

**A Kingdom Which Cannot
Be Shaken**

(1919)

Philip Mauro

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Philip Mauro almost exclusively used the Authorized Version (King James Version) unless he specifically referred to the Revised Version, the American Revised Version (later known as the American Standard Version) or even in places to the Rotherham Version to illustrate a particular point. The use of the Authorized Version was retained throughout this work.

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INTRODUCTION

We believe that one of the greatest needs of the people of God at the present day is enlightenment concerning the Kingdom of God. The subject itself is not difficult. It is quite within the comprehension of the great majority of believers. Few, however, have any definite or clear ideas about it. They have come to regard it as a subject beset with difficulties and clouded with “mysteries,” a subject which can be understood only by those endowed with spiritual intelligence of an exceptional kind. They have been told that the Kingdom of God which the Lord said was “at hand,” was not at hand; that it was never brought into existence, but was “postponed” and is now “in abeyance.” Explanations have been evolved, of a very confusing and bewildering character, to account for the alleged fact that the Kingdom which the Lord said was at hand, was not at hand at all. Moreover, the saints of God have witnessed the origin and spread of the strange idea that the Lord Jesus Christ offered to restore the earthly kingdom to the Jews, but that (for some unknown and unimaginable reason) the leaders of the nation refused the “offer” of what was dearest to their heart; and that thereupon the Lord withdrew the offer, and the kingdom was “postponed.” And in addition to the foregoing assertions (for which, however, there is not the slightest support or warrant in the Scriptures), the people of God are also told that the Kingdom, notwithstanding it has been “postponed,” nevertheless exists “in mystery-form.” This confusing and self-contradictory teaching makes necessary that distinctions be invented between the “Kingdom of heaven,” “the Kingdom of God,” and “the Church”; which distinctions are, however, impossible of comprehension. Thus the saints have become perplexed and bewildered; and a subject of vital importance to them, and which in itself is quite simple, has been so clouded with obscurity that it is virtually ignored.

This is a matter in which we feel the deepest interest because of the importance of the truth involved. Hence we would spare no effort that might contribute to the correction of current errors and misconceptions.

We say that the subject of the Kingdom of God is in itself, and also in the manner of its presentation in the Scriptures, quite simple and intelligible. Where, for example, could we find a statement more transparently clear than the Lord’s announcement: “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15)? What warrant or excuse can be found for the new theory that when the Lord said “the kingdom of God is at hand” He meant that God was then ready to restore again the kingdom to Israel, and to establish again the earthly throne and rule of David’s line? The proposition which underlies this strange doctrine is that “the kingdom of *God*” means *the earthly* Davidic Kingdom, which was overthrown by king Nebuchadnezzar but which God has promised, in His own time, to restore. There is, however, no satisfactory explanation why the *earthly* kingdom should have been called by our Lord “the Kingdom of God” — a name never given to it in the Old Testament, and which does not belong to it at all. Then again if we ask why the Lord did not restore the earthly kingdom, if that is what He meant by His proclamation, we are told that the refusal of the Jews to accept it prevented Him from carrying out His purpose. If we ask how the purpose of the Lord, announced repeatedly and *without any condition or qualification whatever*, could be frustrated by the unbelieving leaders of the Jewish nation, we receive no answer. If we further ask

what, in view of the postponement theory is “the kingdom of God” which was preached by Paul and the other apostles as a *present reality*, again we receive no satisfactory answer. And finally if we ask how about those who *did believe the gospel*, as Christ commanded them to do in the words we have quoted above, we are brought to the startling conclusion (from which there is no escape so long as the postponement theory is maintained), that they had been led to believe, on the word of the Lord Himself, what was *not true at all*.

Surely, when brought to such a conclusion, it is time to wake up to the fact that we have been on the wrong track, and to go back for another start. This is what the writer of these pages did in the spring of the year 1918. After having been for upwards of ten years in a state of confusion and mystification regarding the whole subject of the Kingdom, it occurred to him to take up that subject again upon the assumption that when the Lord Jesus Christ said “The Kingdom of God (or of heaven) is at hand,” *He meant just that. He said*. From that moment the writer found himself in a plain path. Therefore we urge the reader in like manner to take the Lord’s words in their obvious sense; and he also will find himself in the way to a clear apprehension of this vital subject.

The fact of the matter is that there is *not one word* in Scripture about the Kingdom being “postponed” or “in abeyance.” On the contrary God’s announcement that “the Kingdom of God is at hand” was immediately followed by the introduction of that very kingdom, in precisely the way, and in precisely the form, and for precisely the purposes, contemplated in the announcement and foretold by “all the prophets.” To assert that the Kingdom announced by the Lord is postponed or “in abeyance” is therefore to contradict the plainest statements of Scripture, and to turn the truth of God upside down.

1

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE: TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM

A kingdom is a domain ruled by a king, whose word is *the law* of the realm. Hence the *Kingdom of God* is a domain wherein the *law of God* is obeyed. And we may appropriately add to this definition that which is necessary to make it in any wise complete, namely, that the Kingdom of God is that Kingdom in which God's will is done in the power of the abiding Spirit of God. This is what John the Baptist declared when he promised, through Jesus Christ, the baptism with the Holy Ghost — a promise recorded in all four Gospels. With this simple definition in mind we shall easily steer clear of the error of thinking that “the *Kingdom of God*,” which our Lord proclaimed as “at hand” was the earthly kingdom ruled by David's line.

God's purpose from the beginning of His dealings with men has been to obtain for Himself a people who would *obey His laws*; in other words His purpose has been to *establish His Kingdom*. In Psalm 105 is a recital of God's dealings in grace and power with the children of Israel; and the *object* He had in view is declared in the last verse in these clear words: “That they might *observe His statutes and keep His laws*.” But the whole history of that people is a long record of rebellion against the law of God, and of refusal to obey. And why? Was it because they were any more averse than others to submitting themselves to the law of God? Not at all. The simple explanation of Israel's failure in this vital matter is “Because the carnal mind”, *i.e.* the mind of the natural man, “is enmity against God: for it is *not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Romans 8:7). They *did not* obey the law of God simply because they *could not*.

It is probably unnecessary to remind the readers of these pages that the dispensation of law had for one of its main purposes to bring out clearly the fact that the whole human race, Jews as well as Gentiles, were “all under sin” (Romans 3:9); that is to say, that all were subject to “the law of sin” (Romans 7:23; 8:2), and therefore *could not* be subject to “the law of God.” This important fact should be kept in mind in pursuing our present inquiry.

How then was God to get for Himself a people who would be subject to His law? In other words, how was *the Kingdom of God* to be brought into existence? The answer to this question is to be found in the simple facts of the Gospel. Since man is by nature *incapable* of obeying God, because he is hopelessly corrupted and enslaved by sin, a *new work of God* was needed ere there could be any Kingdom of God — a work such as to impart to man a *new nature*. Hence the Lord's *first lesson* concerning the “Kingdom of God” — a lesson given before He began to announce that Kingdom publicly — is found in the well-known words, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God,” and “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3, 5).

We have said that the great purpose and aim of God in all His dealings with fallen men, from the very beginning of the reign of sin and death, has been to recover men from that servitude, and to

bring them back again *under His authority*. And that is but another way of saying that God's great purpose from the very beginning has been to establish His Kingdom.

In the light of Scripture it can be clearly seen that, for the accomplishment of that purpose of God, two things were of necessity to be done — the necessity of arising from the condition all men were in as the result of sin.

First, man being an enemy of God (Romans 5:10; 8:7; Colossians 1:21) must needs be “reconciled to God,” or in other words brought into oneness with God. This is called “peace with God,” which is not mere quietness or cessation of hostilities leaving the cause thereof untouched, but actual and complete *agreement with God* of heart, mind, will, judgment, in all things.

Second, man having been “reconciled to God” through the removal of the cause of enmity (his own sin), needs to be completely “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him Who created him”; or in other words, to be conformed to the image of God's Son, in all holy obedience to every word of God, in gentleness, meekness, lowliness of mind, patience, forbearance, love towards enemies and every excellence whereof Jesus Christ, in the days of His flesh, was the perfect pattern (Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:23; Romans 8:29; 12:2).

It is also given us to see in the light of Scripture how God accomplishes these two necessary works. For as regards the first needed work it is written, “When we were *enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son*” (Romans 5:10). And again: “And you that were sometime alienated and *enemies* in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He *reconciled* in the body of His flesh *through death*” (Colossians 1:21, 22). Reconciliation then, is God's “short work,” which He has “finished” in the death of His Son, and which He had promised afore, saying, “A short work will the Lord make upon the earth” (See Romans 9:28).

But in addition to the work of reconciliation *for* man, there was need of another, and a longer work *in* man, in order to make him wholly submissive to the authority of God, that is to say in order to establish and maintain God's Kingdom over men. This longer work is that which has been undertaken by the Holy Spirit, Who has come into the world for that purpose; for which reason the apostles were forbidden to preach the Kingdom of God as a present reality so as to bring men into it, until the Holy Spirit descended from heaven, and they could announce “the gift of the Spirit” to all who repent and believe on the glorified Christ enthroned in heaven. (See Matthew 16:20; Mark 9:9; Luke 24:49, etc.) For before the day of Pentecost they were commanded only to say that the Kingdom was “at hand.” The Kingdom of God is “righteousness, and peace, and joy, *in the Holy Ghost*” (Romans 14:17); but until Christ was risen from the dead and enthroned in heaven at the head of all principality and power, and until the Holy Spirit was come down from heaven to administer the affairs of that “Kingdom of the heavens” on earth, the Kingdom could not be preached as here and ready for believing sinners to enter into it.

Keeping in mind these two great things necessary to be done for the introduction of the Kingdom of God, it is transparently clear that John the Baptist heralded that very Kingdom; for the prominent features of his proclamation were:

First, that Christ was the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of *the world* (the whole *world*, not Israel only), which sin was the cause of the world's enmity; ¹and

Second, that the Coming One was He Who should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

1 See 2 Corinthians 5:19, “that God was in Christ *reconciling the world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”

John's message was thus not narrowly "Jewish," but on the contrary was a message which embraced the whole "world." Indeed he expressly declared the time had come when "*all* flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6). And in that immediate connection he warned his Jewish hearers not to think that their natural descent from Abraham would avail for entrance into that Kingdom which he was then preaching (which proves it was not the earthly kingdom); and moreover he spoke to the Scribes and Pharisees, not of the earthly kingdom, but of "the wrath to come." And further John pronounced, by the symbolic act of baptism, God's judgment on the "grass" humanity, the natural man. (Cf. 1 Peter 1:23–25).

Precisely the same truths were declared by the Lord Jesus Christ to Nicodemus, when the latter came to Him by night to inquire concerning the Kingdom which John the Baptist was at that time preaching to all the people of Israel. For the Lord said not a word to Nicodemus of any earthly kingdom, but declared plainly that the Kingdom then "at hand" was of a spiritual character, insomuch that it could not be seen except by those who should be born again; and He clearly revealed the *two great things* we have referred to, namely, *first* His own death on the cross that they who believe on Him might not perish but have eternal life, and *second*, the Holy Spirit giving a new birth to believers.

Likewise also the apostle Peter, appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ to open the door of the Kingdom of Heaven, proclaimed on the day of Pentecost the same mighty truths; *first* an exalted and glorified Christ in heaven, and *second* the gift of the Holy Spirit on earth to all who repent and believe in Christ. And once more in the house of Cornelius the same truths of God's Kingdom were declared; and to this day the gospel of the Kingdom, which is the gospel of the grace of God to all "the world," remains unchanged. Men who repent and believe are turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; they are no longer aliens and enemies, but are reconciled unto God by the death of His Son, and have the knowledge of God the Father, Who has delivered them from the power (kingdom) of darkness, and has translated them into the Kingdom of His dear Son that they might fulfill the law of Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost Who is "given" to them.

The whole subject of the Kingdom of God will be clarified for the reader when he realizes that the prominent points in the instruction given by Christ to Nicodemus were the great facts of *the Gospel*, namely, His own death on the cross, the manifestation of the love of God for "the world," the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, the bestowal of eternal life on "whomsoever" should believe the Gospel, the condemnation of all who believe not. The "Kingdom of God" and the "Gospel of God" are thus *indissolubly united together*; for the chapter that has been most used of the entire Bible for setting forth the gospel of God's grace to sinners, is that wherein the Lord explained the foundation principles of the Kingdom. From this it is clear why the Gospel is called "the Gospel of the Kingdom." The message proclaimed by the Lord, and sent forth by Him into the entire world, has for its subject the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3; 28:31). Moreover it is the agency whereby men are regenerated and brought into that Kingdom.

Every other statement in the Bible concerning the Kingdom of God is in full agreement with what we have pointed out above; namely, that that Kingdom is just what its name signifies — a Kingdom of *heavenly character ruled by God*, and not a kingdom of earthly character ruled by *a man*.

And the converse is equally clear; that is to say, it is certain, in the light of Scripture, that the earthly kingdom of David and his successors all down the line to Zedekiah, the last reigning monarch of David's line, was *not* "the Kingdom of God." To establish this point it is only necessary to say that the earthly kingdom was *never called the Kingdom of God*, and that that name does not apply to it at all. But we have much stronger proof, in that the *earthly* kingdom, which God gave to the Israelites at their own request, and gave them in His "anger" (Hosea 13:11), involved in reality *the setting aside of the rule of God*. We have the clear word of the Lord for this.

God had ruled Israel through the Judges, whereof the last was Samuel. But when Samuel was old, the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and demanded a king, saying: "Now make us a king

to judge us *like all the nations*” This was displeasing to Samuel, who took it to the Lord in prayer. But the Lord said to Samuel: “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have *rejected Me, that I should not reign over them*” (1 Samuel 8:6, 7).

This is where the Kingdom of God was really “rejected” by the people of Israel. God granted them at that time their desire by giving them an *earthly* kingdom, “like all the nations.” So we have here the clearest proof that “the Kingdom of God” is not the earthly kingdom of Israel.

2

THE SOURCE OF THE MODERN “POSTPONEMENT” THEORY

In the face of the plain facts to which attention has been called in the preceding chapter, and of volumes of clear evidence from the Word of God that can be (and have been) adduced in confirmation thereof, the wonder is how the idea has taken possession of many minds that when the Lord announced the Kingdom of God He was in reality proclaiming the *earthly* kingdom. The reason for the wide acceptance of this erroneous idea is that it has most unhappily been embodied in the notes of the “Scofield Reference Bible,” which notes are regarded by many as authoritative interpretations of Scripture. In this we have a remarkable illustration of a fact which it is very needful for us all to understand clearly; namely, that it is easy to impose upon the average human mind almost any desired interpretation of Scripture by the simple expedient of pulling the interpretation *alongside of the text*. Thus the Romanists feel quite safe in giving out copies of the Scriptures provided with footnotes which explain away the significance of important passages, or which even assign to them a meaning *directly opposite* to that of the passage itself. For it is found by experience that the reader’s confidence in the Word of God is unconsciously transferred to the human explanation printed as a part thereof; and thus the latter is accepted as the authoritative interpretation of the former.

The extent to which this species of deception can be carried in the propagation of error is shown by the modern revival of Gnosticism in the form known as “Christian Science.” Probably there are none who read the Bible more assiduously than the dupes of that system; yet they are induced to accept the most fantastic and blasphemous perversions and denials of the truth of Scripture — even putting darkness for light, and blotting out the very Personality of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit — and this is accomplished by requiring that Mrs. Eddy’s “interpretations” be read, page by page, with the reading of the Bible. The result is that the impression left on the mind is *that which is produced by the human interpretation*.

There are, to my mind, two great objections to the use of “Bibles” that contain running notes which purport to explain or interpret the text. In the first place it is a dishonor to the Holy Word of God to put human thoughts, expressed in faulty human words, in such close association with it that the reader, unless continually on his guard, would often fail to distinguish between them. One should take up the Word of God with reverence, and should read it with fear and trembling (Isaiah 66:2); and *nothing* should be allowed to come between the inspired words of the Spirit of God and the heart of the reader. A proper and respectful distance should be always maintained between the Word of the living God and the views of mortal man. The Word of God is a living Word; and God is able through it to speak and to reveal His will to those who seek Him therein. But how can God speak through His Word, if the words of man are there to thrust themselves in between?

Therefore we raise our protest against this combination of the precious and the vile, which is put forth as a “Bible,” with a man’s name as its distinctive title. We protest also against the advertising and selling of the corrupt words of man as “helps at hard places”; thus attributing the “helps” to the

words of man and the “hard places” to the words of God. For this is a reversal of the facts of the case; seeing that the real “helps” are in the Word of God, and the “hard places” (where help is truly needed) are *in ourselves*.

This evil has been well understood in past days. In fact a great service was rendered to the cause of spreading the knowledge of the truth, when the British Bible Society adopted the sound rule of issuing copies of the Scriptures in the common tongue “*without note or comment*”

The objection, of course, does not apply to editions like that of Thomas Newberry, which contain the alternative readings, literal renderings, explanations of the Names of Deity and like information whereby the reader is *brought nearer to the original texts*, of which our versions are only a translation. There is no attempt, in such case, to thrust upon the reader of the Word of God a human interpretation, devised in the interests of a particular system of teaching.

It is the undoubted privilege of any servant of the Lord to set forth in print his views touching the truth of Scripture. On the other hand it is the responsibility of all who read what is thus put forth to test every statement by the infallible Word of God, accepting only what is clearly established thereby. For it must ever be remembered that even the most spiritual and most careful of men are liable to err. Indeed it has been made evident that God does not suffer any man to become an “authority” as regards the Truth; because *His Word* is the *only* authority.

When, however, the statements of a frail mortal man are printed on the same page with, and *as it were a part of*, the Word of the living God, and when this combination of diverse elements — God’s statements and man’s — is published and sold as a “Bible,” it becomes a matter of the highest importance to subject the human part thereof to the most searching scrutiny. The Lord’s people in their simplicity are prone to accept without question whatever is stated in the “Bible.” Indeed, as already indicated, the habit of the ordinary reader is to drop the eye down to the footnote, and to take what, and *only* what, is there given as the meaning of the text. The result is harmful even where the note is correct as far as it goes; for it tends to limit the reader to what the note sets forth, thus reducing the value of the text to a minimum.

The Scripture says: “Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:6).

As regards the general merit, or demerit, of the notes and comments contained in the abovementioned publication, I express no opinion. Most likely I should find myself in agreement with many of them. But even so, the objection to publications of that sort would remain in full force. I do, however, find very serious fault indeed with certain specific teachings in the “Scofield Bible,” which teachings I deem to be subversive of vital truth, and to be virtually an assault upon the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Inasmuch as the insidious character and harmful effects of these “diverse and strange doctrines” (never heard of among Christians until recent years) are quite clear to me, I should be chargeable with unfaithfulness to the Lord and to His people should I refrain from testifying plainly against them.

I was not in the least prejudiced against the “Scofield Bible” at the first. On the contrary, because of my associations, at the time it was in preparation, with some who were interested in bringing it out, and because of the esteem wherein I held the editor and his co-workers, I was eagerly looking for its appearance, and was confidently expecting much profit therefrom. So I promptly possessed myself of a copy, and began to study it. But I got no further at that time than the notes on the first chapter of Genesis; for I found to my surprise and disappointment that these notes made room for, and indeed rather favored, the absurd notion that the “days” of Genesis 1 were long periods — ages — of time. Inasmuch as God had taken pains to say that each “day” consisted of an evening and a morning; and inasmuch as He sanctified the seventh *day* (not a geological period), which was exactly like the other six as to its duration; and inasmuch as the entire context makes it evident that the word “day” means in that passage just what it ordinarily means, I was so grieved at the editor’s note that I put the vol-

ume aside, and never looked into a "Scofield Bible" again for about twelve years. For this I am now very thankful, since to the circumstance just mentioned I owe the fact that, in my efforts to lay hold of the truth of God, I was cast directly upon His own Word, and the teaching of His Spirit.

Little as I knew about the Word of God at that time, it was even then plain to me that one who was willing to concede a matter of such importance as the length of the creation days to the vagaries of modern materialism (from which the truth of God had lately delivered me) was not a safe interpreter of the Scriptures. Thus I am to this day unfamiliar with the contents of the larger part of the notes of this "Bible." But in the year 1918 a servant of Christ (who is serving his Lord on the mission field) called my attention to some of the notes on the Kingdom. Thus I became aware of the agency by which the modern "postponement theory" has been propagated among the people of God.

The harm done by the error referred to is great and widespread. Nevertheless there is ground for hope that those who have been misled will be delivered from it. I would therefore use every means in my power to persuade my fellow believers to investigate the subject of the Kingdom of God. For their assistance I have sought, in this volume, to bring the Kingdom teachings of the "Scofield Bible" to the test of a comparison with the clear statements of the Word of God. The result cannot fail to satisfy every candid mind as to what the truth of the matter really is.

So much that is vital is involved in the matter, that I have diligently sought to ascertain the precise point at which those who hold the postponement theory have deviated from the truth of Scripture. The time given to the study of the notes of "the Scofield Bible" I would most gladly have devoted to other purposes. But there is too much at stake to allow personal considerations, or any other reasons, to turn us aside from the plain duty of making known as widely as possible the character and the source of the error in question. What most concerns us is that the theory under consideration sets aside the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ contained in the "Sermon on the Mount," as being not for the children of God of this present dispensation, but as being the "principles" of that *earthly* kingdom which, according to this theory, was offered to the Jews, refused by them, withdrawn by the Lord, and postponed to a future age.

If, as we maintain, those words spoken by the Son of God are the *Father's* words, given to *His own children*, and applicable directly to them, then it must be admitted that the matter is very serious indeed. Beyond all question therefore it is the duty of the people of God at least to look most carefully into it.

As to the interesting matter of the precise point at which the advocates of the postponement theory have departed from the truth of Scripture, we would call special attention to what is set forth herein (Chapter 7) concerning the Old Testament prophecies, particularly those connected directly with David and his house. We find the basis of the postponement theory to be the assumption that prophecies of that class were predictions relating to the earthly kingdom. That assumption is erroneous, as is plainly shown by the New Testament Scriptures. The prophets did not indeed foretell the "Kingdom of God" or "Kingdom of heaven" *by name*; but they described its chief characteristics, insomuch that, in the light of the New Testament, it is impossible to miss the fact that the Kingdom *promised through David's Son* was to be brought into existence, and now has been, by the death and resurrection of the Son of David, by His ascension and exaltation to the right hand of God, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, and by the proclamation of the gospel to the ends of the earth. In other words, the Scriptures prove beyond all doubt that the "Kingdom" foretold by the prophets who spoke of the coming Son of David, is the very Kingdom of God which Christ and His forerunner announced, and which fully began in the world when the risen Lord ascended "the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," and the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to bear witness to Him through the Gospel. The "Kingdom of Heaven" is, in fact, that spiritual and heavenly realm which the Holy Spirit brought down from heaven so soon as God's King had been enthroned there. (See Appendix 2.)

3

WHAT KINGDOM DID THE LORD ANNOUNCE?

In the light of the Scriptures it is clear that the “Kingdom of God” which the Lord proclaimed as “at hand” — meaning that it was about to be introduced — was the selfsame “Kingdom of God” which later His apostles preached as a present reality. Indeed this seems so very plain that it is a matter of interest to inquire how it comes about that any Bible teachers could possibly arrive at the strange conclusion that the “Kingdom of God” which actually *was* “at hand,” is not the “Kingdom of God” which the Lord *said* to be “at hand”; or, (to state it the other way) that the “Kingdom of God” which the Lord publicly declared at hand, proved to be not at hand at all, whereas, marvelous to relate! another “Kingdom of God” whereof He made no mention, was at hand.

We have carefully examined the notes of the “Scofield Bible” in quest of the explanation of this. We find on one hand that no Scripture is cited to support the editor’s view; for there is not one word in the Bible to show that the Kingdom announced by the Lord has been “postponed” or is “in abeyance.” The Lord’s own statement, from first to last, never modified, but proclaimed with ever increasing emphasis, was that the Kingdom was “at hand.”¹ Where then did the contrary idea come from? And on what does it rest? The answer is found in the fact that certain modern students of Old Testament prophecy have developed a system of interpretation based upon the mistaken idea that the main theme of the prophets was the regathering of the scattered people of Israel, their repatriation in the land of Palestine in great prosperity and national distinction, and the restoration of the throne of David. Those coming events of Israel’s future greatness as a nation on earth are indeed foretold by the prophets, and they will surely come to pass in their proper “times and seasons” (Acts

1 Some of the errors made in the attempt to sustain the postponement theory are almost unbelievable. An instance has just come to my notice in an article by Mr. Scofield appearing in “Our Hope” for April, 1920. In it, Mr. Scofield says that “the time speedily came when it was clear that the true King was rejected.” That time he locates at Matthew 11, where the Lord upbraids the cities in which His mightiest works were done. “From that moment,” says Mr. S., “the message is changed; it is no longer ‘the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ “The postponement theory *demand*s that it should be so; and therefore Mr. S. unhesitatingly affirms that it *is* so. But the Scripture records that, as late as when the Lord was on His way to Jerusalem to die there, He sent forth — not *twelve* as at first, but — *seventy* to proclaim “The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (Luke 10:9). And He instructed His disciples, in case they were rejected, to say — not that the Kingdom was withdrawn and postponed, but to say — “Notwithstanding *be ye sure of this*, that the Kingdom of God *is come nigh unto you*” (verse 11). Thus we see that just where the editor of the “Scofield Bible” says the announcement of the Kingdom ceased entirely, it was proclaimed with *increasing emphasis* and with *greater positiveness*. The word “is come nigh” in the above Scriptures is *the same* which is rendered “is at hand” in other passages. We refer to this more in detail later on.

1:7). But it is a serious mistake to suppose that the restoration of the nation of Israel is the great theme of the prophets. We propose, therefore, to show by the plain statements of the Lord and His apostles, that the great theme of the prophets was *Redemption* and *its worldwide benefits*. In other words, what the prophets were mainly inspired to foretell was this present era of blessing to the nations of the world, “the accepted time,” “the day of salvation.”

We find Mr. Scofield’s view of the Kingdom to be based entirely upon the supposition that the prophets were occupied mainly with the restoration of the earthly kingdom to Israel. He assumes therefore, that when the Lord said “The Kingdom of God is at hand,” He meant that the *earthly* kingdom would then be immediately set up if the Jews would accept it — as surely they would have done had it really been offered them. This, we repeat, is entirely a matter of assumption, not one word of proof in its support having ever been produced. Having committed himself thoroughly to this mistaken idea concerning the theme of the prophets, and having taken it for granted also that the time for the fulfillment of the promises concerning the earthly kingdom had come, and having lost sight entirely of the prophecies concerning Redemption and the *spiritual* kingdom that was to be based thereon, the editor has sought through his notes to make the New Testament Scriptures agree with his theory.

But the attempt is an impossibility. In fact the editor himself abandons it completely after carrying it partly through the Gospel of Matthew. Anyone can see this for himself who will take a little pains to examine the matter. For we have to begin with the bold but unfounded assumption that the words “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of heaven” in our Lord’s lips meant the *earthly* kingdom of Israel. Then we have the equally bold and equally unfounded assumption that the supposed “offer” of the earthly kingdom to the Jews of Christ’s day was rejected by them, and that, as the result of such supposed rejection, it was withdrawn and postponed; though there is no trace whatever in the inspired records of any such offer, or rejection, or withdrawal, or postponement; and though there is no hint that God’s purpose to introduce the Kingdom which He had announced (and announced without any qualification whatever) was, or could have been, defeated or postponed by the action of the Jews of Christ’s day.

In the “notes,” the alleged rejection is located at Matthew 11:20, as appears by the following statement: “The Kingdom of heaven announced as ‘at hand’ by John the Baptist, by the King Himself, and by the twelve, and attested by mighty works, has been *morally* rejected.” Then the Lord’s words recorded in Matthew 11:28, 29, are called by the editor, “The new message of Jesus — not the kingdom but rest and service”; and this, we are told, is “the pivotal point in the ministry of Jesus,” — that is to say the point at which He abandoned His message about the Kingdom being at hand, and began to substitute a message of entirely different character.

We earnestly protest that these statements are wholly erroneous. We maintain that the Lord had but one message, which was the gospel of God, and that the Kingdom which He preached while on earth and introduced when He sent the Holy Ghost from heaven, is the very “rest and service” which He offered and still offers to all the weary and heavy laden ones.

Following this is a note (on Matthew 12:46) which asserts that our Lord, “rejected by Israel,” now intimates the formation of the “new family of faith.” But the fact is that the “new family” — composed of the children of His Father in heaven — had been previously addressed at length, and in *the most precise terms as to their relationship with God*, in the Sermon on the Mount. But inasmuch as it would upset the editor’s theory completely to find any hint of the “new family” in that part of Matthew, he firmly closes his eyes to the conspicuous presentation of it in those chapters, and locates the first “*intimation*” of it in Chapter 12. For it is as plain to any babe in Christ as the sun in the sky at noonday, that in the Sermon on the Mount God, the “Father in heaven,” is speaking to His own “children” on earth, by the lips of His own Son. But that fact, so vital to all the household of God, would, if acknowledged, completely destroy the editor’s theory, so he ignores and even contradicts it.

In order to lend an appearance of support to his views, the editor states in a note on the Lord's interview with the woman of Syrophenicia, (Matthew 15:21), that "For the first time the rejected Son of David ministers to a Gentile." This is *necessary* to the theory we are examining; for if Christ should be found ministering to a Gentile prior to Matthew 11, that action on His part would destroy the "Jewish" and "legal" character which the editor imputes to that part of the Lord's ministry; and would demolish the theory completely. How is it possible then that the editor and associate editors and all who have been helping to correct the errors of his edition for nearly a score of years, have been blinded to the fact that the Lord healed the centurion's servant, as recorded in Matthew 8:5-10, and in connection therewith used those remarkable words, "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith *no not in Israel*"? And how can we account for the failure on the part of all those learned men to observe the record in Matthew 4:24 that the fame of Jesus went throughout all *Syria*, and they brought to Him all sick people, and He healed them? And for their failure to observe also that, even before the Lord began to preach publicly in Galilee, He ministered and revealed Himself as "Christ" to the woman of Samaria, and that many of the *Samaritans* believed on Him? (John 4.)²

These are but a few of many instances which show that the advocates of the postponement theory are mysteriously blinded to the plainest facts when those facts are in conflict with that theory; while on the other hand they claim the ability to "see" things in the text of Scripture which support their theory, although others are utterly unable to find a trace of them. (For striking examples of this, see "The Character of Matthew's Gospel".) But, without dwelling upon this, we would ask particular attention to the fact that, even according to the kind of proof by which our friends seek to maintain their theory, the facts concerning the centurion's servant and the Lord's personal ministry of *salvation* (the "living water") to the Samaritans, refute that theory completely.

Pursuing the notes of the aforesaid "Reference Bible" we come to the very important chapter 16 of Matthew's Gospel, where the "church" is first mentioned by name; and there, as a comment on verse 20, in which the Lord charged His disciples "that they should tell no man that He Jesus was the Christ" (Greek), is the following note:

"The disciples had been proclaiming Jesus as the Christ, *i.e.* the covenanted King of a kingdom covenanted to the Jews and 'at hand.' The church *on the contrary* must be built on the testimony to Him as crucified, risen from the dead, ascended and made Head over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:20-23). *The former testimony was ended; the new testimony was not yet ready* etc." (Italics ours.)

We ask special attention to these statements, for they are of capital importance, and they embody errors of a very serious character; though happily the errors are clearly to be seen in the light of the Scripture.

1. To begin with the disciples had *not* been "proclaiming Jesus as *the Christ*" and the text to which this grievously misleading note is appended makes that fact startlingly clear. Indeed the note completely contradicts and falsifies the text, as anyone with but slight attention can see plainly. For the *whole point* of the Lord's words at Caesarea Philippi turns on the fact that the disciples *at last* had become aware, through the revelation of God the Father, that He, Jesus, *was* the Christ. If they had been proclaiming Him or if He had been proclaiming Himself in their hearing as "the Christ the covenanted King," and had been offering to the Jews the Kingdom they were expecting, what point would there have been to His question, "But whom say *ye* that I am?" or to His words to Simon (when the latter made the great confession "Thou art *the Christ*, the Son of the living God"), that "flesh and blood" had not revealed this to him, but "My Father Who is in heaven"?

2 The Samaritans were more despised than the Gentiles, and the Jews held themselves more aloof from the former than from the latter. For while they had many dealings with Gentiles and even accepted them as proselytes, they had "no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9).

According to the theory we are examining, the Lord had been preached all over the land as the Christ of God, come to set up the earthly throne of David. Yet His own question “Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am?” and the reply of the apostles, show plainly that He was *practically unknown*. For if He had announced Himself as Christ the King, and had been so proclaimed by His apostles, He could not have asked that question. Nor could they in that case, have said: “Some say Thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” And furthermore, if He had been publicly proclaimed as “Christ the King” He could not have charged them to tell no man that He *was* the Christ.

There is no ground whatever for such a misstatement; for the plain facts are that the Lord had *never* proclaimed Himself as Christ the King. His way had always been to *let His works speak for Him* (Matthew 11:4, 5; John 5:36; 10:25, etc.) The name by which He almost invariably called Himself was “The Son of man,” a name which connects Him with Gentiles as much as with Jews.

When the Lord crossed the sea with the disciples after feeding the five thousand, and stilled the wind and waves by His Word, they wondered what manner of man He was; and it is recorded in Mark 6:52, that “they considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened”; (literally the verse reads “they *understood not* by the loaves”), or in other words the great truth of His Messiahship was not yet apprehended by them. Still later, after feeding the four thousand, He had occasion again to rebuke them, saying: “Perceive *ye not yet*, neither understand? Have ye your heart *yet* hardened? Having eyes see *ye not*, and ears hear *ye not*?” And He concludes the long list of reproachful questions with the pointed one: “How is it that *ye do not understand*?” (Mark 8:14:21).

From first to last then it is evident that *He could not permit Himself to be proclaimed as the Christ the King, until He had endured the appointed “sufferings of Christ.”* For whatever the “throne” which was promised to Him, whether heavenly or earthly, *the only pathway to it lay through the predicted sufferings and death that awaited Him.* The concurrent testimony of all the Scriptures is that the prophecies concerning David’s promised Son were to be fulfilled *only in resurrection.* (See for example Acts 2:29–32; and 13:22–24 and 32–34). His “Father’s business” upon which He had come was not at all in connection with the earthly expectations of Israel, but was for the Redemption of the whole world, and the introduction of a spiritual Kingdom composed of redeemed sinners out of every nation under heaven.

2. Consider now the following statement of the above quoted note: “The former testimony was ended, the new testimony was not yet ready,” We have shown that what the editor takes to be “the former testimony,” namely the testimony of *Christ as King* Who had come to set up the earthly kingdom, which testimony he says was “ended,” *had not been begun* up to that time; for the apostles themselves had just apprehended that He *was* the Christ. It is also clear that, in the Divine program (which of course was perfectly carried out) the Lord Jesus was not to be preached as “the Christ” until He was risen from the dead and enthroned in heaven. This passage therefore is quite sufficient in itself to settle the whole question as to what sort of a “Kingdom” the Lord and His forerunner had announced. The “Christ” or “Messiah” was, according to Psalm 2, the promised King of Israel. If therefore the Lord forbade His disciples to announce Him as “the Christ,” He in effect forbade them to announce Him as the King of Israel. The Scripture will be searched in vain for any occasion when they proclaimed Him as either Christ or King before He rose from the dead. In fact, before Pentecost they did not preach the Lord Jesus — the *Person* — at all, but only announced the nearness of the *Kingdom.*

But regardless of what was meant by “the Kingdom of heaven” and “Kingdom of God,” the fact is that, instead of the preaching of the Kingdom being “ended” at this point, as the theory demands, the *very same proclamation continued right on to the end of the Lord’s earthly ministry,* not only with undiminished energy, but even with *increased* diligence. For, on His last journey to Jerusalem, during which He told His disciples again and again that He was about to be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and be crucified, and would rise again from the dead the third day, He appointed “other sev-

enty,” in addition to the original *twelve*, and sent them forth to proclaim the Kingdom of God as at hand. (See for example Luke 18:31–34, and notice that the subject of the Lord’s discourse is the Kingdom of God, Chapters 16:16; 17:20; 18:16–30).

The appointment of those “other seventy also” is recorded in Luke 10:1–9, the sending forth of the twelve being mentioned in Chapter 9, *before* the Transfiguration.

4

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST. WAS IT LEGAL?

We have seen that the notes of the aforesaid Reference Bible lead into hopeless confusion. They leave us at Matthew 16 with the statement that the old testimony was *ended* and the new *not yet ready*. There the all-important subject of the Kingdom is dropped, so far as the notes are concerned, and our Lord is left without any message at all. We suspect the reason for this is that human ingenuity could go no further. For how, on the editor's theory, could the words of Mark 1:1 — "The beginning of *the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God*" — be explained? Or the Lord's words, "The time is *fulfilled*, and *the Kingdom of God is at hand*. *Repent ye and believe the gospel*" (Mark 1:14, 15)? Or the fact that Paul everywhere "preached the kingdom of God," and that he witnessed "both to small and great, saying none other things than those which *the prophets and Moses did say should come*" (Acts 20:25; 26:22)? Or the fact that God has "translated us into the *Kingdom of His dear Son*" (Colossians 1:13)? It is only because of the *impossibility* of making these and other important Scriptures fit in with the editor's theory that we can explain the remarkable fact that he has passed them by *without a word of comment*. The users of this edition must have wondered at this strange silence.

Those readers must also have been puzzled and disappointed at the notes on Acts 1:3–6. In the text we have the important statement that the Lord, after His resurrection, was seen of the apostles forty days, during which He was "*speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*." This, of course, could only mean that He was instructing them concerning the work of that Kingdom in which they were to serve Him as soon as they should receive power through the coming of the Holy Spirit, Whom He at that very time promised to send upon them. For why should the Lord be giving them at that time directions concerning a kingdom which had been withdrawn and postponed? Surely an explanation is demanded; but all that is offered in the note is this exceedingly weak suggestion, "doubtless, according to His custom (Luke 24:27, 32, 44, 45) teaching them out of the Scriptures." Obviously this comment does not explain the text, but contradicts it. The passage itself needs no explanation, for it is transparently clear. But this is one of "the hard places" for the editor's theory, which goes to pieces on this one passage. "Helps" indeed are needed; but the note merely exposes the erroneous nature of the theory. If the Lord was merely teaching them out of the Scriptures, then "the Scriptures" from which He was "teaching them" must have had to do with the Kingdom of God; for we have the express statement of verse 3 that *that* is what He was instructing them about. And since the very Scriptures which the editor cites in the above note had to do with the Lord's *sufferings and death and resurrection* as the Gospel records (Luke 24) clearly declare, then the Lord's death and resurrection, and also the coming of the Holy Spirit, *must needs have preceded the Kingdom of God*. That is indeed the simple truth of the matter, and every pertinent Scripture is in perfect agreement therewith. Hence the Kingdom of God preached by the Lord from the beginning of His ministry could not have been the restoring of the earthly kingdom of Israel.

The note last referred to also says: "One point was left untouched, viz., the *time* when He would restore the kingdom to Israel; hence the apostles' question." The question (verse 6) was, "Lord, wilt

Thou *at this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Here we have then a further and very clear proof that "the Kingdom of God," which the Lord previously announced as at hand, and concerning which He was *at that very time* instructing His apostles, is a *different thing altogether* from the earthly kingdom of Israel; for the time for the latter had not come then, and is *not come yet*. Moreover, since the Father hath put that in His own power, it plainly was not given to John the Baptist to say that it was at hand.

The notes to which we have referred show very plainly just where the editor has missed his way in attempting to trace the order of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and promise. The editor comes to the New Testament with the idea that the promise of the restoration of the national independence of Israel and the dynasty of David occupies in prophecy a place of such commanding importance that the fulfillment of that promise must have been the main object of the coming of Christ. Thus, he says: "When Christ appeared to the Jewish people, the *next thing*, in the order of revelation as it then stood, should have *been* the setting up of the Davidic kingdom (Matthew 4:17)." This is a crucial statement; but it is very easy to show that it is quite erroneous. We have only to look back as far as the last verses of the Old Testament to see that "the next thing in the order of revelation as it then stood" was the ministry of a special messenger who should prepare the way of the Lord by turning many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, lest He should come and "*smite the earth with a curse*." We know that the turning of many Israelites to the Lord is exactly what *did* take place (Luke 1:13–17); and we know also that, but for John's Elijah-like ministry, the earth would have been smitten with a curse (Malachi 4:6). John's ministry was therefore *indispensably necessary* as an introduction to the era of blessing, which era he announced when he said: "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Furthermore the fact is that, in the Old Testament prophecies, beginning with that of the One Who should bruise the serpent's head, and Whose heel the serpent should bruise (Genesis 8:15), the restoration of the earthly kingdom to Israel occupies *a very small part*; and that the place given to it is a place of but minor importance; insomuch that, in several Scriptures where the Holy Spirit gives a comprehensive statement of the substance of *all* the prophecies, the restoring of the earthly kingdom is not mentioned at all. (See for example 1 Peter 1:10–12; Acts 3:24–26). This point we hope to examine in a subsequent chapter.

Moreover, even in prophecies where the Kingdom *is* the special theme, it is evident, upon attentive consideration thereof, that the vision of the prophet went far beyond the earthly kingdom of Israel, and that his words described a Kingdom of an entirely different order — spiritual rather than carnal, heavenly rather than earthly, Divine rather than human.

If such be indeed the case, as beyond all question it is, then, the course of events as recorded in the New Testament Scriptures proceeded in perfect order and with unbroken continuity. The unspiritual Israelites no doubt lowered the prophecies concerning Christ to the level of their own earthly desires and expectations. But God's purposes are not to be interpreted, nor is the carrying out of His plans to be controlled, by their carnal ideas. It was not the kingdom of Israel that was due at Christ's first coming, but the Kingdom *of God*; not the kingdom of the earth, but the Kingdom of the heavens. There was no "break" after the ministry of John the Baptist; no "pivotal point in the ministry of Jesus," no "turning point of immense significance" or anything of that sort. On the contrary the Divine program, (as announced by the angel Gabriel to Zacharias and to Mary, and as revealed in the prophetic utterances of those two, and in that of Simeon also, and as officially proclaimed later by John the Baptist and the Lord and His apostles), was carried out in perfect order.

Another point of importance should be here noted. The editor and those who share his views concerning the Kingdom, and concerning the ministry on earth of the Lord Jesus Christ, habitually use the words "Jewish," "Messianic" and "legal" as terms of disparagement. Thus, in the introduction to "the Four Gospels" the editor says concerning the Lord Jesus that "He was 'a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers' (Romans 15:8), and to fulfill the law that grace might flow out. Expect therefore, a strong *legal* and *Jewish* coloring up to the

cross.” Here we have the words “legal” and “Jewish.” And as for the expression “Messianic,” it *always* means, according to the usage of these writers, something limited to the *earthly* prospects of the nation Israel.

The effect of such statements as the foregoing is to give an utterly false aspect to the Gospels, and also to the earthly ministry of Christ. It also confuses all that great body of “Messianic” prophecy which is fulfilled in God’s *heavenly* people, the saved of this dispensation. An example of this is seen in the foregoing statement, which puts into the reader’s mind the idea that the Gospels have a “strong *legal* and *Jewish* coloring.” This is calculated to belittle that infinitely precious portion of the Scriptures — the Gospels. “Legal” means *pertaining to law*; and hence that which is “legal” belongs to the old dispensation and is in *direct contrast* with that which pertains to the dispensation of “grace.” Thus our Lord’s ministry is by this theory with its misleading phraseology, torn from this dispensation, to which it belongs, and assigned to the dispensation which was “Jewish” in the narrowest sense, and which is divinely described as the era of “condemnation” and “death” (2 Corinthians 3:6–9). This doing of violence to our Lord’s ministry of life, healing, and infinite *grace*, is one of the chief results of this new school of doctrine; and the seriousness of the error we are here pointing out is what impels us to raise a warning and to utter a protest against it.

Was our Lord’s ministry “legal”? *He* says not; and we shrink even from asking such a question. He declared at the very beginning and before He began to preach in public, that “God sent *not* His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that he world through Him might be *saved*” (John 3:17). This one Scripture refutes utterly the grievous teachings we are reviewing. Had our Lord’s mission been “legal” He could have done nothing but “condemn” the world. But He says, on the contrary, that God sent Him to *save*. Is “salvation” then by the law or by grace?

But in the very same passage the Lord tells also *how* He would save, saying: “For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up” (verse 14).

We are here confronted by the startling fact, a fact which destroys the postponement theory root and branch, that the words which, probably more than any other, have been used of God for the conversion of sinners among all nations (John 3:16) were uttered by the Lord at the very beginning of His ministry in explaining the Kingdom of God to a leader of the Jews at Jerusalem.

His ministry was, from first to last, one of grace, and not of law. Was His going about “doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil” *legal*? or His receiving of sinners and eating with them? or His dealing with the woman taken in adultery? or His forgiving of sins? or His feeding the multitude? or His casting out of demons? or His enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself? or His submission before the high priest and Pilate and Herod? If that was *legal*, where shall we look for *grace*? In a word, since the gospels are all about the *words and works of Christ*, and since His ministry was one of purest grace (and who will dare say otherwise), in what sense have the gospels a “strong *legal* coloring”?

But again and again we are told by advocates of the “postponement doctrine,” that “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision,” and are left thereby to infer that His ministry was “legal” and “Jewish.” Whereas the whole point of the passage, from which the above words are a partial and thoroughly misleading quotation, is that *Gentiles* participate *equally with Jews* in the benefits of the Lord’s ministry — the word “Gentiles” occurring six times in the few verses (Romans 15:8–12). Jesus Christ was indeed “*of* the circumcision,” that is to say, He was of Israel “as concerning the flesh” (Romans 9:5); but He was God’s Servant “to confirm *the promises*” which promises were *for Gentiles equally with Jews*.

The Lord Jesus Christ truly was of the Jews; but, as He said to the woman of Samaria, “*Salvation* is of the Jews”; and again He said, “*I* am come a light into the world ... and if any man hear My words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world” (John 12:46,

47). Salvation is, in this sense, “Jewish,” and in the same sense all the Scriptures are “Jewish”; and hence in that meaning of the word it would be quite correct to say that we should expect “a strong *Jewish* coloring up to the last verse of the last chapter of Revelation.” And that is exactly what we *do* find. But whence comes this idea that we are to look down upon and despise that which is “Jewish” and “Messianic”? (The word “Messianic,” be it noted, simply means *pertaining to Christ*). And to what does this idea lead, but to confusion and damage? For if we look down upon that which is “Jewish and Messianic,” then we have got beyond the Christ of God, and the Word of God, and the Salvation of God, and the City of God; for these are all as “Jewish” as are the Gospels.

What then are the facts as to the dispensational place of the Lord’s ministry? According to His own clear statement, “The law and the prophets were *until John; since that time* the Kingdom of God is preached” (Luke 16:16). Here we have the two dispensations with the Lord’s own titles for them; and we have also the *point of beginning* of the new dispensation, which was at *the ministry of John the Baptist*. In exact agreement with this are the opening words of Mark: “The *beginning* of the gospel of Jesus Christ (the) Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send *My Messenger* before Thy face.” In these Scriptures we have the new word *euangelion* (Gospel) and the verb (“preach”) derived from it. Likewise Peter in Acts 10:36–38, and Paul in Acts 13:23, 24, marked the new dispensation as beginning with John the Baptist.

It seems hard indeed to go astray as to this. The dispensation of the law and the prophets ended with Malachi; after which came a period of *four hundred years* during which God was absolutely silent; for Malachi was the last of the prophets. Surely the “break” between the two dispensations is wide enough to be seen by all.

And not only so, but Malachi foretold exactly *how* the new dispensation was to begin. For God by him promised the sending of a special messenger, who should prepare the way of the Lord, and who should do a work in the *hearts* of the people such that, when the Lord Himself should come, He would not “smite the earth with a curse.”

Accordingly, when the time for the fulfillment of this and other prophecies (in which the *earthly* kingdom did not figure at all) drew near, God’s angel Gabriel announced to Zacharias the birth of a son, of whom he said:

“And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:11–17).

In due time John the Baptist was born; and he was in the deserts until the day of his showing to Israel. That date is fixed with the greatest precision in Luke 3:1, 2, making evident its importance in God’s eyes. And exceedingly important it was: for then the silence of God that had lasted 400 years was broken, and “The *Word of God* came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the *remission of sins*.” With that proclamation began the era of grace; for John’s message announced the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God, without which there could be no “remission”; and it announced also the coming of the Holy Ghost which is what gives special character and distinction to this present dispensation.

We submit, therefore, that it does violence to the plainest statements of Scripture, and to truth of highest importance, to detach the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ — a ministry of purest grace in both word and deed — from the present dispensation of grace whereof it is a vital part, — to brand it as “legal” and “Jewish,” and to connect it with the long past dispensation of “the law and the prophets.”

5

THE KINGDOM “AT HAND”

*‘From that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent;
for THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND’ (Matthew 4:17).*

*‘Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the
kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND.
Repent ye and believe the gospel’ (Mark 1:14, 15).*

What kingdom was it that the Lord Himself thus proclaimed as “at hand,” and which He called “the Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of God”? Did the Lord from heaven come personally to proclaim with His own lips a Kingdom “at hand” which was *not* at hand? Did He call upon those who heard Him to “believe” what was not true? And did those who did believe Him have to learn later on that they had been deceived, and that the Kingdom which He positively declared to be at hand was postponed? They who hold with the editor of the “Scofield” Bible would have to say “Yes” to these questions. For though there *was* a Kingdom then at hand, and though its divinely given name is “the Kingdom of God” (Acts 8:12; Romans 14:17, etc.), these modern teachers tell us that the Kingdom of God which *was* at hand is not the Kingdom of God which the Lord, Who knoweth all things and Who cannot lie, *said* to be at hand; but that the Kingdom of God which He positively declared as at hand, was *some other* “Kingdom of God” which was not at hand at all. Is it possible, we ask in all seriousness, to do greater violence than this to the statements of the Lord?

But let us see how this simple and transparently clear announcement of the Lord is made to square with the editor’s theory; for we have here an exceedingly interesting and instructive example of the methods by which the postponement theory is upheld.

The footnote to Matthew 4:17 contains the following assertion:

“‘At hand’ is never a positive affirmation that the person or thing said to be ‘at hand’ will immediately appear, but only that no known or predicted event must intervene. When Christ appeared to the Jewish people, the next thing in the order of revelation as it then stood should have been the setting up of the Davidic kingdom” (italics ours).

No proof whatever is offered in support of these assertions; and we are bold to say they are unprovable; for when brought to the test of Scripture they break down completely. It is simply an impossibility to explain away the clear meaning of the words “at hand.”

The word used by our Lord and here translated “at hand” is used by Himself and by the inspired writers of the Gospels and Acts *over fifty times*, and in *every instance* it is a “positive affirmation” that the person or thing said to be “at hand” *was* at hand. In other words, the statement of the editor is *exactly the reverse of the truth*. This is easily shown.

The word referred to is usually translated “*is* (or *is come*) *near*, or *nigh*”; and we will give a few of the more than fifty occurrences of that word in the Gospels and Acts.

Matthew 21:1 “When they drew *nigh* unto Jerusalem.”

This means that they were *nigh* to Jerusalem; and so in every other case.

21:34: “When the time of the fruit drew *nigh*.”

24:32: “Ye know that summer is *nigh*.”

24:33: “When ye shall see these things, know that it is *near*.”

Mark 2:4: “Could not *come nigh* unto Him for the press.”

Luke 7:12: “When He came *nigh* to the gate.”

15:1: “Then drew *near* unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.”

18:35: “As He was come *nigh* unto Jericho.”

19:11: “Because He was *nigh* to Jerusalem.”

22:1: “The feast of unleavened bread drew *nigh*.”

22:47: “Judas drew *near* unto Jesus to kiss Him.”

John 2:13: “The Jews’ passover was *at hand*.”

6:4: “A feast of the Jews was *nigh*.”

7:2: “The Jews’ feast of tabernacles was *at hand*”

6:19: “And drew *nigh* unto the ship.”

Acts 7:17: “As the time of the promise drew *nigh*.”

10:9: “As they went ... and drew *nigh* to the city.”

22:6: “Was come *nigh* unto Damascus.”

It is evident that in all these cases (and the list could be doubled) the word used by our Lord in proclaiming the Kingdom of God as “at hand” means *close by, near, about to come or be reached*. In fact it is the most appropriate word for expressing the very idea for which the editor says it is *never* used.

On several occasions in speaking of the Kingdom of God the Lord used even a stronger word than “is at hand.” Thus, in Matthew 12:28 He said: “But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God *is come unto you*.” Here the Lord declared that the Kingdom was actually present. So likewise in Luke 17:20, 21 He said (speaking to the Pharisees): “For behold, the Kingdom of God *is within* (i.e. in the midst of) you.”¹ In both these cases He referred to Himself as constituting God’s Kingdom *at that time*; that is to say, He Himself was the realm in which God’s will was being done in the power of the Holy Ghost. Still later, again speaking to the Pharisees, and long after the Kingdom had been, on the editor’s theory, withdrawn, the Lord said: “But woo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the Kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nei-

1 In the original Greek there is strong emphasis upon the word “is,” which emphasis does not appear in our versions.

ther suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13).

We should very much like to know on what supposed authority the editor bases his statement that the word *eggus* (or its verb form *eggidzo*) means only that "no known or predicted event must intervene." But even if there were authority for that (which is impossible in view of the Scriptures we have cited), we would still maintain that the Lord's word cannot be made to mean that the Kingdom He said to be "at hand" or "nigh," was in fact *very far off*. By no possible twisting of His words can they be made to mean that the earthly kingdom was then at hand. For there *were* "known" and "predicted" events, which "*must intervene*" before the *earthly* kingdom could come. All the countless prophecies, types and shadows of Redemption, all the numerous prophecies of the sufferings of Christ, "*must needs*" have intervened before the earthly kingdom; and furthermore, the long history of the Roman empire — the legs of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream — "*must needs*" run its course down to the toes of iron and clay, ere the millennial "kingdom" foretold in some of the prophecies could be established on earth. But the spiritual "Kingdom of God" is another thing, and that *was* at hand at the time when the Lord *said* that it was at hand.

In the foregoing comments we have referred only to the use of the expressions "at hand" and "come nigh" in the Gospels; for it is in them that the announcement of the dispensation which actually *was* at hand would be found. It is attempted sometimes to force a different meaning on the words "at hand" (or rather to reverse their meaning completely) because of the fact that in Romans 13:12 Paul says, "the day is at hand," and in Philippians 4:5 he says "the Lord is at hand." It is assumed, of course, that both these statements refer to the second coming of Christ. But it seems quite clear that "the day" to which Paul refers is the day that had dawned *then, i.e.* at the *first* coming of Christ. For he says it is "*now* high time to awake out of sleep"; and because the day *has* dawned he exhorts us to cast off the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light. We believe the sense is the same as in 1 John 2:8, "the darkness is passing away and the true light *is already shining*" (Greek).

In Philippians 4:5 there is no reference to the Lord's coming but to the fact that He is always "near" to supply the needs of His people.

But whatever interpretation may be put upon the above verses found in the *Epistles*, there can be no question at all as to the meaning of the expression in the *Gospels*. For even if "at hand" might sometimes mean the next dispensation, regardless of how far off it might be, it could *never* be used when another dispensation of a different character was to intervene. Specifically, it could not possibly have been said in the days of the Lord's earthly ministry that the earthly kingdom of Israel was "at hand," when in fact the entire dispensation of grace was to intervene.

6

THE ORDER OF REVELATION

Inasmuch as we have in the footnote last quoted above, a crucial statement the settlement of which will decide the whole matter in dispute, we purpose now to look further into it. The assertion is made that “When Christ appeared to the Jewish people, the next thing, in the order of revelation *as it then stood*, should have been the setting up of the Davidic kingdom.”

Again we call attention to the absence of any attempt whatever to support this assertion by proof. We call attention also to the implication that the “order of revelation” is a changeable thing. For it is plainly implied that the order of revelation might be something different at another time.

“As it *then stood*” the next thing was “the Davidic Kingdom” — at least so says the editor. But if so, *what prevented the order of Divine revelation from proceeding?* If the Davidic kingdom was then in order in God’s plan, what prevented its coming into existence? According to the same authority (for no other is cited), the explanation is that *the Jews of Christ’s day would not accept it*.

This is stupefying. Is the order of revelation of God’s purposes such an uncertain thing that the opposition of carnal men can set it aside? If, when God’s “set time” (the order of revelation), had come, the will of man could put off the event for thousands of years, what certainty is there in *any* promise or prophecy? For example, there are at the present time many thousands of the Lord’s people, including the editor himself, who believe that “the next thing in the order of revelation” as it *now* stands, is the coming of the Lord for His people. But if the great mass of them reject the offer of His second coming and kingdom, what possibilities may there not be for any number of hidden dispensations, and “mysteries,” and “postponements,” and “abeyances” to intervene?

God has given His people, through Moses, a test whereby a *true* prophet should be known, saying: “If the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing *which the Lord hath not spoken*, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously” (Deuteronomy 18:22). According to this test, what does the editor make of the Lord’s prophecy “the kingdom of God is at hand,” when he says that the kingdom of which the Lord spoke was postponed because of its (supposed) rejection by the Jews?

Finally we come to the assertion (which is at the very foundation of the postponement theory), that the Davidic kingdom was *the next thing in order* at the time of the Lord’s first coming. This statement we wish to bring in the most definite way to the test of Scripture.

It would be, of course, a task of great magnitude to review the Old Testament prophecies and show the various subjects they embrace, and their sequence — where any sequence can be discerned. But our object can be accomplished without any such laborious undertaking. For we have in the New Testament certain *inspired summaries* of the prophecies, by which the editor’s statement can be tested. To these we will make our appeal.

For example, in 1 Peter 1:10–12 we have a general summing up of what the prophets foretold; and this will answer perfectly our purpose.¹

In the first place, the subject of the prophecies is divided by the apostle Peter into two great parts, (1) “the sufferings of the Christ,” and (2) “the glories that should *follow*” So we have here not only the grand subject of the prophecies, in its two divisions, but we have “the *order* of revelation as it *then stood*”; for we are told precisely that “the glories” (plural in the original) were to *follow* the sufferings. Inasmuch then as the Throne is the prominent feature of “the glories” of the Christ, it is clear that the Throne was *not* “the next thing in order.”

But that is not all. For the Scripture last cited tells us plainly that the theme of the prophets was — not the earthly kingdom, which is not even referred to in this summary, but — the “*salvation*” and the “*grace*” which were to come unto *us*. This is an exceedingly important statement, and it is conclusive of the question we are now examining.

And not only so, but it was revealed to those prophets that the things they foretold were ministered “not unto themselves, but unto us”; and the passage tells further that the *very same things* which the prophets foretold are what “are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

It is here declared in the plainest words that the general theme of the prophets is the same as that of the preachers of the gospel; that what the prophets of old predicted is exactly what the evangelists now preach! Thus we learn that the “gospel” — that is to say God’s message of grace for all the world — was the prominent subject of the Old Testament prophecy, and was “next in order” to “*follow*” the sufferings of Christ, which were immediately due for fulfillment when He came into the world.

The testimony of Paul agrees perfectly with this. His preaching and writing were based firmly upon the prophets; and when he speaks of what was “promised afore,” it is not the earthly kingdom, but “the gospel of God concerning His Son.” This, says the apostle, is what “He had promised afore by *His prophets* in the Holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:1–3). Moreover, the theme of the Epistle to the Romans is the *righteousness of God* in justifying believing sinners; and this (not the earthly kingdom at all) is what the apostle says expressly was “witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Romans 3:21). Paul also in his defense of his ministry before Herod Agrippa testified that, from the beginning of his commission as a servant of Christ unto that very day, he had continued “witnessing both to small and great, saying *none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*” (Acts 26:22). This is another positive assertion that the evangelists now preach exactly what the prophets foretold.

The witness of “all the prophets” is also stated by Peter in the house of Cornelius in a very familiar verse: “To Him (Christ) give *all the prophets witness*, that through His Name, whosoever believeth in Him shall *receive remission of sins*” (Acts 10:43).

The words of Zacharias, spoken before the Lord was born, are likewise very clear, and are decisive of the matter in dispute. The whole prophecy (Luke 1:67–79) should be read attentively; but for our immediate purpose it is enough to quote the opening words, which tell clearly what the new dispensation was to be — namely one of Redemption and Salvation — and tell also what it was that God had spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets “*since the world began*” that is, from a time long before there was any earthly nation of Israel:

1 The passage reads in part: “Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls, of *which salvation* the prophets have inquired “who prophesied of *the grace which should come unto you*; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ Who was in them did signify when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow.”

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and *redeemed* His people, and hath raised up an horn of *Salvation* for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of *His holy prophets* which have been since the world began.”

See also the concluding verses (77–79) which tell specifically what the coming “Salvation” was — “the remission of sins,” “light” to them in darkness and the shadow of death, and a “way of peace.”

Other New Testament summaries of the prophecies might be referred to, but we will only cite in conclusion the Lord’s own words recorded in the last chapter of Luke. There we find His explanations to the two disciples with whom He walked and talked by the way, and whom He reproved for not believing “all that the *prophets* have spoken” (verse 25). The words which follow make it clear that the theme of the prophets was, just as we saw from 1 Peter, “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” For the Lord said: “Ought not Christ to have *suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?*” And that such was necessary He proceeded to prove. For “Beginning at Moses and *all the prophets*, He expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures*, the things concerning Himself.” Clearly then, the two great divisions of the prophetic Scriptures were Christ’s sufferings and death on earth, and His glory as a Man in Heaven. (See John 12:23; 13:32; 17:5; Acts 2:33; 4:13; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:9 etc.). In other words, the main theme of the prophets, when spiritually discerned is that which is fulfilled and being fulfilled through Jesus Christ, *during this present age*. There are indeed many prophecies concerning conditions as they will be on earth during the coming millennial age and among these the earthly supremacy of the nation Israel is conspicuous. But *that* class of prophecies has not the first place in God’s great prophetic scheme. In God’s eternal purpose, which *nothing* could change, the work of Redemption comes first (Hebrews 1:3; 9:12; 10:12), to be followed immediately by the exaltation and glorification of the Lord Jesus in heaven, while the gospel is preached to all the world in the power of the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. Then follows the coming of Christ in the glory of His millennial Kingdom.

The same order of fulfillment of prophecy appears in the words of the Lord recorded in the last part of the same chapter (Luke 24:44–49), that order being, first His own sufferings, then His resurrection and the glory into which He was about to enter in heaven, and then the coming of the Holy Ghost and the preaching of the gospel among all nations. We quote the words, which are so clear as to need no comment: “And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that *all things must be fulfilled*, which were written in the *law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms* concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved (*i.e. was necessary for*) Christ to *suffer and to rise from the dead the third day*; and that repentance and remission of sins *should be preached in His Name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem*. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send *the promise* of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

In these words we have the Lord’s own explanation of “the order of revelation as it then stood” (and as of course it has *always* stood): and we see that, in the progress of great events as declared by Him Who is both the Subject and the Fulfiller of all the prophecies, the earthly kingdom had *no place at all* among the purposes He came to accomplish at that time.

And not only so — but when, in the course of those forty days with His disciples before His ascension, they brought up the subject of the earthly kingdom, and asked the direct question: “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” He dismissed that subject in a peremptory manner with the statement: “It is *not for you to know* the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power” (Acts 1:6, 7). This Scripture is quite enough without any other, to show that the Lord could not have said, in His preaching, that the earthly kingdom was “at hand.”

7

THE KINGDOM PROMISED TO DAVID

The postponement theory is apparently founded upon two mistaken ideas; *first*, that the Kingdom foretold by the prophets of old — especially when the prophecy related to David or his house — was the earthly kingdom of Israel; *second*, that the promise of national restoration and earthly supremacy for the Israelites was “the next thing in order” on the Divine program, and was due to be fulfilled at the time of the first coming of Christ. These two suppositions being taken for granted, it is easy to assume further that the Kingdom which the “Lord said was at hand was the earthly kingdom.

But in fact both the ideas set forth above are erroneous. We are able to assert this most positively; for the Scriptures clearly prove that the Kingdom foretold by the prophets was the *very same Kingdom of God* which is now and eternally based upon the death and resurrection of the Son of David, which was brought into the world by the coming of the Holy Spirit, and which has been extended throughout all the nations of earth “by those who have preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

And in particular we are able to show that the prophecies which refer to *David and his Seed* have their fulfillment in large measure during this present age. The main facts concerning the Davidic prophecies are:

1. The work which, according to those prophecies, the promised Son of David was to accomplish was the twofold work of *saving sinners* from among *all nations*, and *building the House of God* (the church). Both parts of this twofold work are presented in the Gospel of Matthew.
2. The “throne” covenanted to David’s Son was the throne of the universe, not the throne of Israel merely.
3. The prophecies require for their fulfillment that the promised Son of David should first suffer and die before He could reign, whether in heaven or on earth.

This third point is of special value for our present purposes, in that it makes it quite impossible that the earthly kingdom could have been proclaimed, or even contemplated, in the days of the Lord’s earthly ministry. It makes certain that the *only* kingdom which was, or could have been in view, was the spiritual Kingdom of God which was to be founded upon the death and resurrection of the “Son,” the “Christ” of God, Who also was God’s “King,” spoken of by David in Psalm 2.

The fact that the expected Son of David must needs have suffered and risen again ere He could reign (whether in heaven or on earth), is clearly set forth by the apostle Peter in Acts 2:25–31; where he quotes Psalm 16 and explains that David was not speaking of himself when he said “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption,” but was speaking of Christ. And then he further explains that David “*being a prophet*, and knowing that God had sworn

with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would *raise up Christ to sit on his throne*; he seeing this before, spake of *the resurrection of Christ.*”

This gives us plainly the true meaning of God’s word and His oath to David in regard to the Throne, showing that the promise was to be fulfilled *in resurrection.*

Clearly then the Davidic promise, if rightly understood (and there is now no excuse for not understanding it in view of the inspired explanation given through Peter), would lead us to expect, not the earthly kingdom at Christ’s first coming, but just what happened, namely His death, resurrection and ascension and His enthronement in heaven at God’s right hand as foretold in Psalm 110, which Peter proceeds immediately to quote and apply (verse 33).

It has been shown in the last preceding chapter that the great subject of the Old Testament prophets was this present era of God’s grace to the whole world of sinners, which era was, at the appointed time, introduced by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, after it had been duly announced (as also foretold by Isaiah and Malachi) by the ministry of John the Baptist. We have shown moreover, by the clear testimony of many Scriptures, that while the restoring of the national independence of Israel has a distinct place in the purposes of God as revealed by the prophets, it is nevertheless a detail of relatively minor importance, and was not embraced at all within the scope of the Lord’s mission at His first coming.

It was, of course, to be expected that the Jews of Christ’s day should have seen in the prophecies only what they wished to see — that is to say, the era of Israel’s earthly greatness. It is quite natural that the coming of Christ should have meant for them nothing more or other than political deliverance from their Roman oppressors. That is not to be wondered at. But it *is* a cause for surprise, and for deep sorrow as well, that learned commentators in our day, men whose views are widely accepted as authoritative, should make the same mistake.

The two disciples with whom the Lord walked on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–27), and who were disappointed and grieved because they had hoped that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel, were rebuked by Him as “Fools (or senseless ones) and slow of heart to believe *all that the prophets have spoken*” And thereupon, “beginning at Moses and *all the prophets*” He proceeded to show them that the entire prophetic word made it *necessary* that He Who was “the Christ” should suffer *those very things* and enter into His glory.

Very likely we have felt pity for those foolish disciples, who ignorantly cherished an idea so contrary to the purposes of God as revealed by all His holy prophets since the world began. Yet surely much allowance is to be made for those who were Israelites after the flesh, and who were actually under the heel of a foreign despotic power. But how can we account for the fact that, in spite of the expositions of prophecy by the Lord Himself and by His inspired apostles which dispel completely the thought that the Lord’s first coming had anything whatever to do with the national independence of Israel, learned men of our day have revived that exceedingly “Jewish” idea, and have made it the corner stone of their system of teaching? A discerning servant of Christ has lately said that we have here the most extraordinary phenomenon to be found within the pale of orthodox Christianity.

In the present chapter we propose to examine some of the prophecies which refer specifically to David, our object being to ascertain just what was promised in that connection. It is commonly taken for granted that, where David’s name is mentioned in a prophecy, the subject thereof is the earthly greatness of the nation Israel. In fact that idea has so completely taken possession of the minds of certain teachers that the very mention of David’s name in a passage of Scripture (as Matthew 1:1) is regarded as sufficient warrant for calling it “Jewish.” But the truth of the matter is that the prophecies linked with the name and history of David have to do especially with *the gospel*, and with the *House of God*, that is to say the Church.

What those prophecies really called for was the coming, through David’s line, of One Who should

be *the Saviour of the world*. The gospel of God concerning His Son “which He had promised afore by His prophets” was connected with David as much as, and as closely as, with Abraham. Paul makes this very clear in the beginning of his inspired explanation of the gospel given in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says that “the gospel of God” was “concerning His Son” who was “of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:1–3). And the same apostle recalls this fundamental point of gospel truth very emphatically in his last message in which he says: “Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Timothy 2:8, R.V.).

It is greatly to be regretted that David’s connection with the gospel has been almost wholly lost sight of in our day; for the facts in that regard are necessary to an understanding of the breadth and fullness of the gospel message. However, it is not a difficult matter for any who are interested to possess themselves of those facts. We have endeavored to set them forth in some detail in a work entitled “Bringing Back the King,” in the section entitled “The Sure Mercies of David.” Hence we will confine ourselves at present to the consideration of only a few prominent points.

The main fact to be grasped is that the special promises of God which He is fulfilling in our day of grace and salvation were given and covenanted to the two men, *Abraham* and *David*. Thus the gospel rests upon these two pedestals; and the promises to David (or concerning David’s Seed) were just as much for all mankind as were the promises to Abraham and his “SEED.” God made His “everlasting covenant” with Abraham (Genesis 17:7), and also with David (2 Samuel 23:5). It was the same covenant; and it was to be established by the death and resurrection of the promised “Seed”; for we read in Hebrews 13:20 of “the blood of the *everlasting covenant*” which was shed by Jesus Christ.

We might concisely summarize the Gospel of God’s grace as that Divine message which brings to sinners of all nations “The blessing of Abraham” and “The sure mercies of David”; and since the “blessing” and the “mercies” are all secured through Jesus Christ, it is evident that Matthew 1:1 is the opening of *this* dispensation.

The “everlasting covenant” which God made with those two men was an *unconditional* covenant, that is to say a covenant of *grace*. Since God alone was bound by it, there could be no failure in it. That covenant had to do with matters which are infinitely great and of everlasting duration, namely, the Family, the Inheritance, the Blessing, (i.e. the Holy Spirit, Galatians 3:14), the Throne, and the House. Of these the first three were embraced in God’s promises to Abraham, and the last two in His promises to David.¹ With these simple facts in mind we will be able to arrive at a clear understanding of the main features of the Davidic prophecies.

All the five great things mentioned above are embraced in the “Salvation of God,” which is now proclaimed by the Gospel to sinners of all nations, in the Name of “Jesus Christ of the Seed of David raised from the dead.” All of them depend absolutely upon the blood of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, apart from which there could have been *no* blessing of *any* sort whether for Jew or Gentile. Apart from the blood of atonement there was nothing for mankind but *condemnation*; for at the time of Christ’s first coming “the entire world” had become “guilty before God.” It is simply an impossibility that an earthly kingdom could have been announced at that time.

God’s gospel is, as we have seen, that “which He had promised afore by His prophets”; and therefore we *must* turn back to the prophets to find out just what the gospel promises were and are. It is a greatly impoverished gospel when the promises concerning David’s Seed are taken from it, are characterized as “Jewish,” and “postponed” to another dispensation and to another people than the redeemed of this age. And that is *exactly what is being done under our very eyes*. Let us therefore awake out of sleep, and realize what is going on.

1 See “*Our Liberty in Christ: A Study in Galatians*” by Philip Mauro; chapter on “*The Everlasting Covenant*.”

Paul puts the matter very clearly also in his words recorded in Acts 13:22, 23, where, speaking in a Jewish synagogue concerning the people of Israel, he recalled that God, after removing Saul from the throne, had “raised up unto them David to be their king”; and he said: “Of *this man’s seed* hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.” It was, therefore, a *Saviour* that God had *promised* to Israel through *David’s line*; for it was a Savior that Israel needed as much as other peoples of the world. The restoration of the earthly kingdom would not have met their need; much less would it have met the need of the world. But that was not in view at all. For “when the fullness of the time was come” and “God sent forth His Son” it was *‘to redeem them that were under the law’* (Galatians 4:4, 5), not to restore their earthly greatness. And likewise, when Christ Jesus proclaimed with His own lips, “The time is fulfilled, Repent ye and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15), it was of “the Kingdom of God” He was speaking, and not of the earthly kingdom, “the time” whereof the Father had kept in His own power, and concerning which no announcement has been nor can yet be made (Acts 1:6, 7).

In the discourse of Paul from which we have just quoted he showed that the “Saviour” Whom God had raised up to Israel from the Seed of David was not for Israel only, but for “*all who believe in Him*”; and this is in exact agreement with the proclamation made by the angel of the Lord to the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night at the time of the Lord’s birth. The angel’s words were “Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to *all people*. For unto you is born this day *in the city of David a Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord.”

It is strange that this proclamation from heaven, which gives the Lord’s full designation “Christ the Lord,” and His birth “in the city of *David*” and the purpose of His coming, as “Saviour” for “*all people*,” has been so completely ignored in the discussion of the matter in hand; for its decisive bearing thereon is evident. Much is made of the fact that the heathen Magi, who saw the star in the East, came with the query: “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:2). That question of the Magi is often referred to as if it proved that Christ had come in connection with the earthly kingdom. It ought not to be necessary to say that the question asked by those Magi proves nothing of the sort. Coming from the East where the memory of Daniel’s and Ezekiel’s prophecies was doubtless preserved, and possibly Balaam’s also (Numbers 24:17), they probably had received light in regard thereto. Moreover, the Lord *was* and *is* “the King of the Jews”; so that the question of the Magi was an intelligent one. It does not indicate at all that they were expecting the national emancipation of the Jews; for that would have had no special interest for them. The more reasonable explanation of their interest in the birth of Christ, and of the trouble they took to pay homage and “offer gifts” to Him (Psalm 72:10), was that it had been in some way revealed to them that the One who was born “King of the Jews” was to bring blessing also to the *Gentiles*. Therefore the coming of the Magi “to worship” Christ indicates an event of far greater importance than the birth of an heir to the throne of David. It is recorded that the Magi were “warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod,” from which it appears that they were being divinely guided in their mission. It is clear, therefore, that the bearing of this incident is not at all what the advocates of the postponement theory make of it.

But the message of the angel to the shepherds at Bethlehem was an authoritative announcement *direct from heaven*, given in plain words that leave nothing to conjecture. It tells *the precise purpose* for which Christ had been born; and its terms shut out all possibility that the earthly kingdom was then in view. Indeed the purpose for which God sent forth His Son has been repeatedly declared in messages straight from heaven, through angels and men, as Zacharias and Simeon, and later by the inspired apostles, as well as by the Lord Himself. In not one of these declarations concerning the object of His coming is there the slightest hint of the earthly kingdom; but on the contrary they one and all reveal purposes utterly inconsistent with it. Nevertheless, in the interest of the postponement theory, all these clear declarations are swept aside, while other passages of Scripture are forced and wrested in order to make them yield to it a semblance of support.

It is a significant fact that while the message brought by the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, who was to be the father of the Lord’s forerunner, was the first communication from heaven to earth after the

stream of prophecy had ended in Malachi, the first human lips that were opened to prophesy the beginning of the new and long awaited era of blessing were those of the women Elizabeth and Mary (Luke 1:41–55). The words uttered by the latter tell clearly that the new era was to be — not that of the earthly kingdom referred to in some of the later prophecies, but the “mercy” promised to the fathers, “to *Abraham* and *his Seed* forever” (verse 55).

8

THE KINGDOM PROMISED TO DAVID (CONTINUED)

We may briefly summarize the various predictions concerning the Seed of David by saying that what God promised to give through David's line was not merely an earthly King for the Jews, but a Savior for all men.

Matthew records in his first chapter that He Who was born of the virgin of David's line was a *Savior*, and was named "Jehovah Saviour" before His birth (Matthew 1:21). Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied of the Coming One as being a Savior, saying that God had raised up an *horn of Salvation* in the house of His servant David; and further said that this raising up a *Savior* in the house of David was in fulfillment of what God had spoken "by the mouth of His holy prophets ... since the world began" (Luke 1:68–70). Thus we learn (and many other Scriptures declare the same fact) that what was required for the fulfillment of that which all the prophets foretold was the coming in the house of David — not of an earthly king, but of — a Savior.

Zacharias further prophesied concerning the ministry of John the Baptist that he was to go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways — not to give notice of an earthly kingdom but — "to give knowledge of *salvation* unto His people by *the remission of their sins*" (Luke 1:77).

The angel of the Lord, in announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds on Bethlehem's plain, spake not a word of His having come to reign over Israel, but proclaimed good tidings of great joy for *all people*; saying; "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a *Saviour* which is Christ, the Lord" (Luke 2:10, 11). Here again, in a message brought straight from heaven, the promised One of David's line is announced as a Savior for all men, not a King for the Jews.

Simeon also, being filled with the Holy Ghost, and led by the Holy Ghost to the temple, took the infant Son of David from His virgin mother's arms and spake of Him as God's "Salvation" which He had "prepared before the face of *all people*", and as "a Light to lighten *the Gentiles*" (Luke 2:30–32). Thus the inspired message through men and angels all testify clearly that the One Who had come of David's line was the Savior and Light of the world.

In due time "the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness," and he preached to all the people of Israel. His message was in perfect accord with the word of all the prophets; for he announced the coming of a Savior Who should give His life for all men — "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the *world*" — and declared that "*all flesh*" (Jew and Gentile) should "see the Salvation of God" (John 1:29; Luke 3:6).

We have also the testimony of the Lord Himself, the true and faithful Witness, declaring that He came "not to be ministered unto" (that is to be served as kings are served) "but to *minister*, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). We have this same testimony from His own lips in many other passages (as Luke 4: 18–21). And we have also the "good confession" which He wit-

nessed before Pontius Pilate when falsely accused before him of attempting to set up an earthly throne, saying: “My Kingdom is *not of this world*” (John 18:36; cf. Luke 4:5).

The apostles likewise, after the death and resurrection of Christ and their baptism with the Holy Ghost as promised by John the Baptist, proclaimed the same tidings of a Savior for all men, Who had been raised up in the house of David. Thus Peter preached concerning David that he “being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would *raise up Christ to sit on His throne*; he (David) *seeing this before* spake of the *resurrection of Christ*”; and Peter continues the explanation of the prophecies concerning Christ, making it clear that the throne which He was to occupy in resurrection, according to God’s oath to David, was the throne of God in heaven (Acts 2:29–36). And again Peter preached concerning Christ, saying: “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

Paul also connects God’s salvation for all men with David, saying, “Of this man’s seed hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a *Saviour*” (Acts 13:22, 23). And in his epistle to the Romans, the same apostle unfolds “the gospel of God; which He had *promised afore by His prophets* in the Holy Scriptures,” telling us that the promised gospel of God was “concerning His Son, which was made of the *seed of David*, according to the flesh” (Romans 1:1–3). And the last words of this great preacher and apostle of the Gentiles in regard to the gospel proclaimed by himself, is a stirring exhortation to “Remember Jesus Christ of the *seed of David*, raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Timothy 2:8, R.V.).

Thus we have the concurrent testimony of prophets, angels, Spirit-filled men (Zacharias and Simeon), the Lord’s forerunner who also was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb (Luke 1:15), of the Lord Jesus Himself, and of the inspired apostles, all declaring with one voice that God’s promise and purpose from of old, was to raise up *of the seed of David* One Who should save His people by the sacrifice of Himself, and should be straightway exalted to the heavenly throne of a heavenly kingdom. The whole voice of Scripture, both in the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, the Gospels, the preaching of the apostles in the book of Acts, and their teaching in the Epistles, tells the same clear story of the steadfast purpose of God. In the light of these Scriptures, and of many others of like nature, it is as clear as that divine light can make it, that the Kingdom, promised afore by the prophets to the Son of David, was and is that spiritual and heavenly Kingdom which He first announced and then introduced by His death and resurrection, by sending down the Holy Ghost after He had been exalted to the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and by sending forth the gospel into all the world.

In the “Reference Bible” whose teachings we are examining the following is from a note on Matthew 3:2:

“The phrase ‘Kingdom of heaven’ signifies the Messianic *earth* rule of Jesus Christ, the Son of David.” “It is the Kingdom covenanted to David’s seed, described in the prophets.”

This comment makes the kingdom “described in the prophets” to be simply and solely “the *earth rule*” of Christ, “the Son of David.” And then, in another note on the same chapter it is stated that “The Kingdom of heaven” has three aspects in Matthew, of which the second aspect (b) is “in seven ‘mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven’ to be fulfilled during the present age,” etc.

It is thus admitted that the parables of the Kingdom of heaven, including those of Matthew 13, are being “fulfilled during the present age.” This could hardly be denied, seeing that the Lord, in those parables, was telling His disciples what the Kingdom of heaven was “like,” and seeing that the “likeness” of this present dispensation to those parables, or some of them at least — especially the Tares of the Field and the Wedding Supper — is almost too plain to be disputed. We have then an admission from the editor that “the Kingdom of heaven” *does exist* in the world *throughout this present age*, and that the parables tell us what *that Kingdom is* “like.” (There are some nevertheless who “postpone”

also these parables to the period of the great tribulation; for the postponement theory is an error which has assumed various forms.)

On the other hand no one in his senses would assert or could maintain for a minute that the earthly kingdom, once possessed by Israel and which is to be restored to that people again, has the *faintest shadow or semblance of an existence during this dispensation*. Here then is proof positive, and proof which is established by the editor's own admission, that the earthly kingdom — once possessed by Israel and again to be restored to them — is *not the Kingdom of heaven* announced by the Lord as at hand, but is something distinct and different therefrom. One exists "during the present age," as the editor admits, and *its* likeness was foretold by the Lord in His parables. The other is *absolutely nonexistent* at the present time.

The case is very strong; and to realize this we have only to remember that in the days of Christ the Jews were occupying their own land and enjoying a sort of national existence and a measure of independence. Yet at that time "the Kingdom of heaven" (whatever it was) had *not yet come*. Neither was the earthly kingdom then in existence; nor has *it* come, up to the present time. But "the Kingdom of heaven" *did* come immediately, even as Christ said it would come; and it took *precisely the form* and "*likeness*" predicted by the Lord in His parables. This the editor finds it necessary to admit. But how about the national existence of Israel, which the editor says is "the Kingdom of heaven?" What happened to that? So far from anything coming to pass in the nature of an earthly kingdom as expected by the Jews, what actually happened was the complete destruction of their city, temple, and nation and the scattering of the people throughout the world, even to this very day. In a word, *every vestige of their national existence was blotted out*.

It is clear, therefore, that the "Kingdom of heaven," which formed the subject of the Lord's preaching and teaching, and the *earthly* kingdom for which the Jews were and still are looking are not one and the same, but are distinct and utterly different the one from the other.

Turning now to the principal prophecies connected with David we shall find that, while some of them undoubtedly describe millennial conditions on the earth, it is difficult if not impossible to find one which corresponds with the expectations entertained by carnal minded Jews then or now. We are limiting ourselves at present to prophecies *directly connected with David*. These when examined are found to be either prophecies concerning the *gospel* (and hence fulfilled during this present era), or else promises of millennial blessing, in which *all* the nations of the earth will share. (Isaiah 7–12). Briefly, we shall find that while the prophets did not describe "the Kingdom of God" by name, they did describe the main features of this era of worldwide blessing to which the name "Kingdom of God" is given in the New Testament.

We may appropriately begin with the great prophecy found in Isaiah Chapters 7–12. The words "and there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" definitely connect this prophecy with the House of David. (See also Isaiah 7:13, 14). We give it the first place in our examination because it is the *first prophecy quoted in the New Testament*. It is therefore a very significant Scripture, both as determining the nature of the era which began when Christ was born of a virgin of the house and lineage of David; and also as fixing the character of Matthew's Gospel. For in the first chapter of Matthew we have the angel's message concerning the Virgin Mary, in which he said:

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name *Jesus*: for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold *the* virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is *God with us*." (*There are some nevertheless who "postpone" also these parables to the period of the great tribulation; for the postponement theory is an error which has assumed various forms.*)

We have here the first statement in the order of the New Testament Scriptures of the purpose for which the Lord the Son of David was coming into the world. It tells of One about to be born in *David's line* Who should “*save His people from their sins*” — in other words of the birth of a *Savior*, Moreover, and this is the point we wish to emphasize, it plainly declares that the birth of the One Who was to save His people from their sins was the *fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14*. Hence there is no room for any uncertainty as to the meaning of that prophecy. It foretold an era of *salvation for sinners*, not of earthly greatness for Israel.

It foretold the coming of the Lord for the express purpose of doing a work whereby His people were to be saved from their sins. It is therefore a prophecy of the cross, not of the earthly throne. This is what we find at the *very beginning* of Matthew's Gospel (which is commonly disparaged as “Jewish”), and in connection with *the House of David*.

With this clear light it is easy to see many details in Isaiah's prophecy — especially in chapters 11 and 12 — which are fulfilled in this present dispensation. Verse 10 of chapter 11 is especially significant:

“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it (or to Him) *shall the Gentiles seek*; and *His rest shall be glory*” (margin).

Here is a distinct promise of salvation for “Gentiles” through this “Root of Jesse.” And not only so, but this very verse is quoted by Paul in Romans 15:12, who thus definitely links his gospel with that announced in the first chapter of Matthew. The way the verse is quoted by Paul, and the meaning thereby assigned to it by the Holy Spirit, is remarkable and illuminating. This is the quotation:

“And again Esaias saith, There shall be a Root of Jesse, and He *that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles*; in Him shall *the Gentiles* trust.”

Here is a Kingdom promise indeed. It tells of One Who should “rise to reign.” But the Kingdom here foretold is the very opposite of the earthly Jewish Kingdom; for the passage, as thus divinely interpreted, had reference to One Who was to “reign over *the Gentiles*” and in Whom the *Gentiles* should trust (or have hope).

This portion of Isaiah is again quoted by Matthew at Chapter 4:14–16, the quotation being from Isaiah 9:1, 2. There we find the foretelling of Christ's ministry, which was to begin in “*Galilee of the Gentiles*” (a very significant statement); and also of the *nature* of His ministry, which was to be the giving of *light* (and by implication *life* also) to them that “sat in *darkness*” and in “the region and shadow of *death*” These are words of gospel significance, which are so well understood that we need not dwell upon them. It surely goes a long way toward settling the disputed question of the character of Matthew's Gospel, that the prophecies cited at the very beginning of that Gospel, and declared to have been “fulfilled” — the one at the *birth* of Christ and the other at the commencement of His *ministry* — have nothing whatever to do with the earthly kingdom and everything to do with *salvation for the whole world*.

But we have also, in the passage last quoted (Matthew 4:14–16), a bit of evidence of the most definite and conclusive character as to the precise nature of the “Kingdom” which the Lord was then announcing as “at hand.” For in what way and in what sense did the Lord “fulfill” the promise of bringing light and life to “*Galilee of the Gentiles*”? Verse 17 tells us plainly that He fulfilled it by proclaiming the message: “Repent ye, for the *Kingdom of heaven* is at hand.” That message therefore had no reference at all to the earthly kingdom; for the Holy Spirit here testifies that it announced the era of promised blessing to the *Gentiles*. Thus it clearly appears that the prophecy of light to the *Gentiles* is fulfilled in the Kingdom of heaven.

Psalm 2

Another surpassingly important prophecy connected with David is the Second Psalm (a Psalm of David). This great prophecy is distinguished by the fact that it speaks of God's *Christ* ("My Anointed"), of God's *Son*, and of God's *King*. It would require a volume to point out in detail the bearings of this Psalm. But for present purposes we need not dwell long upon it. To begin with, the earthly kingdom is conspicuous only by its *absence*. The first part (the opposition of earth's rulers and peoples) was fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 4:25–28). The words "Thou art My Son" were spoken by the Father at the Lord's baptism, where His death and resurrection were figured, and where He received the anointing of the Holy Spirit for His ministry. Moreover, Paul explains that God fulfilled His promise to the fathers, "*in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the Second Psalm, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.*" This shows that the Second Psalm was a prophecy to be fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, we have in the last verse of the Psalm the unmistakable gospel promise: "*Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him*"

Psalm 72

This is the prayer of David the son of Jesse. It contains distinct promises concerning the Kingdom of David's promised Son. But it is impossible not to see that the scope of the prophecy is vastly greater than the earthly kingdom. In fact it does not fit that kingdom at all. In verse 6 is an evident reference to His first coming, introducing the "rain" of the Holy Spirit and the "showers" of blessing. The references to "righteousness and peace" in this part of the Psalm point to the Kingdom of God as it *now is* (Romans 14:17). The words "And men shall be blessed in Him; *all nations shall call Him blessed*" (verse 17), point also to this present era, during which the gospel is being preached to all nations in obedience to Matthew 28:19; while verses 8–11 declaring the extent of His dominion "to the ends of the earth," indicate the universal Kingdom of glory that is yet to come. It is hard to see any promise of earthly dominion for the nation Israel in the entire Psalm.

Psalm 89

This Psalm is specially pertinent in that it records the Lord's covenant and oath to David in these words:

"I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant; Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations: Selah" (verses 3, 41).

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His Seed shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before Me" (verses 34–36).

The Psalm is written to celebrate "the *Mercies* of the Lord;" and its scope cannot be fully appreciated without a comprehension of what is meant by "the sure mercies of David," a subject too large to be entered upon now. It must suffice at this point to say that "the sure mercies of David" embrace the blessings of the gospel, and chiefly the forgiveness of sins.¹ But it is clear enough upon merely reading the Psalm that its subject is not the narrow one of the Jewish kingdom. Christ's "throne," which is prominently mentioned in it, is manifestly a throne of vastly greater dignity and glory than that of David or Solomon.

Moreover, we find in this prophetic Psalm references to various subjects not in any way connected with the earthly nation. It is promised that the heavens shall praise the wonders of the Lord (verse 5), suggesting the exaltation of the crucified and risen One to the highest heavens. The reference to

1 See "Bringing Back the King," chapter on "The Sure Mercies of David."

“the congregation of the saints” (verse 5), and the statement “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of saints,” have an obvious application to this present age. It is, moreover, impossible to mistake the significance of these words:

“Mercy and truth shall go before Thy face. Blessed is the people that know the *joyful sound*; they shall walk, O Lord, *in the light of Thy countenance*. In Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted” (verses 14–16).

Finally, verses 38–45 contain suggestions of the cutting off of David’s line in the death of Christ. Verse 45 is very clear: “The days of His youth hast Thou shortened: Thou hast covered Him with shame, Selah.” Then there are in verse 48 questions which are very significant in connection with the resurrection of Christ: “What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall He deliver His soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.”

This and other Scriptures, written of Christ as *Son of David*, indicate a fact which is made very clear in the gospel preaching of both Peter and Paul, namely, that God’s promises concerning the Son of David were to be fulfilled *in resurrection*. And this is the very essence of Paul’s gospel, as appears by those remarkable words: “Remember Jesus Christ of the Seed of David raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Timothy 2:8, R.V.).

The Prophecies of Jeremiah

The prophecies of Jeremiah are specially significant because spoken at the time when judgment was about to fall upon the people of Judah, and upon the occupants of the throne of David. We shall not attempt anything like an exposition of the many prophetic utterances from the lips of Jeremiah that have a bearing upon our subject. But we can, in a few words, call attention to certain things which fully bear out what we are seeking to show in this chapter.

In Jeremiah 23:5–8, we read:

“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will *raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper*, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

This is doubtless one of the prophecies referred to by Peter in Acts 3:24; and we can see at a glance that the language strikingly corresponds with Peter’s words in Acts 2:30, and Paul’s in Acts 13:23, 33. The prophecy is a very comprehensive one and reaches forward to the gathering together of the children of Israel out of all the countries into which God has driven them, so that they shall dwell “in their own land” (verse 8). Here we have a brief outline of “these days” of the Gospel, beginning with the coming of the “righteous Branch” of the house of David, “Jesus Christ the Righteous,” and ending with the gathering of the scattered Israelites, which is even now in progress. Manifestly this prophecy excludes the idea of the earthly kingdom during “the days” spoken of. It demands that the Righteous Branch of David should be a *King* and should *reign* and *prosper*, and should execute judgment and justice in the earth, *before* the gathering back again of the scattered people. In other words, it demands *just what is fulfilled in the present Kingdom of heaven*. The period to which the fulfillment of this prophecy belongs is definitely fixed by the title “*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*,” for it is during this present era of grace that the Lord is specially revealed as the righteousness of His people. (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; etc.)

The significance of this prophecy is intensified by that recorded in Chapter 33:15–26, beginning with the words:

“In those days and at that time will I cause the Branch of righteousness to *grow up* unto David; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land (or earth).”

These words point clearly to the *incarnation* of the Lord and to what was to follow. The “days” of which the prophet is here speaking were the days of “the new covenant” under which sins were to be

forgiven and the laws of God were to be written in the *hearts* of His people. (Jeremiah 31:31–34.) The period to which the fulfillment of this prophecy belongs is fixed in the most definite way by the words of the Lord in instituting His Supper, when He gave the cup to His disciples and said: “This is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). The whole of Chapters 31, 32, 33 of Jeremiah should be attentively read.

Coming now to the portion to which we are specially calling attention, we find in verses 17 and 18 (Chapter 33) these promises:

“For thus saith the Lord, David shall never *want a man*” (or literally there shall not be *cut off* from David a man, see margin) “to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites *want a man before Me* to offer burnt offerings and to kindle meat offerings and to do sacrifice continually,”

Obviously these wonderful promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, *raised from the dead and glorified in heaven* as a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, who was a *king* as well as a priest (Hebrews 7:1, 2). After the Christ was “cut off” as foretold by Isaiah (53:8) and Daniel (9:26), there was no man *on earth* to sit on David’s throne; and after the destruction of Jerusalem (also foretold by Daniel 9:26) there were no *priests on earth* to offer the appointed sacrifices to God. But there is now and has been since the ascension of Christ, a Man *in heaven* to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel when the time comes. Moreover, God has also a Man *before Him*, as He said, to offer sacrifices continually (Hebrews 8:3; 13:15).

It is easy, therefore, for us to see, in the light of the New Testament that Jeremiah’s prophecy demanded that Christ should be born while the house of David *still had a known existence in the world* and still had one who was entitled to sit upon his throne; and it demanded also the resurrection of Christ and His exaltation to heaven as both *King* and *Priest* until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. In other words, it demanded the very things which happened from and after the incarnation of Christ. So we have again a prophecy very definitely connected with David, and very definitely fulfilled in this gospel era; a prophecy which excluded the possibility of the earthly kingdom being announced at the Lord’s first coming.

The Prophecy of Zechariah

Finally, we refer to the remarkable and very precious prophecy concerning Christ (Zechariah 13:1–7), in which is found the oft quoted reference to the wounds in His hands with which He was wounded in the house of His friends (verse 6). The chapter begins thus:

“In that day there shall be a fountain opened *to the house of David* for sin and for separation for uncleanness” (margin).

Verse 7 indicates how the fountain was to be opened. For there we have the words: “Awake, O sword, against *My Shepherd*, and against the Man that is My Fellow. Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” No doubt can exist as to the fulfillment of this prophecy, for the Lord Himself has applied it (Matthew 26:31; see also verse 54).

To get the full significance of this prophecy — one of the clearest of all the glorious gospel prophecies — we must go back to the word of the Lord spoke to David by the prophet Nathan, whom God sent to bring home to David’s conscience his awful sin in slaying his faithful servant Uriah, in order that he might take his wife. At that time Nathan said: “Now therefore the *sword shall never depart from thine house*.” This must be kept in mind if we would understand David’s connection with the gospel of God’s grace. For we have two seemingly contradictory promises concerning David: *first* that God would build him a sure house and would “never” take away His mercies from him, and that he should “never” want a man to sit upon his throne; and *second* that the sword should “never” depart from his house. The latter promise was fulfilled when the sword of judgment was sheathed in the

bosom of the Son of David; for by that stroke the house of David was “cut off,” and cut off forever as an earthly thing. But the same stroke opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, wherein, by God’s amazing grace, sinners of *all nations* may be cleansed from their sins. The other promises of this passage are, as we have already seen, fulfilled by Jesus Christ in resurrection. It is evident that Simeon’s inspired words to Mary had reference to “the sword” which was hanging over the house of David; for we remember that, after speaking of Christ as the “Light” that had come “to lighten *the Gentiles*” and to be the “glory of His people Israel,” Simeon said to her: “Yea, *a sword* shall pierce through thine own soul also” (Luke 2:35). This word spoken shortly after the birth of Christ is quite sufficient without any other Scriptures, to prove that the earthly kingdom was not at all in prospect at that time. But the proof is greatly strengthened by the fact that what Simeon’s words indicated is just what was foretold by prophecies concerning the promised Son of David.

The concluding portion of Zechariah’s prophecy foretells also the cutting off of the greater part (two thirds) of the inhabitants of the land, which occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 70; and the salvation of the remnant, of whom God said: “They shall *call upon My Name*, and I will hear them: and I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God” (Zechariah 13:3, 9).

This is fulfilled in those who were saved through the Gospel. (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13; 1 Peter 2:9, 10.)

The promise of this prophecy of Zechariah is very “Jewish,” being seemingly limited to “the House of David;” and indeed some would thus limit many prophecies, and “postpone” them to another age. But the “mystery of the gospel” is this, that whereas all “the covenants and the promises” do indeed pertain to the Israelites (Romans 9:4, 5), God has, in His grace, made believing *Gentiles* to be “fellow-heirs and partakers of His promise in Christ by (means of) the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6). And especially does the gospel offer to the entire world the unspeakable blessings of the “everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David” (Isaiah 55:3).

We have by no means exhausted the prophecies relating to David; but surely enough has been said to show that, in that important class of prophecies, the foreground is fully occupied by precious promises which have now been translated into God’s gospel message to sinners; and that the earthly kingdom occupies therein but a minor place in the remote background. Such being the actual character of the Davidic prophecies, the first verse of Matthew — “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the *Son of David*, the Son of Abraham” — marks that Gospel as pertaining in a special way to *this present era of grace to all mankind*.

9

THE KINGDOM IN OUTLINE

We believe it will be useful at this point to give an outline of that Kingdom foretold by the prophets, announced by the Lord Jesus and His forerunner and brought down from heaven by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

The “Kingdom of God” is a name divinely given to that realm over which Christ reigns and in which the law of Christ is obeyed in the power of the Holy Ghost. For Christ Himself, the Kingdom of God means *Lordship*. For His people it means *obedience to His law* and the *enjoyment of the benefits* secured by His death on the cross, by His living presence on the throne of God in heaven, and by the Holy Spirit’s power on earth. For a clear understanding of this subject it is necessary to lay hold of the fact that the name “Kingdom of God” (or “Kingdom of Heaven”) was *never applied to anything* before the Lord came into the world. Those titles occur nearly 150 times in the New Testament and not in the Old at all.

When the fullness of the time was come God sent forth His Son to do a work that should bring about a new order of things in heaven and on earth. In heaven a Man was to be glorified and invested with royal honors — “crowned” and seated on the throne of God. On earth the gospel of God’s grace was to be proclaimed in the Name of that Risen and glorified Man throughout the whole world “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

It will require much help from above, together with the best attention we can give to the subject, if we are to realize even a little of the marvelous change in the condition of things both in heaven and on earth resulting from the *going up* of a risen *Man* from earth to heaven, and the *coining down* of the *Spirit of God* from heaven to earth. Let us seek, however, to get the clearest possible vision of this new order of things to which has been given the name “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven.”

The new order, characterized by a glorified Man in heaven and by God’s own presence in the Person of the Holy Spirit on earth, was to continue throughout this present age. For Christ is to sit at the right hand of God until His enemies shall be placed as a footstool for His feet (Psalm 110:1, 2; Acts 3:21, etc.); and the Holy Spirit is to abide with the people of God through the entire age (John 14:16, 17).

It need hardly be said that a dispensation introduced by and based directly upon the sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven of God’s beloved and only begotten Son, and by the coming down and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, must be marked by characteristics of a marvelous sort, distinguishing it from all preceding dispensations. And as it is a dispensation *wholly new in kind*, we should expect that a new name would be given to it. Such indeed is the case. God has called it a “Kingdom,” adding the descriptive words “of God” and “of Heaven;” and later (after Christ was risen) “of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:13).

This Kingdom was the subject of much prophecy; but the prophets did not give to it the name “Kingdom of God,” or the other like names. These are found only in the New Testament.

Many of the prophecies which foretold the coming of this age of blessing are in some particulars quite indistinct. In fact, we are told in 1 Peter 1:10–12 that the prophets themselves were in uncertainty as to “*what* the Spirit of Christ Who was in them did signify,” and also as to “*what manner of time*” was signified.

But this uncertainty and obscurity are removed by the explanations given in the New Testament. Let us refer, as a simple illustration of this, to Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the coming “Servant” of God, Whom he described as One Whom man despiseth and Whom the nation (Israel) abhorreth, etc., and in which prophecy he also spoke of “an acceptable time” and “a day of salvation” (Isaiah 49:7, 8). The meaning of this would be difficult or impossible to determine if there were no inspired application of it; but the Apostle Paul quotes the passage and says that “*Now* is the accepted time ... *now* is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2), thus making it quite plain that the prophecy related to this era of God’s free grace to sinners of all nations. This makes clear also what Peter meant by saying that the prophets “*prophesied of the grace that should come unto you*”

Let us refer also to the following passage in the prophecy of Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1, 2).

This passage too would be very difficult, if not impossible, to understand; but the Lord Himself explained it at the very beginning of His ministry, saying: “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:16–21). Thus we know that the passage, so far as the Lord quoted it, referred to the Kingdom of God which He was then preaching as “at hand.” The Lord thus took pains from the very beginning to show that His mission had nothing to do with the earthly aspirations of the Jews, but was altogether with reference to the salvation of sinners.

There are many other prophetic Scriptures which are quoted in the New Testament as being fulfilled by events which took place while the Lord was on earth, or by events which took place in consequence of His death and resurrection. The Gospel by Matthew records many of those events. It contains the words “that it might be fulfilled” about twelve times. The writings of Paul also are rich in references to the prophets, and in passages which tell how their prophecies were fulfilled. These quotations and explanations are of great value in that they not only interpret and apply many specific prophecies, but they also afford the means of interpreting other passages, and of determining whether they apply to this present age, or to an age yet future.

There are, as we are well aware, prophecies which foretell the restoration of the earthly people Israel to their own land, and their advancement to the place of supremacy over all the nations of the world. It is not, however, at all difficult to place this class of prophecies now that we have the light of the New Testament thereon. In that light it is quite clear that the era of Israel’s national greatness belongs to the millennial age, which is to follow this age of grace and salvation during which all men — Jews and Gentiles — are on a plane of equality before God. Jerusalem was, by our Lord’s own word, to be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled (Luke 21:24).

Very naturally this class of prophecies — those pertaining to Israel’s national greatness — was that in which the Jews have always taken the keenest interest. Indeed, it is not to be expected that any Israelites, except such as were specially enlightened by the Spirit of God, would have looked for anything else in connection with the coming of Christ. But it is now abundantly clear from the Word of God, and indeed from history itself, that the Lord’s first coming had no relation at all to the earthly expectations of *the Jews*, but was for the introduction of the age of “blessing” to *the Gentiles*, together

with believing Jews, according to God's covenant with Abraham, which, as we now see, was the great theme of "all the prophets" (Acts 3:24, 25; 10:43, etc.). In other words the first coming of Christ had to do altogether with the Kingdom of God, and not at all with the kingdom of Israel (See Acts 1:3 and 7).

But care and discrimination are needed in studying prophecies which speak of "Israel," "Zion" and "Jerusalem," for the reason that those words are used sometimes with a literal or natural meaning, sometimes with a figurative or spiritual meaning. There is an earthly "Israel" (1 Corinthians 10:18) and a heavenly "Israel" (Galatians 4:25 and 26), and so on. Hence it is not always evident at a glance to which order of things, the heavenly or the earthly, a given prophecy applies. Indeed, it seems that, in many (perhaps in most) cases, there is both a present application to the heavenly people of God and also a future to the earthly people. And this is exactly what should be expected seeing there is a designed parallel between the heavenly and the earthly lines of things.

The whole prophetic scheme is to many a mere mass of confusion, and this confusion affects in a special way the subject of the Kingdom. While various causes have contributed to this confusion, it is due mainly to the fact that writers of books dealing with prophetic themes have failed to distinguish between the Kingdom of *heaven* and the kingdom of *earth* promised to the Jews; and because predictions pertaining to the one have been applied by those teachers to the other.

The past century has witnessed a great awakening of interest in prophecy, and during that period many books on prophetic themes have appeared. Prior to that awakening it was quite generally taken for granted that all the prophecies which spoke of a coming time of blessing were to be attributed to "the church," and that they all were fulfilled, or were to be fulfilled, in this present age. But a more careful and intelligent reading of the prophecies made it plain that many predictions concerning Israel, the land of Palestine, the city of Jerusalem, etc., are to be taken literally and would be literally fulfilled. Hence one and another prophecy which had previously been attributed to the church was, by the most careful students of Scripture, transferred to the earthly people of Israel, and was assigned, as to the period of its fulfillment, to the coming Millennial age. But, as often happens in such cases, the movement went to extremes. Just as previously there had *been* too much taking away of the promises from Israel, and giving them all to the church, so now the current turned strongly in the other direction, resulting in a general and wholesale giving of all prophecies to the earthly Israel and taking them away from the church.

In this shift of opinion as to prophetic matters, the truth concerning the Kingdom has become greatly confused. The fact that Jesus Christ was, upon His ascension into heaven, invested with royal honors, was crowned and enthroned at the right hand of God, was clothed with authority in heaven and on earth, has been practically lost sight of; and the significance of these stupendous events, as affecting the great subject of the Kingdom, has been missed by many of those who are most advanced in the truth. That Jesus, the Christ of God and Son of God, is God's *King*, is perfectly plain from the Second Psalm and from many other Scriptures. It is perfectly plain also that "the Kingdom of God" is *now in existence*; for the apostles preached it and the New Testament Scriptures mention it again and again. But the mistaken idea that the "Kingdom" meant only and always the earthly dominion of Israel has become so firmly rooted in the minds of many students of prophecy that the meaning of some of the clearest Scriptures has been completely missed. Under the dominating influence of this mistaken idea it has been supposed by many, and indeed has become the leading feature of a current school of prophetic interpretation, that when the Lord announced the advent of the Kingdom of God He was referring to the earthly kingdom; and that in His discourses, some of which are of vital importance to the people of God in this dispensation — the Sermon on the Mount for example — when He spoke of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of heaven, He was speaking of the earthly Kingdom.

The simple facts stated at the beginning of this chapter, and which are easily verified from the Scriptures, will serve to put us in the way to a right understanding of this exceedingly important subject, and will afford much assistance in our efforts to determine the meaning of many of the prophe-

cies. For if we have clearly in mind the marvelous changes which took place in *heaven* and *earth* at the beginning of this era, following a train of events whereof the first was the visit of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and if we have also in mind that the wonderful era of blessing thus introduced, and still by God's mercy in existence, was divinely called by a new name, "The Kingdom of heaven (or of God)", we shall find it a simple matter to understand the relation of all the New Testament Scriptures and of the things recorded in them to the purpose of God which is being accomplished in this dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

10

**“THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT”:
ITS DISPENSATIONAL PLACE**

We come now to the most vital part of our subject, that great and marvelous utterance from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ familiarly known as the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot too earnestly admonish and urge our readers to settle each for himself the vital question whether these commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ are given to the children of God, to be obeyed by them “from the heart” (Romans 6:17), or whether they are for a “Jewish” people of some other dispensation.

Deeply do we feel that there is no greater service to be rendered to “the household of God” in these last days than to free them from the modern error (taught in the “Scofield” Bible) which has the practical effect of robbing them of what is of priceless value to them — “the Rock” on which their life structure is to be built, and on which alone can they build anything that will survive the test of the coming Day.

The matter stands thus: The Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us in the New Testament Scriptures, and on the very first page thereof, as having come into the world to “save His people from their sins;” and the people saved by Him from their sins are brought into the family of God as “children.” It is by the work of Christ alone (1 Peter 3:18), that they enter into that place of highest privilege, where they are under the Father’s *care*, and the Father’s *government*. But the Father has placed the Son over His house, and has given *all* authority to Him. The “children” are to be cared for by Him, and are to obey Him in all things; for He is become “the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9). In the Sermon on the Mount the Son of God declares the Father’s Name (which occurs seventeen times in the three chapters); He reveals the Father’s care for the needs of every one of His children; and He gives the Father’s commandments to them. All this is as plain on the face of the whole discourse as the sun at noon on a cloudless day. There never has been, until very recent times, any other view of it; and how any other view could have found acceptance among the people of God will ever be monumental evidence to the power of the evil one to confuse and darken the plainest truths.

Nevertheless the fact is, and we must needs reckon with it, that among the “divers and strange doctrines” by which the unwary saints of God are being “carried about” in these unsettled times, there has sprung up the idea that the Sermon on the Mount contains not the *Father’s* message and commandments to His own *children* of this dispensation, but the “principles of the Messianic Kingdom,” that is to say, the earthly kingdom promised to the Jewish nation, and which will be set up in the coming Millennial age. We are told that the Sermon on the Mount gives “the divine constitution for the righteous government of *the earth*” and that “whenever the kingdom of heaven is established on earth, it will be according to that constitution” (*Scofield Reference Bible*, note on Matthew 5).

Those who uphold the doctrine we are now refuting do indeed allow that in the Sermon on the Mount there is “a beautiful *moral application* to us” (id.). But such a statement in this case is worse than meaningless; for it can serve only to disguise the fact that the commandments of Christ, which He has given to the children of God in their Father’s Name, are being taken away from them and handed over to some supposed Jewish subjects of a far away “Messianic Kingdom.” The words “beautiful moral application” are too vague and cloudy to serve any useful purpose. What would happen if the people of this, or of any other land, were told that the laws of their country are not for them, but for another domain altogether, although those laws have “a beautiful moral application” to themselves? Would not the effect of such a doctrine be to bring about a reign of lawlessness?

We cannot insist too strongly on the fact that our Lord’s repeated use of the words “Your Father,” fixes the character of the discourse in the clearest way. It is simply impossible for us to be misled in this vital matter if we give heed to the significance of that characteristic expression. We have here, *for the first time in the history of the universe*, God speaking to a company of men to whom He gives the place and name of “children,” and to whom He reveals Himself in the Name and character of “Father.” How much is involved in that single word of holy and intimate relationship, of tenderest love, of unailing care? Is anything further needed to make certain that these words are not for any *earthly* people, but for God’s own children who have been called to a *heavenly* citizenship?

But be it noted also that the Son of God is here speaking to those “disciples” who willingly “came unto Him,” that He is putting *them* into that same relationship with God which *He alone knew*, and is sharing with them that holy Name which *He alone has the right to use*. The editor of the Scofield Bible has the hardihood to say that the Sermon on the Mount is “not grace.” But we ask with honest indignation, what more could God’s amazing grace do for sinners than to give them the place of children in holy intimacy with His only begotten Son?

And how is it that the editor, in his comments upon this infinitely precious portion of Scripture, has *not a word* to say on the expression “your Father,” which is its prominent feature? This can be explained only by the fact that the editor could not, by any possibility, make that expression square with his theory. For we are bold to say that no one can give to that expression its true significance and at the same time hold on to the postponement theory.

We call special attention to the fact that, in the “Scofield Bible,” those features of the Sermon on the Mount which plainly show its real character and application, are passed by in *complete silence*; whereas one or two phrases somewhat difficult to explain are seized upon, an interpretation suitable to the editor’s purpose arbitrarily assigned to them, and the whole theory made to rest upon such arbitrary interpretations. Those interpretations we purpose to examine a little later; but happily the case does not hinge upon the meaning of any doubtful passages; and just now we wish every reader to notice the editor’s eloquent silence as to the prominent features of the Sermon on the Mount, for those are the very features which spiritual commentators of other days, such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon (see Appendix 1), delighted to dwell upon.

The Word of God records for our instruction the two great and wonderful occasions in the history of the world when men heard the Voice of God Himself uttering the commandments which they were to keep. What a marvelous contrast there is between those two occasions! It is highly important that we note the differences, and ascertain the reason therefore.

At Mount Sinai there were terrifying sights and sounds; for the mount was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the whole mount quaked greatly. There were, moreover, blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, which sounded long and waxed louder and louder. But hardest of all for them to bear was that “Voice of words,” the Voice of the Lord which is powerful and full of majesty, which so filled them with terror that they entreated that the Word should not be spoken unto them anymore. As it is written (Exodus 20:18, 19):

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trum-

pet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw, they *removed and stood afar off*. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

How different it was at the other mountain, concerning which it is written (Matthew 5:1):

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples *came unto Him*”!

Why did they come to Him now, and not remove and stand afar off as when the same Lord gave commandments to an earthly people at Mount Sinai? Why did they climb that mountain and listen unterrified to His words? He was not working miracles on the mountain, nor dispensing loaves and fishes; but was giving commandments, even as at the other mountain; yet “His disciples came unto Him” and quietly listened while He brought them into known relations with the Father Who had sent Him for this very ministry.

There is much to be learned from this wonderful contrast; but we can only indicate briefly the leading points; and the most important is that, in these two contrasted scenes, we have the main differences between the two dispensations to which they respectively belong. In one we see man shrinking from the presence and the voice of God, and standing “afar off.” This is “Law.” In the other we have Immanuel, God the Savior, come in the lowly guise of sinful flesh, associating Himself with sinners, in order to bring them into the closest and holiest relations with Himself. This is “Grace.”

Furthermore we see the character of the dispensation of grace in the fact that the disciples’ coming to Him was *voluntary*. It was their own heart that prompted them to ascend that mountain and listen to His Words. The Lord met the needs of “the multitudes” on the low levels of the plain; but those only who were drawn to His own Person up to the mountain top, received of His words. To those who respond to the gospel He gives “rest” from the burden and penalty of sin; and to them He also says: “*Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me*”; but He does not force His yoke upon any, nor *compel* even His own people to learn of Him. It is pure grace.

Here is a test for our hearts. We believe and are sure that the heart of every man who has been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who has received the forgiveness of sins as the gift of His nail-pierced hand, would prompt him *at once* to seek the *words* of His blessed mouth, with the desire and intent to *keep* them. The impulse of his renewed heart would move him to climb that mountain and lay hold of those commandments. We believe and are sure that the normal experience of the quickened sinner is to go straight to the Sermon on the Mount, and to drink in the “doctrine” which drops there as the rain and distils as the *dew*, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. For no *babe* in Christ was ever afraid of the Sermon on the Mount or ever shrank from *that* mountain and entreated that he might not hear *that* Voice any more. Indeed, the “babes” are utterly unable to comprehend the reasoning and the words which man’s wisdom teaches, whereby it is nowadays attempted to stamp a “legal” character upon the Father’s message to His own family. We believe and are sure that the record of the commandments of Christ has been placed by the Spirit of God at the very beginning of the New Testament for the express purpose that the “children” might be brought *immediately* to the knowledge of their Father’s will for them, and might receive it from the lips of the Lord Himself, in order that it might have the strongest claim upon their hearts.

As we meditate upon the great work of grace which has been going on for nineteen centuries with so little outward show, we can see with the mind’s eye the “many children” newly born into the Kingdom of heaven hastening, in response to a heaven sent impulse, up the mountain, away from the distracting sights and sounds of earth, to that quiet place where Christ’s own voice may be heard speaking the words His Father gave Him to speak (John 7:16; 17:8). But a strange thing has come to pass in our days. Heretofore those who were recognized and trusted as leaders among God’s people did all they could to *encourage* the young believers to take Christ’s yoke, and to submit to His commandments, assuring them, in the words of the apostle John, that “His commandments are not griev-

ous.” But now, alas that such a thing should be! there are men of learning and ability, esteemed widely as sound and safe expositors of Scripture, who make it their business to hinder those of the household of faith who would go up the mountain where Christ’s own words are to be heard, and who tell them in the most positive terms that those words are not for God’s children at all, but for some “Jewish disciples” of another era!

In time past the obstacles in the way of one who would press up the mountain in order to be in the presence of his Lord and to receive “the doctrine of Christ” from His own lips, were such as might appeal to the natural heart. The world spread its attractions before the eye, and the flesh raised itself up against the exertion required for the ascent. But now the case is far more serious; for we find men of the strictest orthodoxy who have posted themselves in the way in order to intercept any of the children whom they may find heading for that Mount of the nine times “Blessed” ones; and we hear these teachers saying in the most authoritative tones that the mountain and the words of Him Who there speaks from heaven belong not to this dispensation of grace at all; that it is “*legal ground*”; that the Father’s words are “Jewish,” being the “principles” of a far-off earthly kingdom; and that the early Christians who “grounded themselves” on those words were a “dangerous sect”! What a shame! What a deep dishonor to the throne of God! And what a cruel wrong to unsuspecting babes in Christ, who are thus turned away from the words given to them as “the Rock” whereon to build a life structure that will endure! Brethren, let us pray for those men, that God will indeed give them repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth; and also that Christ’s “little ones”⁷ may be rescued from this new danger. Well did the apostle say that in the last days “perilous times” should come.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as Firstborn over the entire family of God, shares *everything* He has with the beloved children. And among the choicest of those family possessions are the Father’s “commandments.” Speaking of these He said: “I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10); and again, “That the world may know that I *love the Father*, and as the Father gave Me commandment, *even so I do*” (id. 14:31). By these, and by many other Scriptures, we learn that the Kingdom of heaven calls upon those who are in it to keep the commandments of God *willingly*, and through love alone. But, according to this new teaching, the doing of the Father’s commandments is “legality.”¹ If therefore our hearts respond at all to the grace of God manifested to us in bringing us into His household on the footing of children, then we shall not be looking for excuses to justify ourselves in not keeping His commandments, but on the contrary we shall be rather *eager* to keep them; we shall count it a privilege to have them; they will be our joy, our treasure, our chief delight; and the law of His mouth will be better to us than thousands of gold and silver.

There is no need to dwell longer upon this point; for it is sufficient for our purpose to call attention to the fact that, throughout the entire Sermon on the Mount, it is God the “*Father*” Who is speaking to *His own children* through His *Son*. That fact is too plain to be disputed (and indeed I have found none who would dare openly to dispute it during the two years this discussion has now been going on); and when grasped it necessarily settles the question for every unbiased inquirer.

Another fact that is equally conclusive will be mentioned ere we bring this chapter to a close. The Sermon on the Mount is manifestly given to those people of God who find themselves in conditions

1 In the article recently published in “*Our Hope*,” to which reference is made in the next chapter, Mr. Scofield says that anyone who teaches that the Sermon on the Mount is for the children of God is a “Legalizer,” of the same sort as those who taught in apostolic times that the Gentile disciples must be circumcized and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved, and concerning whom the apostle Paul said “let him be accursed,” as the preacher of “another (i.e. a different) gospel.” We have therefore a startling contrast to which close heed should be given, for it presents the issue in a striking way: The Lord says of His commandments in the Sermon on the Mount that “*Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called ‘great’ in the Kingdom of heaven*”; but the editor says the same shall be called a “Legalizer,” and liable to the curse referred to.

which exist in this present dispensation and in none other. An attentive reader of these chapters (Matthew 5, 6, 7) cannot fail to see that the circumstances of those addressed are precisely what God’s children have to face in *this* age; and that it is *simply an impossibility* to fit the discourse into the conditions that will exist on earth during the millennium. Here we have then another decisive fact, a fact which the defenders of the postponement theory are *obliged* to evade, because they cannot explain it consistently.

The Lord tells those to whom this Sermon is given that they are “the light of the world,” and that they are to let their light shine; which is just what the apostles wrote later to the church (Ephesians 5:8; Philippians 2:15; James 1:17; 1. Pet. 2:9). In the millennium the Lord Himself will be the Light of the world, which will be filled with His glory. In the Sermon on the Mount He further says that His people will be persecuted and reviled for His Name’s sake; that they are to submit to evil, to turn the other cheek when smitten; that they are to be reviled and hated and exposed to false prophets. Those conditions prevail during this age of His rejection and absence; but will be wholly abolished during the millennium; for then Christ’s own people, the children of God, will be reigning with Him, and the Jewish nation will be in the place of supremacy on earth.

Furthermore, a large and important section of the Sermon is devoted to the subject of *care and anxiety regarding the necessities of this life* — food and clothing. It is in this present age of the Lord’s absence, and *in none other*, that His people have to undergo trials of faith in regard to these needful things, and find themselves exposed to anxious care for the morrow. It is manifestly impossible to fit the sixth chapter of Matthew into any age but this; and we have yet to see the first attempt to do so. This is preeminently and conspicuously the age in which the god of riches, the mammon of unrighteousness, competes with God Himself for the love and confidence of His people. Indeed, if we had only the words “lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” to enlighten us, we would be able to see clearly that the Sermon on the Mount is not “Jewish,” but for a *heavenly* people.

Finally, the concluding verses of the Sermon on the Mount tell of the storm which, at the end of the age, will test every man’s work of what sort it is, and will also test every man of what sort *he* is. This again is conclusive proof that the discourse applies directly to a people who live before the day of trial, and not to a people who will be on earth in the millennium, when that day will be past.

11

THE CHARACTER OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Our main purpose in the present chapter is to show that the Sermon on the Mount exhibits in every part thereof the character of *grace*.

There is the utmost need of making this clear and plain to the people of God because the new and popular “Bible” whose teachings we are examining declares in the most unqualified way that:

“The Sermon on the Mount is law, *not grace*”; and that “The doctrines of *grace* are to be sought in the Epistles, not in the Gospels” (page 989, Edition of 1909).

Further it is stated in the “Bible” referred to that:

“The Sermon on the Mount in its primary application gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the church” (id., page 1000).

And again that:

“It is evident that the really dangerous sect in Corinth was that which said ‘I am of Christ.’ They rejected the new revelation through Paul of the doctrine of *grace*; grounding themselves probably on the *kingdom teachings of our Lord*” (id., page 1230).

It will be seen that, in the last quotation from the “Scofield Bible,” not only is the teaching of Paul set in contrast with, and made to appear as a superior to, that of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the latter is exhibited as that which lays a foundation — not for a true Christian life and character as the Lord Himself declared, but — for a “really dangerous sect.” Could anything be more subversive of vital truth or fraught with greater possibilities for danger and loss to the household of faith? Is it not therefore the urgent duty of everyone who has a thought for the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ and the welfare of His people to cry out against this novel and destructive teaching, and against the “Bible” which contains it?

For what are the points of the doctrine of Christ contained in the Sermon on the Mount? These are the principal ones: To let our light shine before men for the glory of our Father in heaven; to refrain from the angry thought and word, and from the impure desire and look; to submit to injury; to give, to lend, to love our enemies; to return blessing for cursing, to do good and to pray for those who do us harm; to be like our Father in heaven; to seek not a reputation for piety or almsgiving, like the Pharisees; to give God’s things the first and largest place in our prayers; to forgive without limit all trespasses against ourselves; to lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth; to serve God and not Mammon; to trust our heavenly Father for the needful things of this life, taking no anxious thought for the morrow; to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; to refrain from judging our brethren; and, in a word, to do to others whatsoever we would that men should do to us.

Such is “the doctrine of Christ,” concerning which the apostle John says: “He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the FATHER and the SON” (compare the Lord’s words in John 14:23); and, “If there come any unto you, and bring not THIS DOCTRINE, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (2 John 9, 10). This is the “doctrine” concerning which the editor of the “Scofield Bible” says that they who grounded themselves upon it were “the really dangerous sect” at Corinth; and concerning which he also says in another publication (“Our Hope” December, 1919), “The Sermon on the Mount is law, and that raised to its highest, most deathful and destructive potency.” What terrible words are these! Surely the first nine verses of the Sermon, the “Beatitudes,” are quite enough to refute this false and injurious statement, and to show that the discourse pertains not to the curse of the law but to the free blessings of the gospel.

We ask careful attention now to the grace of God as marvelously displayed in the Sermon on the Mount; and after that we will examine the reasons which the Editor has brought forward in support of his statement that the Sermon on the Mount is “not grace” but “law, and that raised to its highest, most deathful and *destructive* potency” — a thing to be feared and shunned.

First. The quality of purest grace is seen in the Sermon on the Mount in that the Son of God is therein bringing sinful men into the knowledge of the *Father*, and into the conscious enjoyment of the relationship, the privileges and the responsibilities of the children of God. Not only is this grace, but it may be said without fear of contradiction that grace can do no more for sinful men than to bring them into the family of God on the footing of children.

The One Who, in this marvelous utterance, brings those who were by nature aliens and enemies of God into intimate and holy relations with God the Father, is the very One Who had come to offer that sacrifice without which such relationship would have been forever an impossibility; without which there would have been nothing for the best of men but death and judgment and the lake of fire. Hence the whole discourse assumes the work of redemption to have been accomplished. We do not find in it any explanation of the means by which those addressed would be made the children of God; but such explanation is not called for in the address in the form given to it as a part of the *written Word*. *In* that form it is for those who have come to Christ the crucified and risen One in response to the gospel, and who know already the ground of their acceptance with God. We are not told just what explanations on this point the Lord gave in His oral teaching; but we know that “when they were alone He expounded all things to His disciples” (Mark 4:34); and moreover the record of His interview with Nicodemus shows that He was ever ready to explain to the sincere inquirer how a man could by faith in Him be born again when old, could obtain everlasting life, could escape condemnation, and be brought into the Kingdom of God.

Second. The quality of divine grace is also conspicuously exhibited in the Sermon on the Mount in that those who are there addressed are made the children of God *without works or merit on their part*. We have here the greatest possible contrast between God’s dealings with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, and His dealings with the objects of His grace in this dispensation. The position or relationship offered to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai was *expressly conditioned upon their obedience*. The offer was made in these words:

“Now, therefore, *if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.*” And thereupon:

“All the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do” (Exodus 19:5-8).

That covenant was, as we know, flagrantly broken by all the people; and hence it became null and void. It is idle therefore to say that God was under any obligation whatever to “offer” to Israel any “kingdom” at any time. His purpose for that people, as for all men, must, from the breaking of that covenant, be carried out upon the basis of *grace alone*. That His purpose is to restore again the king-

dom to Israel God has plainly declared in various prophecies; but the “times and seasons” thereof He has kept in His own power (Acts 1:7). The first coming of Christ and His ministry on earth had nothing whatever to do with that particular part of the purpose of God. As to that there should be no uncertainty whatever.

But with those to whom the Lord gave His teaching on the Mount *no conditions* were made; and, if we know the most elementary truths concerning God’s dealings with men, we know that this is the great distinguishing difference between law and grace.¹ The Lord Jesus Christ, in His Sermon on the Mount, speaks to “children” of God, with never a word of anything to be done by them to bring them into that relationship, or to maintain them therein. Hence one can fail to see “grace” as distinguished from “law” in this discourse only by closing his eyes to that which is most conspicuously exhibited in it. We know that there is but one way a man can become a child of God, namely by the new birth which is the gift of grace to all who believe in Jesus Christ. We know, too, that, although His own people as a nation “received Him not,” yet some individuals *did* receive Him; and that to “as many as received Him to *them* GAVE He the power (right or privilege) to become the sons (children) of God, even to them that believe on His Name, who were born ... of God” (John 1:11–13). It was to those who “received Him,” and to whom by grace it was *given* to become children of God, that the Father’s instructions (the Sermon on the Mount) were spoken; and hence that utterance became, and is, the abiding Rock foundation upon which the members of God’s great family are, one and all, to build. This is as plain as words can make it. It follows that they who, for whatever motive and by whatever means, seek to deprive the children of God of the Sermon on the Mount, are striking at the foundation upon which their all is to be built. Can anything be more serious?

Third. Grace is further displayed in the Sermon on the Mount in the nature of the motive or inducement offered for the doing of the things commanded therein. For example, our light is to shine in the darkness of this world, not in order that *God* may see our good works and bless us by making us His children, but that *men* may see them and glorify our Father Who is in heaven, and Who has already made us His children. We are “to do and teach” these commandments, not that we may thereby gain entrance into the Kingdom of heaven, but that (having been brought into it by grace) we may be “called great” therein. We are to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, etc., not in order to gain a place in the family of God, but because, having been freely *given* that place of highest privilege, we are to be (in all our behavior) what God has made us. The lesson is precisely that given to the household of God by the apostle Paul in the words: “Be ye, therefore, followers (imitators) of God as beloved *children*; and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us” (Ephesians 5:1, 2).

Grace is seen then in the position of eternal dignity and glory into which the Lord Jesus lifts those to whom this message from God the Father was sent. Grace is further seen in the fact that the position of nearness to God known and enjoyed only by the Son Himself is given to guilty rebels *freely*, without any works on their part. And grace is still further seen in that the commands which the Father here gives to His children afford opportunity to them to gain rich rewards; whereas failure on their part, while it will entail suffering and loss (as all the New Testament teaches), will not involve the forfeiture of their relationship with God.

In view of all this clear truth, what possible reasons can the wit of man devise for setting aside the Sermon on the Mount as “legal,” and as having no proper place or part in the dispensation of grace? Is it because it contains commandments? So the editor seems to contend in an article lately published

1 According to Romans 6:14 and other Scriptures, to be “under law” means to be in the servitude or “dominion” of sin, and hence liable to the penalty of sin; for the law could do nothing with or for the sinner but to consign him to the penalty righteously due him. Hence sin has dominion over those who are “under the law.” But “under grace” a remedy for sin has been provided through Jesus Christ; and they who are under grace *can* and *should* keep the commandments of God “from the heart” (verse 17).

by him in “Our Hope.” But the Epistles of Paul are full of “the commandments of the Lord,” as everyone knows who has read them. And surely we should all be astonished at any one who would dare assert that it is not in keeping with “grace” for the Father to give commandments to His own children. Would it not be a *disgrace* to any *human* father who should fail in that duty? And are we who are by grace alone the children of God to refuse every message from Him which demands obedience, and which puts before us the consequences of disobedience? If so, then there are *no* Scriptures for us, and nothing for us to do in this life but to please ourselves. It is almost unbelievable that anyone would advance such a proposition; yet we have to take notice of the fact that the editor, in the article last referred to, argues that the Sermon on the Mount is not for us because it is “couched in the language of authority, rather than in the language of *kindly counsel*”; and because “nowhere is the phrasing that of *good advice*, but always imperative requirement.” This certainly implies that our Father in heaven is not permitted to speak to *His* children in “the language of authority” (though He bids earthly parents thus to command *their* children and to *enforce* obedience with the rod), but only in the “language of kindly counsel” and in the phrasing of “good advice.” We think it unnecessary, however, to spend further time upon such a proposition.

We come then to the passage by which the editor, both in his “Bible” and in his published articles, seeks to support the statement that “the Sermon on the Mount is law and not grace.” That passage is Matthew 6:12, 14, 15, which reads as follows:

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ... For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Upon this the editor’s note says: “This is legal ground. Cf. Ephesians 4:32, which is grace. Under law forgiveness is conditioned upon a like spirit in us: under grace we are forgiven for Christ’s sake and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven.” And in the article referred to above he says that in the Sermon on the Mount “Every blessing is conditional upon works, not faith.”

We have already amply shown that this last statement is directly contrary to the truth. We have, therefore, only to inquire, is Matthew 6:12–15 “legal ground”? And if so does it follow that the entire Sermon on the Mount belongs to another dispensation?

In regard to these questions we submit as follows, taking them in reverse order:

1. Whatever view may be taken of the words of Matthew 6:12–15, the main question as to the dispensational place of the Sermon on the Mount remains unaffected. For we have shown by the clearest proofs that the message is the Father’s message to His own children. Hence if we find anything “legal” in that message we must conclude that it properly belongs there. For the children to reject their Father’s commandment because it contains a clause which they choose to regard as “legal,” would be a most presumptuous thing,

2. We maintain, however, that the words of the passage in question are not only consistent with God’s grace in making believing sinners His children, but that they tend to emphasize strongly the fact that the Kingdom to which the Sermon on the Mount pertains is that of *grace*. For it is clear that the conspicuous feature of this day of grace is *the forgiveness of sins*, which is preached in the Name of Jesus Christ and on the ground of His atoning sacrifice, to all the world. Hence everyone who enters the Kingdom of God is a *forgiven sinner*. He has been fully and freely pardoned and justified from all things. Therefore, he is required and most properly required — seeing that the character of the Kingdom into which God’s grace has brought him *imperatively demands it* — to forgive others their “debts” or “trespasses” against himself. The passage has nothing whatever to do with the man’s *sins*, which were *all* forgiven when he was made a child of God. It relates to a very different matter, that of debts or trespasses; and it is truly an amazing thing that anyone who considers himself fitted to comment upon the whole Bible should fail to distinguish between things so widely different in their nature as *God’s* forgiveness of the repentant sinner and the *Father’s* forgiveness of the tres-

passes of His own children.²

It is a truth of great practical importance for every child of God to know that if he, who has received by grace the free pardon of all his sins (the least of which would have justly sent him to hell), should refuse to forgive the “trespasses” of others against himself (the greatest of which would be a relatively trifling thing), he will be left now in this present life to the consequences of his own “trespasses” (and does not everyone of us know by experience something of what that means?) with the possibility of future loss besides.

We are bound, moreover, to enter the most serious objection to the statement that “under the law of the kingdom no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven.” Even in the dispensation of law God did not deal with men on that basis. One needs but slight knowledge of Scripture to be aware that God ever and always forgave the penitent sinner upon confession and faith alone. THERE NEVER HAS BEEN, IS NOT NOW, NOR EVER WILL BE, BUT ONE BASIS UPON WHICH GOD FORGIVES THE SINNER; and we are bound to protest that it not only assails the foundation truth of redemption, but does deep dishonor to the Lord Jesus Christ, to say that in the Kingdom announced and introduced by Himself no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven. The very coats of skin, wherewith God in His pardoning mercy covered the nakedness of the first pair of sinners, bore witness to the eternal truth that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

The words of Matthew 6:12 are of immense practical value; for if we use the prayer pattern given by the Lord (not as a *form*, which He plainly forbids, but as a pattern) praying in our closets “after this *manner*,” the clause “as we forgive our debtors” will cause us to search our hearts in His very presence for any unforgiving or resentful thought ere we can seek or expect to enjoy the forgiveness of our own trespasses.

Near the end of our Lord’s ministry — long after the kingdom had been “postponed” according to the editor’s theory — He repeated this lesson, saying:

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:24–26). The editor cannot, consistently with his own teaching, assign these words of the Lord to the category of His “kingdom teachings,” for they were spoken but a few days before His death. Hence the same doctrine found in the Sermon on the Mount cannot, even by the editor’s own theory, mark it as belonging to the dispensation of law. On what then does the theory rest? Clearly it is entirely destitute of support.

To sum up: there is an important difference between the *sinner’s sins* and the *believer’s trespasses*. The sinner, when he comes to Christ, receives the forgiveness of all his sins through the merit of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, and upon the sole condition of “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” The believer’s trespasses, committed after he has been forgiven and accepted as a child of God, are forgiven *through confession* (1 John 1:9), through the intercession of the Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous at God’s right hand (1 John 2:2), and upon the ground of the *same Sacrifice*. The believer, however, cannot count upon this forgiveness of his trespasses, but may expect to suffer the consequences of them, if he refuses or fails to forgive the trespasses of others against himself. It is with this matter that our Lord’s teaching, which we have examined in this chapter, has to do.

2 C. H. Spurgeon, commenting on the words “as we forgive our debtors,” says: “This is a reasonable, nay a blessed requirement, which it is a delight to fulfil.” (See Appendix 1).

12

ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM

The Lord's words found in Matthew 5:20, touching the righteousness required for entrance into the Kingdom, have been found difficult; and for that reason, and also because of the importance of the matter referred to in that verse, we would ask our readers to give it a careful examination. These are the words:

“For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed (or abound above) the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven.”

What makes this passage difficult for some is that the Lord speaks, not of the righteousness required of those who *have been already* brought into the Kingdom, but seemingly of that which is required as a condition of *entering into it*. The passage appears to demand of those who would enter into the Kingdom of heaven, something more than simple faith. But a close examination of it, in the light of other teaching by the Lord on the same subject, will show that it is fully in accord with the entire doctrine of grace, and that it calls for no more and no less than is required of sinful men as the condition of *every* blessing offered by the gospel.

First let us notice that the words of Matthew 5:20 effectually close the door against all who have not the particular “righteousness” referred to; for the Lord emphatically says that “in *no case*” shall any one enter the Kingdom without it. These and other like words or our Lord guard most carefully against an error into which, nevertheless, some of our ablest teachers and commentators have fallen, namely the error of supposing that mere professors, those who merely say “Lord, Lord,” are in the Kingdom of heaven. There is indeed much in the Lord's teaching to warn the multitudes of His *professed* followers and to awaken all such to the fact that a mere profession will not avail to save them from the wrath to come. But His teaching also makes it clear that a mere profession no more avails to bring one into the Kingdom now than to bring him into heaven hereafter. There is no mistaking the meaning of the Lord's clear declaration that:

“Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord” — i.e. one who has a mere profession — “shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). The following is also quite clear:

“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). And again:

“Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God” (John 3:5). And again:

“Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child,

shall in no wise enter therein” (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17).

All the foregoing passages speak definitely to the one point of entrance into the Kingdom; and by taking them all together we shall be able to gain a clear understanding of that important matter. Let it be observed that three of the passages were spoken by the Lord at the beginning of His ministry, and the other two at the end thereof. This shows that there was no change whatever in His teaching as to the Kingdom. On that subject He taught at the end of His ministry precisely the same as at the beginning. Let it also be noted that exactly the same thing is said as to entrance into the Kingdom of *heaven*, and as to entrance into the Kingdom of *God*. This proves (as do many other Scriptures) that both these titles are given to that spiritual Kingdom which the Lord came to announce and to introduce.

In these several passages the requirement for entrance into the Kingdom is variously stated as:

1. a righteousness which abounds above that of the scribes and Pharisees;
2. being born again;
3. being converted and becoming as a little child;
4. receiving the Kingdom as a little child.

The teaching of the New Testament shows that these are the very conditions laid down for the sinner’s entrance into the blessings of the gospel. For, in order to receive the blessings of the gospel, a sinner must receive a divine righteousness; he must be born again; he must be converted and become as a little child — humble and teachable — and he must receive God’s gift as a little child receives what is offered — that is, in simple faith.

It follows that entrance into the gospel state (that is to say into “the household of God”), and entrance into the Kingdom of heaven are *one and the same thing*. And indeed every part of the Sermon on the Mount bears witness to the fact that they to whom that message properly belongs are in both the *family* of God and the *Kingdom* of God.

Returning now to Matthew 5:20 we would point out that the words there recorded cannot be taken to mean that candidates for entrance into the Kingdom must attain *by some works of their own* to a higher degree of righteousness than that of the scribes and Pharisees, since mere human righteousness can go no higher than that which was attained by some of them, as Saul of Tarsus. The *only* righteousness which answers to the Lord’s requirement is *God’s* righteousness; and the *only* way to obtain *that* righteousness is by faith in Jesus Christ. Hence the verse has exactly the same meaning as if the Lord had said that unless ye have “the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9) ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

In Romans 10 is found one of the clearest statements in all the Bible of the conditions which a sinner must fulfill in order to be saved by grace; and in that great gospel passage the stress is laid upon the difference between “the righteousness which is of the law” and “the righteousness which is of faith.” The former is that which the religious Jews (the scribes and Pharisees) “went about to establish,” but which they *did not attain unto*; and “Wherefore? Because they sought it not by *faith*” (Romans 9:30–32). They did not attain unto the righteousness which the law demanded, because they sought it *in the wrong way*; and the best they could attain was “their own righteousness.” We have, therefore, in Romans 9:27–10:10, a clear commentary upon Matthew 5:20; and from it we learn that the righteousness required for entrance into the Kingdom is the righteousness of God which is *given* to all who believe in Jesus Christ and who truly own Him as “Lord,” that is as Sovereign Ruler or King.

Paul’s words in Philippians 3:4–9 also throw clear light upon the passage we are studying. The apostle, speaking of his own life when he was “as touching the law a Pharisee,” says that as regards

“the righteousness which is of the law” he was “blameless.” But he counted *that* righteousness, along with everything else he formerly boasted of, as “loss” and “dung,” in order that he might gain Christ, and be found *in Him*, not, says he, “having *mine own* righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is *through the faith of Christ*, the righteousness which is of God BY FAITH.”

The righteousness which Paul had as an unconverted Jew was doubtless the very best specimen of “the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” that could be produced. But it would not do to qualify him for entrance into the Kingdom of God; which he afterward preached.

We see then that the righteousness of which the Lord spoke in Matthew 5:20 is the righteousness of God, which He bestows as the “gift” of His “grace” (See Romans 3:21–24; 5:17) upon all who are of the faith of Jesus Christ.

But there is a *special* lesson to be learned from the peculiar wording of Matthew 5:20, and from its context, where are found the commandments given to those who are in the Kingdom of heaven. Those commandments are so deep and so spiritual that they embrace not only the region of the outward word and action, but the hidden region of the heart (verses 22–28). The entire passage shows that what God is purposing to have, through His dealings in grace with all the world in this dispensation, is not merely a people who shall passively “believe,” or assent to, the truth of the gospel, not merely a people strictly orthodox in all their views and opinions concerning the Lord, His redeeming work, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the second coming, the eternal punishment of the wicked, etc., all of which truths the demons also believe, and tremble (James 2:19); but a people who will *do* the things which Christ has commanded; a people that shall be “doers of the Word, not hearers only,” deceiving their own selves.

Hence the words used by our Lord in Matthew 5:20 lay stress upon the faith that is active — *doing* the things commanded by God — rather than upon the faith which merely acknowledges that what God says is true. This passive faith, which is mere barren and unfruitful orthodoxy, this faith without works, is dead (James 2:20). God’s righteousness, which is by faith, cannot be separated from *works* of righteousness any more than a river can be separated from its water. “For as the body without the spirit (or breath) is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

In connection with the incident of the rich young ruler who at the critical moment chose to cleave to his riches rather than to follow Christ at the cost of parting with them, the Lord spoke again of entrance into the Kingdom, saying:

“Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of heaven; and again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:23, 24; Mark 10:23–25; Luke 18:24, 25).

This incident occurred near the end of the Lord’s ministry, and His words in connection with it show very clearly that the Kingdom had not been “postponed.” The records of this instructive incident given in the three Gospels also show that the expressions “Kingdom of heaven” and “Kingdom of God” were used of one and the same Kingdom — the spiritual, not the earthly Kingdom. But what is mainly to our present purpose is that, according to the above quoted words of the Lord, it is as “impossible” for any man to enter into this Kingdom without a work of God in his heart as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The explanation of this lesson is found in the words, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” The camel is a bulky, ungainly beast of burden, generally laden with merchandise; but God could make it small enough even to pass through a needle’s eye. The Lord had just said “Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a *little child* shall in no wise enter therein” (Luke 18:17). The lesson therefore, teaches most impressively the necessity of a man becoming very small indeed — being brought almost to nothingness — in order to enter the Kingdom, the entrance thereto being like a needle’s eye to a camel laden with rich merchandise. It thus teaches clearly that without a definite work of God it is “impossible” for any man to enter

therein. And finally, as the camel, in order to pass through the eye of a needle, must not only shrink in size but also be disencumbered of its merchandise, so the heart of man must be freed from the love of riches and from trusting in riches, in order to enter the Kingdom.

To the same effect is the teaching found in the very heart of the Sermon on the Mount, Chapter 6:19–24, where it is plainly shown that God’s great rival in this age is Mammon, the god of riches. To treasure up for oneself treasure on earth is, to begin with, a vain and foolish occupation, because earthly possessions quickly vanish away (verse 19). But further and more serious is the fact that the treasure hoarded on earth steals away the “heart” from God (verse 21). And finally, which is the worst of all, the hoarder of earthly gain becomes the pitiable and contemptible “bond slave” of his wealth, which absorbs his time and controls his actions, making it impossible for him to be the free servant of Christ. For no man *can* serve two masters (verse 24). Far better is it for any man to pluck out the “right eye” than, by fixing it on the acquisition of wealth, to be filled with darkness, or to cut off the “right hand” by which wealth is gathered, than to become the poor slave of the unrighteous Mammon.

It is “clear that “the Kingdom of God,” whereof the Lord spake in connection with the impressive incident of the rich young man, was not the earthly kingdom of Israel into which every descendant of Jacob enters by his natural birth, but the spiritual realm into which only forgiven sinners are admitted. It is highly significant that, immediately afterward, the Lord said to the twelve, “Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and *all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished*. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated and spitted on; and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again” (Luke 18:31–33).

Here again we see that the Lord spoke of the Kingdom of God in direct connection with the announcement of his own sufferings and death, and in such way as to show that the two subjects were closely related. We see also that the “*all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man*” are specially His sufferings and death, which must needs be “accomplished” in order that the Kingdom of God might be set up.

And lastly, as regards this incident, we call special attention to the Lord’s words: “Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house or parents, or brother or wife, or children *for the Kingdom of God’s sake*, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting” (verses 29, 30). In Matthew’s Gospel we read “for My Name’s sake,” instead of “for the Kingdom of God’s sake”; (Matthew 19:29); and in Mark we read “for My sake *and the gospel’s*” (Mark 10:29). Thus the Kingdom of God is identified with Christ Himself and with *the gospel*. It is worthy of note that the Lord Himself and also His apostles (Paul especially), use the expression “the gospel” in such manner as to forbid the idea that there is more than one gospel of God.

Difficulty has also been found with the Lord’s words concerning the two commandments (the sixth and seventh) which have to do with murder and adultery (Matthew 5:21–28); for it is thought by some that those words are not in keeping with the dispensation of grace. But a brief consideration of them should suffice to dispel that idea, and to show that nowhere is the absolute necessity for Christ’s atoning work for the salvation of the best of men more forcibly declared than in the passage just cited. All would agree that those who break the sixth and seventh commandments — murderers and adulterers — need the mighty work of a Divine Savior to free them from the penalty and guilt of their sin. But the words of the Lord recorded in Matthew 5:21–28 show that the commandment includes not the criminal act only, but the angry or the lustful thought as well from which the act springs. Thus, in the light of the Lord’s interpretation of the law, every man can see that *he himself is as guilty as King David was*, and can see what his own sentence would be if left to the judgment of God’s holy law. For the law of God could not do other than consign him to the doom of the “murderers and whoremongers and idolators” (Revelation 21:8; 22:15). In the words of the Lord to which we are referring, we read the same truth which the apostle Paul declared when he said that, in view of the

law of God, every mouth was stopped and *all the world* had become *guilty before God*; and that there was, in God's eyes, *no difference* (Romans 3:19, 22, 23). But this truth, which puts all men on the same level as equally guilty, making it clear that each and all deserve the same eternal judgment, is here declared in order to show plainly that all men need alike "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" and the remission of sins in His blood (Romans 3:24, 25).

We find, therefore, that the Lord's unfolding of the true meaning and depth of the law, so far from being inconsistent with the doctrine of grace, is in perfect keeping therewith, being indeed the very truth which shows that all men are equally in need of being saved *by grace*.

We reach then the conclusion that the Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount concerning sin and the law, and concerning the fact that all men are alike guilty when tested by the law, and hence are, one as much as another, in need of salvation by grace through blood redemption, belongs just where God has put it, namely at the very beginning of the New Testament Scriptures. It follows that, to tear that vital doctrine away from this dispensation to which it belongs does violence to the truth of God and serious wrong to the household of faith.

13

“NOT UNDER LAW”

“**L**et not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. But yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under (the) law, but under grace” (Romans 6:12–14).

We propose now to inquire further into the meaning of the words, “Ye are not under law but under grace”; and to ask, what is the relation of the people of God — those who have, in His contemplation, died with Christ and are risen with Him — to the law of God?

Romans 6 begins with this very question, which is put in these words: “What shall *we* say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” There is surely a need for asking this question at the present day; in view of those current teachings which virtually declare that “Not under the law” means that we are not to obey the law of God; for not to obey the law of God is to “*continue in sin.*” Hence the teaching we are opposing says in effect (or would lead logically to the conclusion) that we may “continue in sin.”

The Word of God makes it certain that there are just two conditions or states of being in which a man can live in this world, namely, under “the law of God,” or under “the law of sin”; for man *must be* under either one government or the other. If we “*rightly divide the Word of truth*” we will clearly see, in the light of Romans 5 and 6, two great spiritual domains, one in which sin reigns, the other in which Christ reigns. It was by “disobedience,” that is to say by casting off the law of God, that sin entered the world, whereby the dominion of sin became established, and sin and death became the two despotic rulers of men. (Romans 5:12–20). But by the “obedience” of Jesus Christ unto death, and by His resurrection from the dead, another “dominion” was introduced into the world, namely, that wherein *grace reigns through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (5:21). This new spiritual dominion is the Kingdom of God. Those who believe in Jesus Christ, submitting to Him as Lord — that is, as the One they are to obey — are taken out of the dominion of sin, just as if they had died to the authority of that realm, and are brought into the dominion wherein grace reigns through righteousness by Jesus Christ.

The same truth is declared in Colossians 1:12, 13, where Paul gives thanks to the Father, “Who hath delivered us from the power (or authority) of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” The “authority of darkness” is another name for the dominion of sin and death; and “the kingdom of His dear Son” is another name for the dominion in which grace reigns. Hence to be “under grace” is to be *under Christ*. It is pure grace that saves us from our own sins, and from sin’s authority (“the *law of sin,*” Romans 7:25, 8:2). It is grace that makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. It is grace that puts us in the kingdom of God’s dear Son; and it is grace that enables us to keep the commandments of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, Who is given to us. It ought not to be necessary to say that the essential feature of a kingdom is its *law*. Those who are in the kingdom of sin are subject to “the law of sin” (Romans 7:23); and those who are in the Kingdom of God are subject to “the law of God” (Romans 8:7). Now this is precisely what the flesh is not, nor

can be. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” as our Lord declared in His first recorded lesson (John 3:6); and the flesh, or natural man, is incurably lawless. Hence one *must be* born of the Spirit in order to enter the Kingdom of God, or in other words to become subject to the law of God. Therefore by a little attention we can clearly see that Paul (in Romans 5–8) is unfolding the same lesson concerning the Kingdom of God that the Lord imparted in few words to Nicodemus. It is the *new birth* (which baptism represents — Romans 6:3–5) that brings us into the Kingdom of God — the domain of the Holy Spirit — and that puts us under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, thus bringing us into subjection to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:2).

Law is the will of another which is imposed on the one who is subject thereto. The natural man is subject to “the law of sin” (see John 8:34); and inasmuch as the dominion of sin is just the opposite to the Kingdom of God, it requires a mighty work of God, first to translate a man from one to the other, and second to change his heart so as to make him willingly subject to the law of God.

It is as clear as words can make it that the great change which takes place when a sinner is justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Romans 5:9, 10), is a change from *the kingdom of sin to the Kingdom of God*. That is to say, it is very far from being a change from being *under law* to being *not under law*; but is on the contrary a change from being under the law of *sin* to being under the law of *God*. For man must be under one law or another. What runs all through Chapter 6 of Romans is the fact that there has taken place a *change of masters*. In our natural state we lived in sin, we served sin, sin had dominion over us, we were the servants of sin, we yielded our members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity. But through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we, as figured by our baptism (verses 3, 4), died to sin, and thus were freed from sin, that henceforth we should not serve sin. We were made free from sin and therefore are to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin; for it is declared that sin shall *not have dominion* over us.

But we are not left to do our own will and pleasure; for that would be to “continue in sin.” It would mean, moreover, the failure of the purpose for which Christ died, which was to restore to God an *obedient* people, or in other words to establish the Kingdom of God. Hence the great truth which the Sixth of Romans proclaims as the final outcome of all God’s dealings with us in grace through the gospel, is that we are “*become servants to God*” “*servants of righteousness*.” Such being our present status, we are to be always *yielding ourselves to God* as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. The word translated “servants” is literally “bondservants.” The passage speaks therefore of *the most complete subjection to the law of God*.

This Scripture reveals to us, however, a great difference in *the character* of the obedience we are to render to God from that which we formerly rendered to sin. Our obedience to God is to be *willing* or *voluntary* obedience. To be of any value in His eyes it must be the prompting of our own hearts. We must “serve the Lord with gladness”; even as the Lord Jesus Himself said: “*I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart*” (Psalm 40:8). And again: “*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me*” (John 4:34). Those whom He brings into *family relations* with God and with Himself must be like Him in this vital matter. For He said: “*For whosoever shall do the will of My father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother*” (Matthew 12:50). The object then of God’s dealings with us in grace is to bring us into the “blessed” state of the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; “*but his delight is in the law of the Lord*” (Psalm 1:1,2).

We are to experience and to realize in ourselves the promise of the Psalmist: “*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments*” (Psalm 112:1). We should be able to say: “*So shall I keep Thy law continually forever and ever. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts. I will speak of Thy testimonies also before Kings, and shall not be ashamed; and I will delight myself in Thy Commandments, which I have loved*” (Psalm 119:44–47).

Another word of the Lord Jesus Christ shows that the *obedient ones* are they who compose the

Kingdom of heaven. For He said: “Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of My Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

Particular attention should be given to Romans 6:16–18, which we quote:

“Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to *obey*, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether (servants) of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine where to ye were delivered” (See margin). “Being then made free from sin, ye became *the servants* (or bond- slaves) of righteousness.”

This passage tells us that, having been set free from sin’s authority, we are free to choose whom we *will* serve. This is precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ said:

“Whosoever committeth sin is *the servant of sin*. And the servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be *free indeed*” (John 8:34–36).

So we are free to choose whom we will serve.

The passage tells us further that our choice of masters is limited between sin and God. One or the other of these we *must* serve. And finally it tells us that the saints at Rome, who are in this respect a pattern for us, had *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine to which they had been delivered. Verse 17, as literally translated in the margin, is very significant and forceful. The saints, when they were converted, had been delivered over to — that is to say they had been put under the authority of — a certain “form (or pattern) of doctrine,” by which their conduct was thenceforth to be molded. That “form of doctrine” of course, was “the doctrine of Christ,” which is also called “the apostles’ doctrine,” because taught by them. It is the law of God *in the form given to His own children through the Lord Jesus Christ* which form of doctrine differs in certain particulars from the law of Moses. This is “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25), because it is the law given to those whom Christ has made free. Indeed there is a sense in which the law of Christ itself makes us free; for it is in the keeping of it that we enjoy *practical* liberty from self-pleasing and other phases of the law of sin and death. Thus Paul a little further on says: “For *the law* of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).

Let us have clearly before us then the object God had in view when He paid the great price necessary to redeem a people from all iniquity (literally lawlessness), and to purify them unto Himself (Titus 2:14). His object was that He might have a people *for His own possession*, who would “observe His statutes and keep His laws” (Psalm 105:45), a people who would obey Him *from the heart*. This is what is meant by having His laws *in our hearts*, instead of in statute books or on tablets of stone.

Man’s long trial under the law of God as given from Mount Sinai, and under the statutes and judgments which accompanied the law, proved conclusively that none could keep the law. The reason for this is given in the words of Romans, 8:7, “Because the mind of the flesh” (or natural man) “is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

The effect of sin upon the character of man is such that the keeping of the law of God in a life of complete obedience is simply an impossibility. What then? Shall God abandon the Law? or will He bring about its fulfillment by doing a new work in the hearts of men? We know the answer to this question. God did not abandon the law. It could not be thought of. So the Lord Jesus Christ, in one of the first lessons that came from His lips, declared the purpose of His coming into the world in these words; “Think not that I am come to destroy (or abolish) the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). And to the same effect His servant Paul, in unfolding the gospel of justification by faith apart from the law asks this vital question: “Do we then make void the law through faith?” It is unhappily true that much of the teaching which finds acceptance today would imply that

the answer to this question should be “Yes.” But Paul’s answer is: “God forbid; yea, *we establish the law*” (Romans 3:31).

This statement is of the greatest importance; and we purpose giving further consideration to it in a later chapter (see Chapter 16). The subject of the passage is the righteousness of God in the remission of sins by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God has set forth as a Propitiation, or Mercy seat. And lest it be supposed (as indeed many do suppose in our day, and as is taught by prominent expositors of Scripture at the present time), that the work of redemption accomplished through the blood of Christ and proclaimed by the Gospel for acceptance by faith alone apart from all works, had the effect of *doing away with the law*, the apostle was inspired to declare in the most forceful language that, in preaching justification by faith alone, he was in fact *establishing* the law.

And this is easily understood in the light of the passages on which we have already commented. God now seeks *and secures* through Redemption, what He could not secure in any other way, and that is an *obedient* people. For to them that believe the Gospel He gives a new nature, through the new birth, working such a change in their hearts that, instead of hating His law and loving their own will, they can love His law and hate even their own departures from it. And to them He also gives His Holy Spirit, so that where there was formerly no *power* to keep the law of God (even when there was the desire to do so) there is now the mighty Spirit of God, “the Power that *worketh in us*” through Whom we can walk in God’s holy ways and do His blessed will. And God’s purpose in all this work of Redemption is “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us” (Romans 8:4). In the preceding chapter of Ephesians (2:2), mention is made of “the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.” The contrast is very striking.

Attention should also be given to the statement made both at the beginning and at the end of Romans, namely, that the gospel of Christ is preached among all nations for THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH, that is to say for obedience which faith willingly renders (Romans 1:5 and 16:26). It is certain therefore, that any gospel which does not demand *obedience* to the law of Christ is not the gospel of the grace of God which Paul preached, but is “another gospel” which he denounced. (See Galatians 1:6–9; 3:1; 5:7; 6:2, noting the words “*obey the truth.*”)

What then is meant by the words “For ye are not under (the) law, but under grace?”¹ The meaning simply is that having been justified by the grace of God, on the sufficient ground that Christ died for our sins, we do not have to seek justification *by our own works*. Indeed, to seek justification by any efforts of our own would be to cast a doubt upon the sufficiency of Christ’s work for us, and thus would do dishonor to Him. There is, therefore, the greatest difference between being “under law” and being “under grace.” It is the difference between doing things commanded by the law of God *in order to gain* pardon and life by our own acts, and doing them because He has, for Christ’s sake and on the ground of His obedience unto death, *forgiven our sins freely* and made us His own children.

The greatest possible inducement was given to the Israelite to keep the law, and to do all the “works” (keeping of days and seasons, offering of sacrifices, observing the appointed ceremonies) written in the law of Moses. The promise of living on forever was held out as a reward to the man who should continue in all things that were written in the law to do them. But notwithstanding this strong inducement no man ever kept the law. This makes certain that it did not lie in the power of any man to be “subject to the law of God.” (Romans 10:5; Leviticus 18:5.)

One of the intended purposes of the law of Moses was to make evident the fact that *sin had obtained the complete mastery of the human race*. For in Romans 5:20, 21, it is said that “the law entered that the offence might abound”; whereas we would naturally suppose that the law entered in order that the offence might cease, or at least be checked. To the same effect it is declared in the strong words of 1

1 There is no definite article in the original text. It reads “not under law but under grace.”

Corinthians 15:56, “The strength of sin is the law”; whereas we would expect to read that the law controlled and suppressed sin. It follows that there was the absolute necessity (unless all men were to perish), that God should, in some *righteous way*, break the mastery which, as proved by the law, sin had gained over all mankind. And there was but one righteous way that God could do this, namely by the sacrifice of His own Son.

But it was foreseen that, because of what is said of the connection between sin and the law, some would be led to think evil of the law. To guard against this error (into which nevertheless many have fallen) Paul exclaims: “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:7, 12).

Therefore the words: “Ye are not under the law” are very far from meaning that the children of God have not to keep the law of God. As against that idea it would be enough to cite Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 7:19: “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but *the keeping, of the commandments of God*”; or those in 1 Corinthians 9:20, where he describes himself as “being *not without law to God but under the law to Christ.*”

What Romans 6:14 declares is, not that we are “without law to God,” but that “sin shall not have dominion over us.” And the reason for this wonderful fact is that we who believe in Jesus Christ raised from the dead are not in the condition of the unconverted Israelites, which condition is here briefly described by the words “under law”; but, having been born again through the Word and Spirit of God, having been quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and brought into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son, we are now subject to *His* commandments, which condition is here briefly described as being “under grace.”

We may truly say, therefore, that Romans 6:14 teaches practically the reverse of what many have been led to suppose. For it does not say that we are not under the dominion of God and therefore have not to obey His law; but on the contrary it says that we are not under the dominion of *sin* and subject to *its* law, but rather are under the authority and law of God.

The Kingdom of God, or in one word, Christianity, is not the bringing of perfect law to men who were powerless to keep it. That was Judaism. But Christianity, or the Kingdom of God, is God imparting to men, through the Holy Spirit, a new nature which delights in the law of God.

Do we need then to be told where we are to look for “the law of Christ” or “the doctrine of Christ,” which is given to the children of God for their obedience? That there should be any question or uncertainty on this vital point only shows how clever and how successful the Devil has been in hiding the truth of God and misleading His saints. When, as children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, we take the New Testament into our hands and open it, we find at the very beginning thereof “the law of Christ,” spoken by His own lips. It is what is commonly called, “The Sermon on the Mount,” which is a message in the simplest and clearest language, brought by the Son of God Himself to the children of God on earth from their Father in heaven. God caused those commandments of Christ to be put where we find them in order that we might know His will as to the behavior of His own children. They stand with respect to God’s new covenant people (who are also His children) just where the law of Sinai stands with respect to his old covenant people. But we see marvelous differences. There are no terrifying sights or sounds at the Mount where the Lord Jesus gathers at His feet those who receive Him, and to whom He gives the right to become the children of God (John 1:12). There is no shrinking back in fright, and no crying out, “Let us not hear that Voice anymore;” but on the contrary “When He was set His disciples *came to Him*; and He opened His mouth and taught them” (Matthew 5:7, 2). (The word “teach” means here and generally in Scripture, not merely imparting information, but giving the instructions or laws which the hearers are to obey.)

What is of the very highest importance is the fact that the relationship of the Lord’s disciples to His Father *is not made to depend upon their obedience to the laws He gives to them.* At Sinai the covenant was

“*if ye will obey My Voice indeed, and keep My Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people*” (Exodus 19:5). But at the other mountain it is all grace; for those to whom Christ gives His commandments are *already in the relationship of children to God*. Only the Son of God could put them there; and only He could reveal the Father (Matthew 11:27.) Hence their relationship is eternally secured by that which God, in wondrous grace, has done for them. There is no condition as to that, nothing to be done by them to make them the children of God. On the contrary, when we come to that part of the Sermon on the Mount which tells what will be the consequence of doing those commandments, we find it to be not a matter of gaining or losing salvation, but a matter of gaining or losing the things we shall have wrought. In other words, it is a matter of rewards only. For the one who hears those sayings and does them is likened unto a wise man that built his house upon the rock; whereas he who hears and does them not is likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and who in the day when every man’s work shall be tested of what sort it is, will lose all that he wrought. The teaching is just what is found in 1 Corinthians 3:11–15.

The Lord’s call to obedience in the Sermon on the Mount rests upon the *highest* of all motives — the desire of the children of God to glorify their Father in heaven and to be like Him. And to this He added, at the close of His ministry, the *tenderest* of all motives in those words which we cannot hear too often, “If ye *love Me*, keep My commandments.”

It is truly a cause for astonishment and for profound sorrow too, that men should have arisen amongst us in these last times who assert with boldness, and under cover of a great show of orthodoxy, that “the Sermon on the Mount is law and not grace”; and who dare to proclaim that it is not for the children of God at all (notwithstanding the Lord expressly declared it to be the word of the Father to His children), but is for some imaginary “Jewish disciples” in a yet future kingdom.

We would fain lift our voice, therefore, like a trumpet and cry out a loud and solemn warning against this subversive teaching, which robs the children of God of their Father’s own words, spoken *to us* by His Son. As it is written: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken *unto us* by His Son.”

“Therefore, *we* ought to give the *more* earnest heed to the things which we have heard” (Hebrews 1:1, 2 and 2:1–4).

14

LAW AND GRACE

In the present discussion concerning the Kingdom of God there are two great questions involved:

First, was the Kingdom which the Lord and His forerunner announced as “at hand” postponed to a future age?

Second, is the Sermon on the Mount the law of the present Kingdom of God, into which only those enter who are born of the Spirit; or is it the law of the future kingdom which will be set up when Christ comes again?

The second question is of vital importance. It demands that we settle, each for himself, whether or not the commandments of Christ, spoken in that discourse, apply directly to us. Manifestly this question involves the Lord’s honor and His authority over the lives of His people in this world and involves also their complete submission to Him. It cannot be denied that, *if those commandments are indeed for us*, then to refuse them under any pretext whatever (as that they pertain directly to a future dispensation) is to set at naught the authority of Christ, the Sovereign Lord of the Kingdom of God.

It must be that, in a matter so vital, the Scriptures will afford to all who are willing to do the will of God, the clearest information. God would not leave the most simple of His children in uncertainty regarding it. Indeed there never was, until modern times, and should not be now, the slightest *question* about it. How a matter which is so plain on the very surface of the discourse itself should have become involved in obscurity, will ever be one of the most striking evidences of the cleverness of that arch enemy of truth — the devil. Those who truly belong to Christ cannot be reached and harmed by the teachers of higher criticism and new theology; for they will not listen to those false teachers. Other means must be found in order to induce the children of God to relinquish the commandments of Christ. To accomplish this it was necessary that men should arise, who, by reason of their strict orthodoxy, could gain the confidence of the people, and who could bring forward plausible reasons why those commandments should not be obeyed. This has now come to pass and this new and “strange” doctrine is being diligently propagated. And not only so, but a new “Bible” has been provided wherein it is taught in the most dogmatic fashion as unquestioned truth. By these means tens of thousands of the confiding people of God have been misled to their hurt.

It is with this modern “Bible” that we have mainly to deal; for it is certain that without the authority of a “Bible” to lend it apparent support, the subversive doctrine we are considering would have had very little acceptance among the saints of God. How is this new doctrine upheld? And upon what is it based? Careful study of the matter makes clear that the theory is based in part upon a supposed difference between Law and Grace. It is assumed throughout that “law” is not for the children of God, because they are “not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14). If such indeed be the case, then it would follow that all the other Scriptures, as the Epistles of Paul for example, which contain com-

mandments to be obeyed, would not be for the children of God of this dispensation.

What we are now pointing out is very strikingly exemplified by an article recently published by the editor under the title, "*Is the Sermon on the Mount Law?*" to which we have already made reference. In that article (as indeed in all his discussions of the subject), the editor assumes that it is only necessary to show that the Sermon on the Mount is Law (as most certainly it is), in order to prove that it is not for us to keep, seeing that we are "not under law but under grace."

But we would ask whence came the strange idea that the children of God who are "under grace" are not to keep the commandments of God — *particularly those spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ?* And upon what is *that* idea based? There is certainly nothing in the Scripture to lend it the slightest support. On the contrary, in order to show that it is opposed to the very plainest Scriptures we will quote a few of many.

Our Lord said:

"If ye love Me *keep My commandments.*" "If ye *keep My commandments* ye shall abide in My love."

"Ye are My friends, if ye *do whatsoever I command you*" "Teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you*" (John 14:15; 15:10, 14; Matthew 28:20).

Paul said:

"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but *the keeping of the commandments of God*" (1 Corinthians 7:19).

John said:

"He that saith, I know Him, and *keepeth not His commandments*, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

"For this is the love of God that we *keep His commandments*, and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 2:4; 5:3).

With words so unmistakably plain as these, charging us with responsibility both to keep the commandments of Christ and also to teach all who are converted through the Gospel to observe "all things whatsoever" He has commanded, it is truly an amazing thing that any who profess to be the servants of Christ should dare to set His commandments aside as belonging to another age, or to maintain that those who are "under grace" are exempt from obeying the law of God. For the fact is, and it is *one of the foundation truths of Christianity*, that *only* those who *by grace* have been made the children of God, *are able* to keep the law of God; and that their chief responsibility in this world is to *keep that law*, and thus to let their light shine before men, so that they may see their good works and glorify their Father Who is in heaven. This important point will be considered in Chapter 16. In the present chapter we purpose to discuss the difference between Law and Grace, when those words are used as terms which distinguish two contrasted dispensations. ¹

The leading Scripture in this connection is John 1:17, "For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ."

¹ It should not be necessary to point out that the word Law is used in the Scriptures in different senses. This is true also of the word Grace. But it is needful to keep that fact in mind at the present time because advantage is being taken of the various meanings of the word Law to mislead the simple-minded, and to make them think that because they are not dispensationally "under law" they are not to be "subject to the law of God."

It is certain that a new order of things came into the world by Jesus Christ; and it is certain also that it was a very different order of things from that which resulted from the law of Moses. It would take many pages to state the differences, and to show the more excellent and eternal glory of the New Covenant of Grace and Truth, as compared with the inferior and temporary glory of the Old Covenant (See 2 Corinthians 3). But we have at present only one point to consider, namely *what was the difference between the two dispensations as regards the keeping of the law of God?* Is it true, as the “Scofield Bible” teaches that those who are “under grace” are not to keep the law of God? We reply that nothing could be farther from the truth. The law remains unchanged in all its vital features, being indeed expanded and raised to the highest plane by the Lord’s own exposition thereof; and it remains to the end that it may “*be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*” (Romans 8:4).

The difference between this dispensation and the preceding one, in regard to the Law, lies wholly in *our relations to the law*, and in the *place where the law is written*. We who have been born of the Spirit and thus are brought into the family of God, are under a *Father’s care* and a *Father’s government*. It is demanded and expected of us that we shall keep His law in the power of the Holy Ghost Who is given unto us, and through *the prompting of love alone*. Briefly stated, *grace* has brought us into eternal relations with God in association with His own Son. Therefore: and *not in order to gain the favor of God and escape punishment of our sins, as would be our position under law* — but because Christ has brought us into eternal favor with God His Father, and has Himself borne the punishment of our sins, we are to keep His commandments and abide in His love. The law indeed remains; but for us it is written not in tablets of *stone*, but in *fleshy tablets of the heart*. That is the difference between law and grace. One of the leading promises concerning the New Covenant was this: “I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts” (Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:33). This promise is being fulfilled during this dispensation of grace.

Now we wish to make it very clear that the difference which we have pointed out between Law and Grace appears conspicuously in the Sermon on the Mount. The statement reiterated in the “Scofield Bible” and in articles by the editor, that the Sermon on the Mount is “legal ground,” that “under law forgiveness is conditioned on a like spirit in us,” that “under the law; of the Kingdom *no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven*” citing Matthew 6:12, 14, 15, is utterly destitute of and contrary to the truth. An article by the editor lies before us in which it is said that in the Sermon on the Mount “every blessing is conditional upon works, not faith.” This is utterly false. The fact is that, in *every* dispensation, forgiveness of sins has been conditioned — not upon works but — upon repentance and faith, in view of the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus. There never was nor could be any other basis for the forgiveness of sins. God set forth His Son a propitiation (or mercy seat) “to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins *that are past*, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25). We boldly challenge the citation of a *single instance* in God’s recorded dealings with men when He made *His* forgiveness dependent upon the sinner’s act in first forgiving others. As in the case of David’s heinous sin, so in every other, God forgave the moment there was true repentance and confession on the sinner’s part. Yet the editor of the “Scofield Bible” lays it down in the most dogmatic fashion that “under the law of the Kingdom no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven.” There could be no more monstrous error than this regarding the vital subject of the forgiveness of sins.

It will be noticed that whereas the Scripture declares that “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” the editor makes the Lord Jesus Christ the Introducer of a dispensation in which “no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven.” To such a dispensation as that, the era of law would be far preferable; for God was ever, during that era, pleading with His people to return to Him, promising to have mercy upon them and to pardon abundantly.

The new dispensation introduced by Jesus Christ does not change in the slightest the *ground* upon which forgiveness is granted. On the contrary, Christ came to lay, by His sacrificial death, that very foundation for the forgiveness of sins which had been ordained in the purpose of God from before the foundation of the world. The question of keeping the law of God is also involved, as a distinct matter,

in the New Covenant; because those who are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ receive not only the forgiveness of their sins, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit, with power to walk in obedience to the law of God.

The difference between Law and Grace, when those words are used to designate, respectively, the past dispensation and the present, is briefly this: Under Law men were cast upon their own efforts as to obeying the commandments of God; whereas under Grace a Savior is given who both saves His people from their sins and also gives them a new nature whereby they may obey the law of God from the heart. Therefore, while the law condemns the best of men, grace saves the worst of men.

It is recorded in John 1:11, 12 that while the Jews as a people received not the Lord Jesus Christ when He came to them, yet some individuals *did* receive Him, and to them He *gave* the power (or right) to become *the children of God*. The place of “children” in God’s family was therefore a *gift*; in other words it was by *grace*. Indeed we know with absolute certainty that it could be neither bought nor earned by merit. Here then is *grace*; and grace to the utmost limit! For what more can grace do for a sinful rebellious man, who by nature is the enemy of God, than to put him “among the children”? Moreover, this amazing grace was bestowed upon *all alike*, upon the sole condition of *receiving Christ*, or in other words of “believing on His Name.”

It was to the company of those who “received Him,” and to whom He consequently gave power to become “the children of God,” that the Lord gave the words recorded in Matthew 5, 6, 7 — the Sermon on the Mount. And since every child of God receives *at once* the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 10:43, 1 John 2:12 etc.), it is clear that they to whom the Sermon was spoken, and all for whom it is intended, are forgiven sinners. Therefore it is a stupendous error to say that under the Sermon on the Mount forgiveness is only for those who have first forgiven others, and that “every blessing is conditional upon works, not faith.” We repeat that such doctrine is to be found *nowhere* in the Word of God; and least of all in the Sermon on the Mount; for there we have the highest exemplification of *grace*. Indeed the very words — “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” — which the editor disparages as “legal ground” — afford strong evidence that we have here the law of the Kingdom of *grace*. In the preceding passage (Chapter 5:44–48) the substance of the law of grace is stated in the words “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you,” etc.; and the reason for this command is declared in words which should take firm hold of our hearts: “*That ye may be (in conduct) the children of your Father which is in heaven.*” These verses focus our attention upon the fact that the *great outstanding feature of this age of grace is the full and free forgiveness of sins*. That is the first recorded purpose in the New Testament for which Christ Jesus came into the world (Matthew 1:21); and Paul emphasizes it specially in the familiar words: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15). Hence it is absolutely essential to the glory of God our Father in heaven that we, who have been forgiven *much*, should manifest forgiveness to others. We have already discussed this point in Chapter 11; but it is of such vast importance that we would again say that to fail in showing grace to others is to deny the character of that holy and heavenly Kingdom into which God’s free grace has brought us. Therefore, the Lord Jesus, in the pattern of prayer He gave to the family of God, allows them to ask forgiveness of their trespasses, only upon the condition of their willingness to forgive others. This we say is *due to the very character of the kingdom of grace*. It is moreover, an exceedingly practical truth; and hence a grievous wrong is done to the children of God by those who deny its application to them. The Father’s *chastening* is just as much a proof of His love, as is His provision for His children’s needs (Hebrews 12:8); and it is most important for them to know that if they refuse to forgive trespasses against themselves they will be left to the consequences of their own trespasses against God. The Apostle Paul states the same principle in the words: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” (Galatians 5:7). Thus the words of Matthew 6:12–14 are invaluable as causing us when in prayer and confession before God seeking His pardon for our many trespasses, to search our own hearts and review our own conduct to see if we are refusing to forgive others.

15

THE PROMISE FULFILLED

The “promise” referred to in the foregoing Scriptures is that great promise which it was God’s plan to fulfill in this dispensation, the promise of the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven and bringing the Kingdom of heaven into the world.

The day of Pentecost witnessed the full introduction of the Kingdom of heaven with all the characteristics it was to have for the entire age. For then the disciples of Christ were baptized with the Holy Ghost, as had been definitely announced by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11). The Lord Himself took up this promise in speaking with His disciples after His resurrection, when — using almost the same words as John — He said: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5). John was not the herald of a false promise to the Jews. He had not announced a new order of things which had to be “postponed.” On the contrary, all that he foretold concerning Christ was fulfilled. It was witnessed of John that “All things that John spake of this Man (Christ) were true” (John 10:41).

Peter takes up the same great promise of the Spirit in his inspired utterance on the day of Pentecost, saying of the Lord Jesus:

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father
THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear”
(Acts 2:33).

And, in order to make known the extent of this Promise, and to show that those “afar off” (the “called” from among the Gentiles) were to be partakers in it, he added these words: “For the Promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

There is no room for doubt as to what “the Promise” was which was due to be fulfilled at the time John the Baptist was sent forth to preach the coming of Christ. Nor was there any uncertainty about it in the minds of the apostles after the Lord had “opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures.” For He said to them at that time, “And behold, I send THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER upon you; but tarry ye at the city of Jerusalem until ye be endowed with POWER FROM ON HIGH” (Luke 24:25, 49).

But this “Promise of the Father,” was not only that which John the Baptist had announced; it was also the great Promise of the prophets. Thus Peter quoted from Joel God’s promise to pour out His Spirit on *all* flesh (Gentiles as well as Jews); and he quoted also the promise of the coming of this era of grace in the words: “And it shall come to pass that *Whosoever* shall call on the Name of the Lord *shall be saved*” (See also Romans 10:13).

Paul, in the words quoted at the head of this chapter, says that “the Promise” which was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ, was one which God had “made unto the fathers.” And in Galatians he says that “the Blessing” which God had covenanted to Abraham to bestow upon the Gentiles, was “the Promise of the Spirit” (Galatians 3:13, 14).

The testimony of other Scriptures might be added; but from the foregoing it may be clearly seen that the Promise which was due to be fulfilled in the days of John the Baptist was God’s “everlasting covenant” with Abraham (Genesis 17). For it is under this covenant that the Holy Spirit is given for the regeneration of repentant and believing sinners and for empowering them to keep the law of God written in their hearts.

How then can the clear records of the Book of The Acts be squared with the idea that the promise then due for fulfillment was that of the earthly kingdom? This can be done only by introducing further notes directly contradicting the Word of God. Thus we find in the “Scofield Bible” in the introductory note to Acts, these radical statements:

“This book (Acts) records the ascension and promised return of the Lord Jesus, the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter’s use of the keys, opening the Kingdom (considered as the sphere of profession, as in Matthew 13) to the Jews at Pentecost, and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.”

“The apparent failure of the Old Testament promises concerning the Davidic kingdom was explained by the promise that the kingdom would be set up at the return of Christ.”

It is greatly to be deplored that such false statements as these should have been introduced into any book that is sold and accepted by many as a “Bible.”

The statement that Peter’s ministry under the direct inspiration and in the power of the Spirit of God — Who used the apostle merely as an instrument — admitted those converted souls to “the sphere of profession,” is an error which strikes at the very foundation truth of the age. Did Christ die and rise again, and ascend into heaven; and did the Holy Ghost come down from heaven; and did the preaching of the gospel of God in the Spirit’s power begin merely to admit men to a “sphere of profession”? If *that* is what “the Kingdom of God” is, what advantage is there in being in it? If what the gospel “preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” does for those who believe, is merely to bring them into a “sphere of profession,” why should we preach it? But we challenge the production of a single word in all the inspired record which lends the least support to this monstrous statement. What God, speaking through Peter, declared to those men who heard the first gospel message of the risen Christ, and what God still declares through all who still preach the same message, is that they who repent and believe the gospel receive the forgiveness of their sins and “the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

The “gospel of God” brings those who receive it in obedient faith, not into a sphere of profession but into the family of God as children born of God.

God has not established a “sphere of profession” in the world; nor has He provided “keys” to open it to “mere professors.” That idea is a flat denial of the truth. The “sphere of profession,” that is to say “Christendom” or “Great Babylon,” is an institution which bulks large in this world. All can “see” it; and all who profess are made welcome in it without any gospel, or any repentance, or any faith, or any new birth. But our Lord, in His first lesson on the Kingdom of God declared that Kingdom to be such that unless a man be born again he cannot even “see” It, much less “enter” therein (John 3:3, 5). And so it is. The Kingdom of God throughout this age, is *invisible to men*; for it is “Righteousness and peace and joy IN THE HOLY GHOST” (Romans 14:17). It has no organization, no court, no officials, no army, no visible mark of any kind to characterize it as a kingdom in the eyes of men. On the other hand “the sphere of profession” is one of *the most conspicuous things in the world*. So here again there is a flat contradiction between the statement of *God’s Bible*, and that of the “Scofield Bible.”

The editor's description of Peter's ministry coincides exactly with what the Church of Rome makes of it — a mere means of entrance into a great worldly "sphere of profession." But Peter himself gives a very different account of it. Speaking before all the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem, Peter reminded them of the honor that God had conferred upon him, saying:

"Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and" — not enter the sphere of profession, but — "*believe*. And God which knoweth the hearts bare them witness, *giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did to us*" (Acts 15, 7, 8).

Thus all the Scriptures bear witness in the plainest way to the truth that none enter the Kingdom of heaven but those who, through the gospel preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, are convicted of sin, brought to repentance, and who receive the risen Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. These obtain, through grace alone, the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and are translated into the *Ghost, even as He did to us*" (Acts 15:7, 8).

As to the editor's statement about "the apparent failure of the Old Testament promises concerning the Davidic kingdom," it need only be said there was no "failure" of any promise, either real or apparent. And so far from offering any explanation for the "failure" of any promise of God, the apostles triumphantly proclaimed, both by voice and pen that God's promises and purposes had been and were being *fulfilled* through the coming of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of God's free salvation to sinners of every nation and tongue and tribe. Peter puts it very strongly, saying:

"But those things, which God before had shown by the mouth OF ALL HIS PROPHETS, that Christ should suffer, He hath so FULFILLED."

And again:

"Yea, and ALL THE PROPHETS, from Samuel and those that follow after, AS MANY AS HAVE SPOKEN, have likewise foretold of THESE DAYS" (Acts 3:18, 24).

Paul also has a very strong word on this point. Speaking in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia he said:

"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet *the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day*, they have FULFILLED them in condemning Him" (Acts 13:27).

Those who know the purport of the messages of the prophets would never say that those messages required for their fulfillment the setting up of the earthly kingdom; for what "fulfilled them" was the death of Christ, and the era of blessing which has resulted therefrom. And Paul's next words give the lie to those who dare to assert that our Lord, when He was here among men voluntarily submitting to the constituted government of Caesar and setting an example of obedience to the powers that be, went about proclaiming the earthly kingdom. For Paul said:

"And though they found *no cause of death in Him*, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain."

Had He ever proclaimed the earthly kingdom or offered Himself as King to the Jews, that act would have been a "cause of death."

But inasmuch as we have shown in another chapter that God's promises to David have their fulfillment in great measure in these days during which Christ the Son of David is crowned and enthroned in heaven as "the King of glory" (Psalm 24), we need not dwell longer upon this point.

16

FULFILLING THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

“Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10)

The Lord’s words, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17), are plainly intended to guard us against an error into which (as of course He foresaw) it is very easy to fall. The words “Think not” show that men would be disposed to entertain that very idea. Never was this admonition more needed than at the present time, when it is being widely taught and held that the law and the prophets have been virtually abolished, and that even the very words of the Lord just quoted have also been “postponed,” as to their application, to a future age.

The error against which the foregoing words are intended to guard us springs from a hasty inference that (because the dispensation of “the law and the prophets” has been superseded by that of “grace and truth”) *the doing of the things required by the law and the prophets* is no longer required of God’s people. We have touched upon this important point in a preceding chapter, “Law and Grace,” where we have shown that the very opposite to the above stated inference is true; that is to say, the reason for the change of God’s dealings with men (brought about by the coming of Christ and by the eternal Redemption He accomplished for God and men) was that God might have a people who *would and could* obey His law. The matter, however, is of such importance that it demands a more extended consideration.

As further showing God’s care to guard those who are saved by grace from thinking that no obligation rests upon them to keep the law of God, we call attention to the words of Paul in Romans 3:20–31. He first shows by the Scriptures the impossibility that any man could be justified in God’s sight by the deeds of the law, making it a *necessity* — if any were to be justified at all — that there should be a Divine righteousness provided as a free gift. He then sets forth the great gospel fact that a righteousness of God, apart from law, has now been provided through the blood of Christ, which perfect righteousness is freely given to all who are of the faith of Jesus. But in this connection he is careful to state that there is no conflict between this grace of God in clothing the believing sinner with His perfect righteousness, and “the law and the prophets,” for in fact *that very grace is “witnessed by the law and the prophets”* (verse 21). Here again we have the statement in effect that the present age of grace has been foretold by both the law and the prophets. The meaning of this will become clearer as we proceed.

The apostle then reaches the important conclusion, “that a man is justified by faith without (or apart from) the deeds of the law” (verse 28). But from this some might infer (and have inferred) that the law was abolished or made void. For if the object of the law — righteousness for men — is now attained by faith in Christ alone, should not the law be set aside as a useless and a superseded thing? Men would draw that conclusion; but as it would be an error, the apostle takes pains to forestall it by

saying: “Do we then *make void the law through faith?* God forbid: *Yea, we establish the law*” (verse 31).

There are then two errors to be guarded against. On the one hand we must not make void the *grace* of God through seeking to be justified by works of law (Galatians 2:21); and on the other hand we must not make void the *law* of God by supposing that the law is abolished during the dispensation of grace (Romans 3:31). It is easy, in seeking to avoid one of these opposing errors, to fall deep into the other. Let us, therefore, keep clear of both.

What then did the apostle mean by saying that in laying the foundation of the gospel of God’s grace, he was not making void the law but establishing it? He meant that, through grace, believing sinners are not only justified freely from their sins, but they also *receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*, Who empowers them to “obey from the heart” (6:17), and to be “subject to the law of God,” which to the unregenerate man is an impossibility (8:7). He meant to make it clear that the purpose and effect of the gospel is not merely to save sinners from eternal condemnation, though that is the first result mentioned in Romans. For in chapter 3 the death of Christ is indeed set forth as effective to justify us from our sins; but in Chapter 8 it is further stated that God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh — not only that we might escape God’s judgment against sin, but — “**THAT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT**” (8:3,4).

Grace then provides, *first*, a perfect forgiveness for all past sins; *second*, perfect security from the wrath to come; and *third*, power for a *present* life of obedience to the law of God. This third provision of grace should be the object of our chief concern during our sojourn in the world; for what we may miss of it now cannot be recovered hereafter.

We see then that “the law and the prophets” are not abrogated, though a different dispensation has come. The law is with us still in order to condemn man and all his works, to witness to the righteousness and holiness of God, to bring all the world “guilty before God,” and to reveal the need of redemption. The law and the prophets are *for* us, because (except as to certain parts clearly indicated in the Scriptures, and which we will distinguish presently) they are to be “fulfilled *in* us.” But we have something more than the law and the prophets. We have the new birth and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit to put the law into our hearts; and we have moreover the example of our Lord in His walk below (1 Peter 2:21), Who had the law of God in *His* heart (Psalm 40:8); and we have also the aid of His unceasing intercession on our behalf above. That makes the greatest possible difference.

Let us then lay firm hold of the fact that, while the Son of God did indeed come to seek and to save that which was lost, to give His life a ransom for many, to destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, to die for our sins that He might bring us to God, and for other like purposes which the Scriptures plainly declare, He came also *not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them*. One great object of His atoning work was that the Holy Spirit might come and abide with the saints forever. And to what end is the Spirit given thus to abide in Person as promised by the Lord in John 14:16? The purpose is clearly declared in the words that immediately precede. The passage reads:

“If ye love Me keep My commandments; and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth.”

The Holy Spirit then is given as the “Comforter,” or (literally) as the “Helper nearby”, that we may keep the commandments of Christ from the heart. For to that end “the love of God is shed abroad *in our hearts* by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us” (Romans 5:5).

The words “love Me, keep My commandments” are found in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:6) as well as in the New. And there were *individuals* in those days who could say “The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver”; and “O, how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day”; and “I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold” (Psalm 119:72, 97, 127). But there was no *company* of people, no “holy nation” or in other words no “Kingdom of God,” com-

posed of pardoned sinners, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, to whom the Lord could say, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," and "This is My commandment that ye love one another as *I* have loved you."

It is quite evident, however, that there are parts of the law and of the prophets which are not to be fulfilled in and through God's new covenant people. So we would seek an answer to the question, In what way has the Lord fulfilled, and does He fulfill, the law and the prophets? The Scriptures throw much light upon this important question; and as we examine it in their light we find that the Lord has already fulfilled, or will yet fulfill, the greater part of the law and the prophets *in His own Person*. Thus for convenience we may regard the law as embracing *first* the types or shadows (Hebrews 10:1), which includes all the sacrifices, observances, feast days, etc. etc.; and *second* the *righteousness* or righteous acts which the law demanded from men (Romans 8:4). The Lord rebuked the Pharisees, who were punctilious as to all the ceremonies of the law, as having "omitted the weightier matters of the law, *judgment, mercy and faith*" (Matthew 23:23); and in these words He showed what the law required of men.

It is obvious that all the *types and shadows* of the law have either been fulfilled by the Lord at His first coming or are being fulfilled by His priestly work on high during this dispensation, or will be fulfilled at His second coming. This leaves *for us* the *righteousness* of the law. As to these, God has not by any means revoked or even relaxed His requirements. How could He? Could He take pleasure in unrighteousness? or could He leave His people whom He has bought at a great price, to do their own pleasure? So far from this being the case, the truth is that one of the great purposes for which God sent forth His Son was to bring to Himself a people who would and could be subject to His law, and obey it from the heart.

In addition to the types and shadows of the law which have their fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ in Person, the law of Moses embraced also certain regulations which were appointed to the Israelites, as suited to a people having an *earthly country* and geographical boundaries, and who had *political* relations with other kingdoms of this world.

These, however, are not suited to a people scattered throughout the world, who have a *heavenly* citizenship, and who have no political relations with the kingdoms of this world. Such observances have therefore no place in the law of God as given to His people of this dispensation.

The messages of the prophets may be like the law, divided into, *first*, predictions to be fulfilled *by the Lord Himself*; and *second*, declarations of the will of God to be observed *by His people*. The latter embraced some commands which were local and temporary, along with others which were permanent expressions of the mind of God, valid at all times and in all places. It is easy to distinguish between the two classes.

The Sermon on the Mount contains another reference to the law and the prophets. It is in these words:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for *this is the law and the prophets*" (Matthew 7:12).

This condensation into a few simple words of the substance of the law and the prophets, so far as they apply to our dealings with our fellow men, should be of the utmost value to us. Men have admired it and called it the "golden rule." It is easily memorized; but only by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit can it be carried out.

Once again near the end of His days on earth the Lord gave a concise summary of the law and the prophets, when, in response to the question, "Which is the great commandment of the law?" He said:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy

mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*" (Matthew 22:36–40).

The word "hang" in this passage signifies to hang up or upon. Hence we learn that *all* the law and the prophets have these two commandments as their support. It is certain from this passage alone that the law and the prophets have not been abolished, but are in full force and effect for God's saints today. The Lord here brings into view the highest purpose of God's revelation of Himself, whether in the law or the gospel; and that is to establish *love* as the rule of action in the lives of His people. *God is love*. Therefore the law of God is the expression of *what He is*; and the proper effect of the law is to make His people *like Himself*.

The relation which love bears to the law of God as given to the saints of God by the Lord Jesus Christ is twofold. First, it is to be *the motive for obedience*. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Second, it is to be *the characteristic of all our actions*; for "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10). And again it is written: "By love serve one another. For *all the law* is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:13, 14).

These passages are very illuminating. They will flood our hearts with light if we will but give ourselves to meditation upon them. On the other hand, comments and explanations will be of little service in conveying their deep and rich meaning. Therefore we will only point out that the fulfilling of "*all the law*" is God's purpose in giving His Holy Spirit to His children; and that the fulfilling of "all the law" is in one word "LOVE," that is to say, being LIKE GOD.

In the account which Mark gives of the Lord's summary of the two great commandments of the law, the following incident is recorded which is not related by Matthew. Upon hearing the Lord's answer the scribe who had asked the question said:

"Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth; for there is but one God; and there is none other but He; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

"And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art *not far from the Kingdom of God*" (Mark 12:28–34).

Whatever the Lord may have meant by this last remark, it certainly shows that the Kingdom had not been withdrawn and postponed; for here was one who was not far from it. What is suggested to us by those words is that the scribe was near to the Kingdom of God, in that he had both a perception and an appreciation of *the law of that Kingdom* which soon was to become a spiritual reality in the world. To love is to GIVE. God loved the world and GAVE His only begotten Son. Christ loved the church and GAVE Himself for it. Hence to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, is to place all the powers and faculties of our being at His disposal for His service. Therefore the will of God for us, His redeemed people, is expressed in the words: "Yield *yourselves* unto God, as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:13, 14).

There is indeed one mighty difference between the present relation of God's saints to the law and the past relation of the Israelites thereto. To the Israelite the keeping of the law was the road to the attainment of life and righteousness. But the believer in Jesus Christ comes to the law with *life and righteousness already his, as the gift of God in Christ Jesus*. The Lord Himself came to the law, not to be saved by it — for He was already the Righteous One — but to glorify God through magnifying the law and making it honorable. Even so with us who have Christ as our righteousness; since there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, we come to the law not to be saved by our own works,

but to glorify God in doing those things which are pleasing to Him.

And why, we would ask in conclusion, are we “under grace,” and not “under law”? The reason is not flattering to us. It is because we were too hopelessly bad and corrupt to be saved even by God’s holy law. So evil was our state that to make anything “good” out of us, was a thing which even the law of God “could not do.” It follows that had we been left under the law it could only have condemned us to eternal wrath. There is, therefore, no ground for boasting in the truth we are now considering, but rather for self-abasement even to the dust. For boasting is *excluded*. “By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of *faith*” They who need to be saved *by faith in Another* have nothing to boast of *in themselves*.

Nevertheless, it is in the heart of man even to speak disparagingly and contemptuously of the law of God; as if it were the fault of the law, and not because of his own corruption and wickedness, that the law could not save him. His evil thoughts would even go so far astray as to lay that failure to the law of God, which is “holy, and just, and good”; and whereas the Lord Jesus Christ magnified the law and made it honorable, there are those respected among us as teachers of the Word, who seem bent upon belittling the law and making it contemptible. May the solemn truth of the matter sink into our hearts, deliver us from all boasting, and cast us upon the mercy of God for *grace* whereby we may serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear; “For our God is a consuming Fire.”

APPENDIX 1

C. H. SPURGEON ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

[We take pleasure in giving to our readers a few of the comments of Charles H. Spurgeon on the Gospel of Matthew. It is refreshing to one's spirit, as well as enlightening to the understanding to read such words as those which follow, after examining certain modern commentaries in which the Gospel of Matthew is disparaged as "Jewish" and the Lord's own words, recorded therein, as "legal."]

In view of the fact that they who teach the commandments of Christ are now denounced by Editor Scofield as "Legalizers," it is interesting to observe that Mr. Spurgeon is conspicuous among those so denounced. Yet Spurgeon is almost the last person in the world to whom the term "Legalizer" could be applied; for surely few if any have ever understood or preached the grace of God better or more clearly than he.

The following extracts are from a volume entitled "The Gospel of the Kingdom." It had an introduction by the late Arthur T. Pierson, in which he says: "This commentary on the Gospel of Matthew is the latest and ripest of his life's labors," — "his last and best work." The quoted extracts will make it clear that the present writer in his books on the Kingdom of God, is merely seeking to revive in the consciousness of the saints of the present day that which was held (without a single exception that we are aware of) by all sound teachers of previous generations.]

These are Mr. Spurgeon's comments:

Note on Matthew 2: 4-6.

WITH joy we would note the name of *Governor* here given to Jesus. We are of the spiritual Israel if He rules us. Oh, that the day may soon come when the literal Israel shall behold the government laid upon His shoulder.

"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

He continued the warning John had given: "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The King exceeds His herald; but He does not differ from him as to His message ...

In Christ Jesus, God was about to reign among the sons of men, and therefore men were to seek peace with Him. How much more ought we to repent who live in the midst of that kingdom?

OUR Lord not only preached the kingdom, but He now began to call one and another into its service and privilege.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.”

This is the peculiar blessing of the elect of God, and it stands high up in the list of honor. The only homage which wickedness can pay to righteousness is to persecute it. Those who in the first blessing were poor in spirit, are here despised as well as poverty-stricken; and in this they get a new royal charter, which for the second time ensures to them the kingdom of heaven. Yea, they have the kingdom *now*; it is their’s in present possession.

“Ye are the salt of the earth” etc.

Thus He speaks to those whom He enrolls in His kingdom. In their character there is a preserving force to keep the rest of society from utter corruption. If they were not scattered among men the race would putrefy.

“Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments” etc.

Our King is not come to abrogate the law, but to confirm and assert it. His commands are eternal; and if any of the teachers of it should through error break His law, and teach that its least command is nullified, they will lose rank, and subside into the lowest place. The peerage of His kingdom is ordered according to *obedience*. Not birth, knowledge, or success will make a man great; but humble and precise obedience, both in word and in deed. “Whosoever shall do and teach,” he is the man who “shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”¹ Hence the Lord Jesus does not set up a milder law, nor will He allow any one of His servants to presume to do so. Our King fulfils the ancient law, and His Spirit works in us to will and to do of God’s good pleasure as set forth in the inimitable statutes of righteousness.

Lord, make me of this Thy Kingdom a right loyal subject, and may I both “do and teach” according to Thy Word! Whether I am little or great on earth, make me great in obedience to Thee!

THE Kingdom is not for rebels, but for the exactly obedient. It not only requires of us holiness, reverence, integrity and purity, but it works all these in our hearts and lives. The gospel does not give us outward liberty to sin because of the superior excellence of a supposed inner sanctity; but rather it produces outward sanctity by working in our inmost soul a glorious freedom in the law of the Lord.

What a King we have in Jesus! What manner of persons ought we to be who avow ourselves to be in His holy Kingdom? How conservative ought we to be of our *Father’s revealed will*? How determined to allow no trifling with the law and the prophets?

“But I say unto you, swear not at all,” etc.

False swearing was forbidden of old; but every kind of swearing is forbidden now by word of our Lord Jesus. He mentions several forms of oath and forbids them all; and then prescribes simple forms of affirmation or denial, as all that His followers should employ. Notwithstanding much that may be advanced to the contrary, there is no evading the plain sense of this passage that every sort of oath, however solemn or true, is forbidden to a follower of Jesus. Whether in court of law or out of it, the rule is “*Swear not at all*” Yet

1 But Editor Scofield says he is the man who shall be called a “Legalist.”

in this Christian country we have swearing everywhere, and especially among law-makers. Our legislators begin their official existence by swearing. By those who obey the law of the Saviour's Kingdom, all swearing is set aside, that the simple word of affirmation or denial, calmly repeated, may remain as the simple bond of truth. ... Christians should not yield to an evil custom, however great the pressure put upon them; but they should abide by the plain and unmistakable command of their Lord and King.

"After this manner therefore pray ye."

Our Lord having warned us against certain vices which had connected themselves with prayer, as to its place and spirit, now gives us a model upon which to fashion our prayers. This delightful prayer is short, devout, and full of meaning. Its first three petitions are for God and His glory. Our chief prayers to God are to be for His glory. Do we thus begin with God in prayer? Does not the daily bread come in before the kingdom?

We pray as children to a Father, and we pray as brothers; for we say "*Our Father*." "*Our Father*" is a familiar name; but the words "which art in heaven" suggest the reverence due to Him. Our Father, and yet in heaven; in heaven, and yet our Father. May His Name be treated reverently, and may all that is about Him — His word and His gospel — be regarded with the deepest awe. It is for us so to walk before the Lord in all lowliness, that all shall see that we reverence the character of the thrice-holy One. Then we can truly pray "Hallowed be Thy Name," when we hallow it ourselves.

"And forgive us our debts" etc.

This pardon we can only obtain as we freely pass over the offences of others against ourselves: "*As we forgive our debtors*." This is a reasonable, nay a blessed requirement, which it is a delight to fulfil. It would not be safe for God to forgive a man who will not forgive others.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses" etc.

This enforces Christian action by limiting the power of prayer according to our obedience to the command to forgive. If we would be forgiven we must forgive; if we will not forgive we cannot be forgiven. This yoke is easy; this burden is light. It may be a blessing to be wronged, since it affords us an opportunity of judging whether we are indeed the recipients of the pardon which comes from the throne of God. Very sweet is it to pass by other men's offences against ourselves; for thus we learn how sweet it is to the Lord to pardon us.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" etc.

What a kingdom is this which has such a law! This is the Code Christian! This is the condensation of all that is right and generous. We adore the King out of Whose heart and mouth such a law could flow. This one rule is proof of the divinity of our holy religion. The universal practice of it by all who call themselves Christians would carry conviction to Jew, Turk, and infidel with greater speed and certainty than all the apologies and arguments which the wit or piety of men could produce.

Lord, teach it to me! Write it on the fleshy tablets of my renewed heart! Write it out in full in my life!

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (10:7).

Their first work was proclaiming the coming *Kingdom*, and preparing the way for the

coming King. Those Israelites who were willing might become subjects of this heavenly Kingdom, and therefore they were informed of its near approach.

[The foregoing quotations from Mr. Spurgeon's work will suffice to show that he regarded the Gospel of Matthew as belonging in its entirety to this dispensation; and it appears that he had never even heard of the notion that Christ had offered the earthly kingdom to the Jews, and that they had refused it. — Philip Mauro]

APPENDIX 2

[The Scriptures bear the clearest witness to the fact that the Kingdom of God is but another name for the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, Whose coming into the world, as announced by John the Baptist, was the true beginning of that Kingdom in all that was to characterize it throughout the age. The one inspired definition of the Kingdom given to us emphasizes in a special way the relation of the Holy Spirit of God thereto. That definition is in these words: "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). The Kingdom of God is indeed that *spiritual* realm wherein the will of God is done in the power of the Holy Ghost.

The following extracts are from the writings of William Law, who was born in 1686 and died 1761, a man noted for his great spirituality, and especially for his keen perception of the truth that the Kingdom or the "gospel state" into which a man is brought by faith in Christ, is one in which nothing is done except the Holy Spirit has the doing of it. We commend these extracts to the careful perusal of our readers.]

EXTRACTS FROM WILLIAM LAW

The truth and perfection of the gospel state could not show itself, till it became solely a ministration of the Spirit, or a kingdom in which the Holy Spirit of God had the doing of all that was done in it. The apostles, whilst Christ was with them in the flesh, were instructed in heavenly truths from His mouth, and enabled to work miracles in His name, yet not qualified to know and teach the mysteries of His kingdom. After His resurrection, He conversed with them forty days, speaking to them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God; nay, though He breathed on them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," yet this also would not do; they were still unable to preach or bear witness to the truth as it is in Jesus. And the reason is, there was still a higher dispensation to come, which stood in such an opening of the divine life in their hearts, as could not be effected from an outward instruction of Christ Himself.

And every religious trust or confidence in anything but the divine operation within us is but a sort of image worship, which, though it may deny the form, yet retains the power thereof in the heart. And he that places any religious safety in theological decisions, scholastic points, in particular doctrines and opinions that must be held about the Scripture words of faith, justification, sanctification, election, and reprobation, so far departs from the true worship of the living God ... and sets up an idol of notions to be worshipped, if not instead of, yet along with Him. And I believe it may be taken for a certain truth that every society of Christians whose religion stands upon this ground, however ardent, laborious, and good their zeal may seem to be in such matters, yet in spite of all, sooner or later, it will be found that nature is at the bottom, and that a selfish, earthly, overbearing pride in their own definitions and doctrines of words will by degrees creep up to the same height, and become that same fleshly wisdom, doing those very same

things, which they exclaim against in popes, cardinals, and Jesuits. Nor can it possibly be otherwise. For a letter-learned zeal has but one nature wherever it is; it can only do that for Christians which it did for Jews. As it anciently brought forth scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, and crucifiers of Christ, as it afterwards brought forth heresies schisms, popes, papal decrees, images, anathemas, transubstantiation, so in Protestant countries it will be doing the same thing, only with other materials; images of wood and clay, will only be given up for images of doctrines; grace and works, imputed sin, and imputed righteousness, election, and reprobation will have their Synods of Dort, as truly evangelical, as any Council of Trent

But this truth of truths, fully possessed, and firmly adhered to, brings God and man together, puts an end to every “Lo here and Lo there,” and turns the whole faith of man to a Christ that can nowhere be a Saviour to him, but as essentially born in the inmost spirit of his soul, nor possible to be born there by any other means, but the immediate inspiration and working power of the Holy Spirit within him. To this man alone all Scripture gives daily edification; the words of Christ and His apostles fall like a fire into him. And what is it that they kindle there? Not notions, not itching ears, nor rambling desires after new theories and new expounders of them, but a holy frame of love, to be always with, always attending to, that Christ and His Holy Spirit within him, which alone can make him to be and do all that, which the words of Christ and His apostles have taught. For there is no possibility of being like-minded with Christ in anything that He taught, or having the truth of one Christian virtue, but by the nature and Spirit of Christ become essentially living in us. Read all our Saviour’s divine sermon from the Mount, consent to the goodness of every part of it, yet the time of practising it will never come till you have a new nature from Christ, and are as vitally in Him, and He in you, as the vine in the branch, and the branch in the vine. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” is a divine truth, but will do us no divine good, unless we receive it as saying neither more nor less, than “Blessed are they that are born again of the Spirit, for they alone can see God.” For no blessedness, either of truth or life can be found in men, but where the Spirit and Life of God are essentially born within them.

Now, whether this self broken off from God, reasons, wills, and contends about the difference of Scripture words and opinions, or reasons against them all, the same evil state of fallen nature, the same loss of life, the same separation from God, the same evil tempers of flesh and blood, will be equally strengthened and inflamed by the one as by the other — hence it is that Papists and Protestants are hating, fighting, and killing one another for the sake of their different excellent opinions, and yet, as to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, they are in the highest union and communion with one another. For if you expect a zealous Protestant to be therefore a newborn creature alive unto God, or a zealous Papist to be therefore dead to all divine goodness, you may be said to have lived in the world without either eyes or ears. And the reason why it must be so is because bad syllogisms *for* transubstantiation, and better syllogisms *against* it, signify no more towards the casting Satan out of our souls, than a bad or better taste for painting.

Hence also it is, that Christendom, full of the nicest decisions about faith, grace, works, merits, satisfaction, heresies, schisms, etc., is full of all those evil tempers which prevailed in the heathen world when none of these things were ever thought of.

This is plain, not only from the nature of a written history or instruction, but from the express words of our Lord, saying, “Except a man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God.” Therefore the new birth from above, or of the Spirit, is that alone which gives true knowledge and perception of that which is the kingdom of God. The history may relate truths enough about it; but the kingdom of God, being noth-

ing else but the power and presence of God, dwelling and ruling in our souls, this can only manifest itself, and can manifest itself to nothing in man but to the new birth. For everything else in man is deaf and dumb and blind to the kingdom of God; but when that which died in Adam is made alive again by the quickening Spirit from above, this being the birth which came at first from God, and a partaker of the divine nature, this knows, finds, and enjoys the kingdom of God.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life,” says Christ; this record of Scripture is true; but what a delusion for a man to think that he knows and finds this to be true, and that Christ is all this benefit and blessing to him, because he assents, consents, and contends, it may be, for the truth of those words. This is impossible. The new birth is here again the only power of entrance; everything else knocks at the door in vain. “I know you not,” says Christ, to everything but the new birth. “I am the way, the truth, and the life;” this tells us neither more nor less, than if Christ had said, I am the kingdom of God, into which nothing can enter, but that which is born of the Spirit.

For no one can be in a better state than this; the wisdom of the Greek, the carnality of the Jew, must have the whole government of him, till he is born of and led by the Spirit of God; this alone is the kingdom of God, and everything else is the kingdom of this world, in which Satan is declared to be the prince. Poor, miserable man! that strives, with all the sophistry of human wit, to be delivered from the immediate continual operation and government of the Spirit of God, not considering that where God is not, there is the devil, and where the Spirit rules not, there all is the work of the flesh, though nothing be talked of but spiritual and Christian matters. I say talked of; for the best ability of the natural man can go no further than talk, and notions, and opinions about Scripture words and facts; in these he may be a great critic, an acute logician, a powerful orator, and know everything of Scripture, except the Spirit and the truth.

How much then is it to be lamented, as well as impossible to be denied, that though all Scripture assures us, that the things of the Spirit are and must, to the end of the world, be foolishness to the natural man, yet from one end of learned Christendom to the other, nothing is thought of as the true and proper means of attaining a divine knowledge, but that which every natural, selfish, proud, envious, false, vainglorious, worldly man can do. Where is that divinity student who thinks, or was ever taught to think, of partaking of the light of the gospel in any other way, than by doing with the Scriptures that which he does with pagan writers, whether poets, orators, or comedians, namely, exercise his logic, rhetoric, and critical skill, in descanting upon them? This done, he is thought by himself, and often by others, to have a sufficiency of divine apostolical knowledge. What wonder, therefore, if it should sometimes happen, that the very same vain, corrupt, puffing literature, that raises one man to be a poet laureate, should set another in a divinity chair?

The Kingdom of God is only where the Light and Spirit of God dwell and rule

That one Light and Spirit, which was only one from all eternity, before angels or any heavenly beings were created, must to all eternity be that one only Light and Spirit, by which men can ever have any union or communion with God. Every other light is but the light whence beasts have their sense and subtlety; every other spirit is but that which gives to flesh and blood all its lusts and appetites. Hence it is, that the gospel state is by our Lord affirmed to be a kingdom of heaven at hand, or come among men, because it has the nature of no worldly thing or creaturely power, is to serve no worldly ends, can be helped by no worldly power, receives nothing from man but man’s full denial of himself, stands upon nothing that is finite or transitory, has no existence but in that working

power of God that created and upholds heaven and earth, and is a kingdom of God become man, and a kingdom of men united to God, through a continual immediate divine illumination. What scripture of the New Testament can you read that does not prove this to be the gospel state, a kingdom of God, into which none can enter but by being born of the Spirit, none can continue to be alive in it but by being led by the Spirit, and in which not a thought, or desire, or action can be allowed to have any part in it, but as it is a fruit of the Spirit?

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” What is God’s kingdom in heaven, but the manifestation of what God is, and what He does in His heavenly creatures? How is His will done there, but because His Holy Spirit is the life, the power, and mover of all that live in it? We daily read this prayer; we extol it under the name of the Lord’s Prayer, and yet (for the sake of orthodoxy) preach and write against all that is prayed for in it. For nothing but a continual, essential, immediate divine illumination can do that which we pray may be done.

For where can God’s kingdom be come, but where every other power but His is at an end, and driven out of it? How can His will only be done, but where the Spirit that wills in God wills in the creature?

What now have parts, and literature, and the natural abilities of man that they can do here? Just as much as they can do at the resurrection of the dead; for all that is to be done here is nothing else but resurrection and life. Therefore, that which gave eyes to the blind, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, and raised the dead that alone can and must do all that is to be done in this gospel kingdom of God. For even the smallest work or fruit of grace must be as solely done by God as the greatest miracle in nature; and the reason is, because every work of grace is the same overcoming of nature, as when the dead are raised to life. Yet vain man would be thought to be something, to have great power and ability in this kingdom of grace, not because he happens to be born of noble parents, is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day, but because he has happened to be made a scholar, has run through all languages and histories, has been long exercised in conjectures and criticisms, and has his head as full of all notions, theological, poetical, and philosophical, as a dictionary is full of all sorts of words.

Now let this simple question decide the whole matter here: Has this great scholar any more power of saying to this mountain, “Be thou removed hence, and cast into the sea,” than the illiterate Christian has? If not, he is just as weak, as powerless, and little in the kingdom of God as *he* is. But if the illiterate man’s faith should happen to be nearer to the bulk of a grain of mustard seed than that of the prodigious scholar, the illiterate Christian stands much above him in the kingdom of God.

The true nature of the Kingdom of Heaven

The first and main doctrine of Christ and His apostles was to tell the Jews “that the kingdom of God was at hand,” or was come to them. Proof enough surely that their Church was not the kingdom of God, though by God’s appointment, and under the laws of His own commanding. But why not, when it was thus set up by God? It was because it had human and worldly things in it, consisted of carnal ordinances, and had only types, and figures, and shadows of a kingdom of God that was to come. Of this kingdom Christ says, “My kingdom is not of this world”; and as a proof of it, He adds, “If it was of this world, then would My servants fight;” which was saying, that it was so different in kind, and so superior in nature to this world, that no sort of worldly power could either help or hinder it. But of this world, into which the kingdom of God was come, the Holy One of God says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good comfort, I have overcome the

world.” Now how was it that Christ’s victory was their victory? It was because He was in them and they in Him. “Because I live, ye shall live also; in that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.”

When the holy Church of Christ, the kingdom of God, came among men, was first set up, it was the apostle’s boast, that all other wisdom or learning was sunk into nothing. “Where,” says he, “is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world? Hath not God made them foolishness?” But now, it is the boast of all churches, that they are full of the wise, the scribes, the disputers of the world, who sit with learned pomp in the apostle’s chair, and have the mysteries of the kingdom of God committed to them.

Hence it is, that from a religion of heavenly love, built upon the redeeming life and doctrines of a Son of God dying to save the whole world, division, bitterness, envy, pride, strife, hatred, and persecution, nay every outrage of war and bloodshed, breathe and break forth with more strength in learned Christendom than ever they did from a religion of pagan idolatry, set up by Satan.

The Gospel, a Ministration of the Spirit

Let me now only, before we break up, observe to you the true ground and nature of gospel Christianity ...

When the Son of God had taken a birth in and from the human nature, had finished all the wonders that belonged to our redemption, and was sat down at the right hand of God in heaven, then a heavenly kingdom was set up on earth, and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, or was given to the flock of Christ in such degree of birth and life, as never was, nor could be given to the human nature, till Christ, the Redeemer of the human nature, was glorified. But when the humanity of Christ, our second Adam was glorified, then the heavenly life, the comfort and power, and presence of the Holy Spirit, was the gift which He gave to His brethren, His friends and followers, which He had left upon earth.

The Holy Ghost descended in the shape of cloven tongues of fire on the heads of those that were to begin and open the new powers of a divine life set up amongst men. This was the beginning and manifestation of the whole nature and power of gospel Christianity. ... Hence the apostles were new men, entered into a new kingdom, come down from heaven, enlightened with new light, inflamed with new love, and preached not any absent or distant thing, but Jesus Christ, as the wisdom and power of God, felt and found within them, and as a power of God ready to be communicated in the same manner, as a new birth from above, to all that would repent and believe in Him.

Here therefore, my friend, you are to place the true distinction of gospel Christianity from all that went before it, or that is to come up after it. It is purely and solely a divine life awakened and set up amongst men, as the effect and fruit of Christ’s glorification in heaven, and has no other promise from Him but that of His Holy Spirit, to be with it as its light, its guide, its strength, its comfort, and protection, to the end of the world. Therefore as gospel Christians, we belong to the new covenant of the Holy Spirit, which is the kingdom of God come down from heaven on the day of Pentecost; and therefore it is, that there is no possibility of seeing or entering into this new kingdom, but by being born again by the Spirit.

“Stephen was a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost.” These are always together, the one can never be without the other.

This was Stephen’s qualification for the deaconship, not because of anything high or pe-

cular in that office, but because the gospel dispensation was the opening a kingdom of God amongst men, a spiritual theocracy, in which as God, and man fallen from God, were united in Christ, so an union of immediate operation between God and man was restored. Hence this dispensation was called, in distinction from all that went before it in outward types, figures, and shadows, a ministration of the Spirit, that is, an immediate operation of the Spirit of God Himself in man, in which nothing human, creaturely, or depending upon the power of man's wit, ability, or natural powers, had any place, but all things begun in, and under obedience to the Spirit, and all were done in the power and strength of faith united with God.

If you turn to your own strength, to have Christian piety, and goodness; or are so deceived, as to think that learning or logical abilities, critical acuteness, skill in languages, church systems, rules and orders, articles and opinions, are to do that for you, which the Spirit of Christ did, and only could do for the first Christians; your diligent reading the history of the gospel, will leave you as poor, and empty and dead to the divine life, as if you had been only a diligent reader of the history of all the religions in the world. But if all that you trust to, long after, and depend upon, is that Holy Spirit, which alone made the Scripture saints able to call Jesus "Lord"; and if this be your one faith and one hope, the divine life, lost in Adam, will find itself alive again in Christ Jesus ... And be assured, that nothing but this new birth can be the gospel Christian, because nothing else can possibly love, like, do, and be *that which Christ preached in His divine Sermon on the Mount*. And be assured also, that when the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit that ruleth in you, there will be *no hard sayings* in the gospel; but all that the heavenly Christ taught in the flesh will be as meat and drink to you; and you will have no joy, but in walking, as He walked, in saying, loving, and doing, that which He said, loved, and did. And indeed, how can it be otherwise? How can notions, doctrines, and opinions about Christ, what He was, and did, make you in Him a new creature? Can anyone be made a Samson, or a Solomon, by being well versed in the history of what they were, said, or did?

APPENDIX 3

EXTRACTS FROM DARBY AND NEWBERRY

Mr. J. N. Darby, in reply to the question, "How are we to regard the Sermon on the Mount?" said:

"It contains the principles of the Kingdom of God and its code of laws. It forms the rule of Christian life to us, to whom the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. MAY NOTHING ROB THE CHURCH OF THESE MOST PRECIOUS CHAPTERS OF PRECEPT AND PROMISE; FOR THE LORD HERE UNFOLDS THE CHARACTER OF GOD AS FATHER, IN A WAY HE DOES NOWHERE ELSE; and of this He says in John 17: 'I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it.'

"The precepts of Matthew 5, 6 and 7 are very clear and they cut very close. The sword is two-edged, sharp and piercing, separating and dividing; and the flesh trembles as we read it. But the higher the calling [in this case to a place in the family of God] the profounder will be the perceptive word that is connected with it, and the richer and the sweeter the promises. Let us not get drawn away from the unworldly simplicity of Christ shown to us in these chapters; and may the prayer the Lord has therein taught be our model and our guide, in matter, in order, in character, and in end."

Mr. Thomas Newberry on the Lord's Prayer

Attempts have been made to rob us of this precious prayer as a thing we have left behind; but notwithstanding all the misuse of "*paternoster*," let us hold to these blessed words that fell from the lips of our Lord.

This prayer is both a pattern and a form, and is well adapted to give the keynote to our prayers. It is a marvellous prayer, taught to His disciples by the great Master of prayer, and therefore divinely perfect. We may compare it with the breastplate of the high priest, containing the Urim and Thummim. These Urim or Thummim, or lights and perfections of the divine mind, are twofold. They may be discovered and learned from the heart of our great High Priest, who is the wisdom as well as the power of God; and they may also be discovered and learned from the original Scriptures, which are the counterpart of that heart, and its outward record.

Let us then consider this precious portion of Scripture, commonly called "The Lord's Prayer," with careful attention to some particulars in the original Greek.

"After this manner pray ye"!

"OUR FATHER." The Word "our" is a very large word; it embraces the whole household of faith, and takes in every fellow-believer. It is not only good to enter into our closet, and

shut our door; but, says the psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of Jehovah" to worship in the great congregation of all the redeemed.

"Our Father." There is no article in the Greek, and God's fatherly character is thus indicated.

"WHICH ART IN HEAVENS." With the article, and in the plural, Heaven is here presented as a locality, and in all its vastness. It was in this temple Paul bowed his knees when he prayed unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in the heavens and on the earth is named; not only the redeemed family of man, but the angels also, who are styled sons of God, and every intelligent creature throughout the universe.

In our Father's house are many mansions. In verse 10 we read, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." There heaven is looked at, not as a locality, but characteristically. It is the character of Heaven that God's will is done there, and therefore the word is without the article, and in the singular. There is but one will in heaven. I love to contemplate heaven in this aspect. I would never be left to my own choice. I love to serve, and I love my Master. Oh, the repose of soul, when everything is left to the Divine will! Gabriel never asks himself, 'What shall I do next? 'Where shall I go?' (See Ezekiel 1:19, 20, 21, 24, 25.) 'When they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a voice from the firmament.' So 'the angels that excel in strength do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word.' Thus we get light to discover one of the perfections of the Word — the distinction between 'the heavens' (with the article, and in the plural) and 'heaven' (without the article, and in the singular). Having got this light, let us look for further perfections.

THUS INTERPRETED, EVERY CLAUSE OF THIS MARVELLOUS PRAYER PRESENTS HEAVEN IN A DISTINCT ASPECT.

1. "OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVENS." Here heaven appears as the Father's house, the dwelling place of God, with its many mansions, and with the secret apartments of the Son. Jesus says, in John 14: "I go to prepare a place for you" — not many mansions, but one place; no more divisions, and no separations there. We have had enough of this on earth, and too much. "And if I go and prepare for you a place, I come again" — not "I will come"; nothing is put between the soul and this blessed hope. Here is another perfection. "For YOU a place," not "a place for you." "You" is emphatic. This place is the apartment of the Son, where His glory dwells, where He will have His Bride with Himself, in that place which He has gone to prepare. He will show her His secret place also. He has asked permission of His Father for her to be there: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou has given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24.) There He will show her this glory, which He had with the Father before the world was.

2. "HALLOWED BE THY NAME." This presents heaven as the temple of God, where the seraphim with covered faces cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah God of hosts." A temple with only a rent veil between the holy and most holy place, into which the High Priest hath Himself entered, there to appear for us. A temple, not only with its ample floor and many worshippers thereon, but with its galleries above, its white-robed choir, and multitudes beyond; so that when the Lamb leads the song, not only do the elders and living creatures join, but the angels take it up, and every creature joins the chorus.

3. "THY KINGDOM COME." Here heaven appears as the palace and throne of God. "Jehovah is in His holy temple." "Jehovah's throne is in heaven." I hear a voice from heaven. Do you hear it? It is the voice of our Beloved, "Come up hither." Are you ready? Let us go together. Look around, what do you see? A throne set in heaven, and One sitting on

the throne, and only One. One will in heaven, and only one.

“Thy kingdom come” — what does this mean? It means “Thy will be done as in heaven” (heaven in the singular shows the kingdom is but one). When God’s will is done in us, the kingdom of God is within us. When God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven, it will be heaven begun below. If God’s will were done on earth today, every sinner would be saved. God seldom swears, except when the importance of the case or the unbelief of our hearts requires it. God wills all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth, and swears it: “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:2). Why are not all saved? Because man has a will of his own. He will die he will not come to Christ that he might have life.

4. “THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.” Heaven is here the centre and source of power to the universe, setting and keeping all in motion and in order, the mighty moving central power of the vast machine of universal action. Earth is a revolted portion of the kingdom, a part of the machinery out of gear. There is a screw loose, and mischief is going on; as there was once in a steam vessel in a storm on the Atlantic; there was something wrong; the engine would not work; a screw was out. Who will put it in? The captain said to the engineer, “You are the fittest person.” He goes down among the heat and steam, puts in the missing portion, and now the vessel rights, and goes onward through the storm. Such was the fact, and the application is simple.

5. “GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.” Here heaven appears as the great storehouse of divine bounty to the universe; the Bethlehem, the house of bread, to the whole kingdom. Every good and perfect gift comes down from above.

“Our daily bread.” “Our” take in every needy one of the household; “bread” not only for the body, but for the soul. Every spoken word is manna with the dew upon it, if God’s voice is heard as speaking from heaven.

6. “AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS.” Here heaven appears as the holiest of all, with its blood stained mercy seat, and the blood sprinkled with the finger upon it (pointing to it), and “seven times” before it “eastward,” between the eye of Him that sitteth between the cherubim and the worshipper. (Leviticus 16:14.) The scarlet sins are seen through the crimson blood, and appear white as snow.

7. “AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.” Here heaven is the school of God, where we learn to forgive, as God in Christ forgave us; becoming thus sons of our Father which is in heaven, perfect as He is perfect.

8. “AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.” Here heaven appears as the paradise of God, with its tree of life, and river of living water, where the Lamb leads, and God wipes off every tear; but without a tempting serpent. No temptation there, from within or from without. No serpent’s venom within; no serpent’s voice without.

9. “BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.” Here heaven appears as “the city of the great King,” the heavenly Jerusalem, into which nothing which defiles enters. All is transcendent holiness. Every defilement is outside. One sight only is lacking in order to enable us fully to comprehend what heaven is. When we have seen that, then shall we fully know from what we have been delivered, and what heaven is as deliverance from evil. That sight is the lake of fire — a sight too fearful to be seen by mortal man; but once seen, it will stamp on the soul forever the sense of the evil of sin. The greatness of our deliverance, and what heaven really is, will be seen by contrast.

10. "FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOREVER, AMEN." The prayers of the Lord Jesus are progressive, as in John 17, taking in the whole compass, from everlasting through all time to everlasting; so here. This completes the scene.

In the various petitions we have: 1. The prodigal's return to the Father's house. 2. The temple filled with glory. 3. The throne established. 4. Almighty power operating without impediment. 5. The storehouse of divine bounty opened. 6. Sin put away forever. 7. The children, having completed their education, home for their eternal holiday. 8. Paradise restored. 9. The city shining out in its purity. Sin, death and Hades cast into the lake of fire. No adversary or evil occurrent.

APPENDIX 4

ALFRED EDERSHEIM ON THE KINGDOM

Alfred Edersheim's monumental work, *"The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,"* stands high as a commentary on the four Gospels. It owes its peculiar value to the exceedingly full and accurate portrayal given in its pages of the customs and modes of thought prevailing in the days of our Lord's earthly ministry, and particularly of the rabbinical teachings of that time concerning the "Kingdom" and the "Messiah." The learned author has, with prodigious industry, searched all available sources for his materials, and has put them together with the minutest care, thus presenting a background for the narratives of the Evangelists by means of which many passages, otherwise obscure, are made clear.

What is important for our purpose is that, in the light of Edersheim's researches, it becomes evident beyond all shadow of doubt that the Lord Jesus was a Messiah very different from that of Jewish expectancy, and that He proclaimed a Kingdom altogether different to that of Jewish expectancy. In the light of these researches it is clearly seen that the Christ and the Kingdom for which the people, influenced by rabbinical teachings, were looking, were not the Christ of God and the Kingdom of God foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures. In this light we can clearly see the great difference — amounting to direct antagonism — between the Kingdom foretold by the prophets of Israel, announced by John the Baptist, and introduced by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that era of earthly supremacy and prosperity described in the writings of the Rabbis. As Edersheim tersely says (page 670):

"The children of that generation expected *quite another Elijah*, and *quite another Christ*; and they disbelieved and complained because the real Elijah [*i.e.* John the Baptist! and Christ did not meet their foolish thoughts."

This radical difference between what the Jews had been taught by their leaders to expect, and what was announced by Christ and His forerunner, led to a sharp conflict between Christ and those rulers which was manifested from the *very first public act of the Lord in Jerusalem*, when He cleansed the temple of the traffickers, and uttered the prophecy of His own death and resurrection which the Jews applied to the temple, whereof they were insanely proud and jealous. (John 2:13–22.) It is simply impossible, in view of the facts brought out by Edersheim, to maintain, or even to suppose, that Christ offered to the men of His day the earthly Kingdom for which they were looking. Thus (commenting on John 7:7) Edersheim says that the world could not hate them (Christ's brethren), because they and the demonstrations they wished Him to give "were quite in accordance with the world and its views. But towards Him, the world cherished personal hatred, because of their contrariety of principle; because Christ was manifested *not to restore an earthly Kingdom to Israel*, but to bring *the heavenly Kingdom upon earth* — to destroy the works of the Devil. Hence He must provoke the enmity of that world which lay in the Wicked One." (Volume 2, page 130.)

Mr. Edersheim's testimony is all the more convincing because he writes without the slightest ref-

erence to (probably in complete ignorance of) the modern postponement theory. It is, of course, impossible to quote more than a few of the passages pertinent to our subject; but what follows will fully bear out what we have stated above.

“According to the rabbinic views of the time, the terms ‘Kingdom,’ ‘Kingdom of heaven’ and ‘Kingdom of God’ in the Targum on Micah 4:7 (‘Kingdom of Jehovah’) were equivalent. In fact, the word ‘heaven’ was very often used instead of ‘God,’ so as to avoid unduly familiarizing the ear with the Sacred Name. This probably accounts for the exclusive use of the expression ‘Kingdom heaven’ in the Gospel by St. Matthew.

“This ‘Kingdom of heaven’ or ‘of God’ must however be distinguished from such terms as *‘the Kingdom of the Messiah,’ ‘the days of the Messiah,’ ‘the age to come,’ ‘the end of days,’* and *‘the end of the extremity of days.’*” [Edersheim is here quoting expressions found in rabbinical writings of the days when our Lord was on earth and prior thereto.] “This is the more important since the ‘Kingdom of heaven’ has been so often confounded with the period of its triumphant manifestation in ‘the days’ or ‘the Kingdom of the Messiah.’” (Page 266.)

Edersheim shows, by many citations from rabbinical writings, that the “Kingdom of God” (or “of heaven”) was clearly distinguished from the era of the Messianic Kingdom, that is to say, the manifestation of the Kingdom in power and glory. In this connection he further says:

“As we pass from the Jewish ideas of the time to the teaching of the New Testament, we feel that while there is a *complete change of spirit*, the form in which the Kingdom of heaven is presented is substantially similar. ... When Christ says that ‘except a man be born from above he cannot see the Kingdom of God,’ He teaches (in opposition to the rabbinic representation of how the Kingdom was taken up) that a man cannot even comprehend that glorious idea of the Reign of God, and of becoming, by conscious self-surrender, one of its subjects, except he be first born from above.” (Page 269.)

“In fact an analysis of 119 passages in the New Testament where the word ‘Kingdom’ occurs, shows that it means *the rule of God; which was manifested in and through Christ; is apparent in the church; is triumphant at the second coming of Christ* (‘the end’); and finally *perfected in the world to come*. Thus viewed, the announcement of John of the near advent of this Kingdom had deepest meaning. ... He came to call Israel to submit to the Reign of God, about to be manifested in Christ. Hence, on the one hand, he called them *to repentance* — a ‘change of mind’ — with all that this implied; and on the other, pointed them to Christ, in the exaltation of His Person and Office. Or rather, the two combined might be summed up in the call; ‘change your mind’ — repent, which implies not only a turning from the past, but a turning to Christ in newness of mind. And thus the symbolic action by which this preaching was accomplished might be termed ‘the baptism of repentance.’

“The account given by St. Luke bears on the face of it that it was a summary, not only of the first, but of *all* John’s preaching. The very presence of his hearers at this call to, and baptism of, repentance, gave point to his words. Did they who — notwithstanding their sins — lived in such security of carelessness and self-righteousness, really understand and fear the consequences of resistance to the coming Kingdom? If so, theirs must be a repentance not only in profession, but of heart and mind, such as would yield fruit both good and visible. Or else did they imagine that, according to the common notion of the time, the vials of wrath were to be poured out *only on the Gentiles*, while they, as *Abraham’s children* were sure of escape — in the words of the Talmud, that ‘the night’ (Isaiah 21:12) was only to the nations of the world, but ‘the morning’ to Israel? For no principle was more firmly established in the popular conviction than that all Israel had part in the world to come; and this, specifically, *because of their connection with Abraham*. This ap-

pears not only from the New Testament, but also from Philo, and Josephus, and from many rabbinic passages. ... In fact by their descent from Abraham, all the children of Israel were *nobles*, infinitely higher than any proselytes. ... In its extravagance the Midrash thus apostrophises Abraham: 'if thy children were even (morally) dead bodies, without blood vessels or bones, thy merit would avail for them!'

"But if such had been the inner thoughts of his hearers, John warned them that God was able of those stones which strewed the river bank to raise up children unto Abraham. (Lightfoot aptly points out a play on the words 'children' and 'stones.' Both words are derived from *bona* to build, which is also used by the Rabbis in a moral sense like our own 'upbuilding,' and in that of the gift or adoption of children.) John further warned them that the proclamation of the Kingdom was, at the same time, the laying of the axe to the root of every tree that bore not fruit. Then, making application of it (in answer to the specific inquiry of various classes), the preacher gave them such practical advice as applied to the well known sins of their past; yet in this also not going beyond the merely negative or preparatory element of 'repentance.' *The positive* and all important aspect of it (the Kingdom message) *was to be presented by Christ.*

"It was only natural that the hearers wondered whether John was himself the Christ, since he thus urged repentance. For this was so closely connected in their thoughts with the advent of the Messiah that it was said, 'if Israel repented but one day, the Son of David would immediately come.' But here John pointed them to the difference between himself and his work, and the Person and Mission of the Christ. In deepest reverence he declared himself not worthy to do Him the service of a slave or of a disciple. His (Christ's) Baptism would not be of preparatory repentance and with water, but the Divine Baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire — in the Spirit who sanctified and the Divine Light which purified, and so effectively qualified for the Kingdom.

"And there was still another contrast. John's was but *preparing* work, the Christ's that of *final decision*; after it came 'the harvest.' His (Christ's) was the harvest and His the garner; His also the fan with which He would sift the wheat from the straw and chaff — the one to be garnered, the other to be burned with fire unextinguished and inextinguishable. Thus early in the history of the Kingdom of God was it indicated that alike that which would prove useless straw and the good corn were inseparably connected in God's harvest field until the reaping time; that both belonged to Him; and that the final separation would only come at the last, and by His hand.' (Pages 269–273.)

Edersheim points out (page 507) that Christianity differs from every system of religion fundamentally as regards "*the forgiveness of sins and the welcome of the sinner.*" As to the former, every human system of religion can but vaguely point to God for a *possible* forgiveness; but what is, in such systems, "merely an abstraction has become *a concrete reality in Christ.* He speaks forgiveness on earth because He is its embodiment. And as regards the second idea (that of the sinner) all other systems know of no welcome to him till by some means, inward or outward, *he has ceased to be a sinner, and has become a penitent.*" It is because of this distinguishing feature of the Kingdom of heaven that Christ demands of all who enter it that they freely extend forgiveness to others.

From Mr. Edersheim's comments on the Sermon on the Mount we quote the following:

"Its great subject is neither righteousness nor yet the New Law (if such designation be proper in regard to what in no real sense is a law), but that which was innermost and uppermost in the mind of Christ — *the Kingdom of God.* ... Christ came to found a *Kingdom*, not a school; to institute a fellowship, not to propound a system."

"Every moral system (founded by men) is a *road* by which (through self-denial, discipline, and effort) men seek to reach the goal. Christ *begins with this goal.* He places His

disciples *at once* in the position to which all other teachers point as the end. They *work up* to the goal of becoming ‘the children of the Kingdom;’ He *makes men such* freely and of His grace; and this [*i.e.* the Sermon on the Mount] *is* the Kingdom. What others labour for, He *gives*. They begin by demanding; He by bestowing; because He brings good tidings of forgiveness and mercy. Accordingly, in the strict sense, there is neither law nor moral system here [in the Sermon on the Mount], but entrance into a new life: ‘Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.’

“But if the Sermon on the Mount contains not a new — nor indeed any — system of morality, but addresses itself to *a new condition of things*, it follows that the promises, attaching for example to the so-called ‘Beatitudes,’ must not be regarded as the *reward* of the spiritual state with which they are respectively connected, nor yet as their *result*. It is not because a man is poor in spirit that his is the Kingdom of heaven (in the sense that one state will grow into the other, or be its result). Still less is the one the *reward* of the other. The connecting link between the state and the promise is, in each case, *Christ Himself*; because *He* stands between our present and our future, and has opened the Kingdom of heaven to all believers. Thus the promise represents the *gift of grace by Christ in the new Kingdom*, as adapted to each case.¹

It is Christ then as the King Who is here flinging open the gates of His Kingdom.

On the Parable of the Sower Edersheim says:

“According to Jewish view the Messiah was to appear in outward pomp, and by display of power was to establish the Kingdom. But this was the very idea of the Kingdom with which Satan had tempted Jesus at the outset of His ministry. In opposition to it was this ‘mystery of the Kingdom,’ in accordance with which it consisted in reception of the seed of the Word. That reception would depend on the nature of the soil — that is, on the mind and heart of the hearers. The Kingdom of God was within. ... *He had brought the Kingdom.*

The Sower had gone forth to sow. This was of free grace — the Gospel” (Page 587).

Commenting on the Parable of the Good Shepherd, and speaking of the sheep for which He lays down His life, Edersheim says:

“But those sheep, they are not only ‘of this fold,’ not all of the Jewish ‘fold,’ but also scattered sheep of the Gentiles. They have all the characteristics of the flock; they are His; and they hear His voice; but as yet they are outside the fold. Them also the Good Shepherd ‘must lead;’ and in evidence that they are His, as He calls them and goes before them, they shall hear His voice; and so, O most glorious consummation! they shall become ‘one flock and one Shepherd.’

“And thus the great goal of the Old Testament is reached and ‘the good tidings of great joy’ which issue from Israel, ‘are unto all people.’ *The Kingdom of David, which is the Kingdom of God is set up upon earth, and opened to all believers.* We cannot help noticing *how different from the Jewish ideas of it* is this Kingdom with its Shepherd-King, Who lays down His life for the sheep, and Who leads the Gentiles — not to subjection or to inferiority — but to *equality of faith and privileges*; taking the Jews out of their special ‘fold,’ and leading up the Gentiles; and so making of both ‘one flock.’ (Compare Ephesians 2:14, 15, and 3:3–6.)

¹ In other words, Christ is the “Door” through which the poor in spirit, the meek, the pure in heart, etc., enter by faith into the several promised blessings.

“In the final step of ‘Ascent’ (that is to say, in reaching the climax of the Parable) the leading thoughts of the whole discourse are taken up and carried to the last and highest thought: *the Good Shepherd Who brings together the one flock!* Yes — by laying down His life, but also *by taking it up again!* Both are necessary for the work of the Good Shepherd; — nay, the life is laid down in the surrender of sacrifice, in order that it may be *taken up again* (and much more fully) in the Resurrection Power. And *therefore* His Father loveth Him as the Messiah-Shepherd, Who so fully does the work committed to Him, and so entirely surrenders Himself to it.

“His death, His Resurrection! Let no one imagine that it comes from without! It is *His own act*. He has ‘power’ in regard to both; and both are His own voluntary, sovereign and Divine acts.

“And this, all this, in order to be the Shepherd-Saviour, to die and rise for His sheep; and thus to gather them all into one flock, and to be their Shepherd. *This, neither more nor less, was the Mission which God had given Him; this the ‘commandment which He had received of His Father — that which God had given Him to do.’*”

In connection with the great efforts which the Pharisees, Herodians, and other enemies of Christ were ever making to find ground for accusing Him to the Roman authorities, Edersheim brings out facts which make it simply an impossibility that the Lord could ever have uttered a word of setting up an earthly kingdom; for had He done so, “He would have quickly perished like Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:37).” Mr. Edersheim’s testimony is all the more convincing because given without the slightest bias against, and apparently without the slightest knowledge of, the postponement theory. We call special attention, therefore, to the following passage, in which, speaking of the effort of the Pharisees and Herodians to entangle Him in His talk (Matt. 22:15–22), Edersheim says:

“Foiled in the attempt to involve Him with the ecclesiastical authorities, they next attempted the much more dangerous device of bringing Him into collision with the civil authorities. Remembering the ever watchful jealousy of Rome, the reckless tyranny of Pilate, the low artifices of Herod (who was at that time in Jerusalem), we instinctively feel how even the *slightest compromise* on the part of Jesus in regard to the authority of Caesar would have been *absolutely fatal*. If it could have been proved, on undeniable testimony, that Jesus had declared Himself on the side of, or even encouraged, the so-called ‘Nationalist’ party, He would have quickly perished like Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:37).

“The Jewish leaders would thus have accomplished their object, and its unpopularity would have recoiled only on the hated Roman power. How great the danger was which threatened Jesus may be gathered from this, that despite His clear answer, the charge that He perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, was actually among those brought against Him before Pilate.”

The facts to which Edersheim here calls attention afford conclusive proof, without looking any further, that the Kingdom announced by the Lord Jesus was truly “not of this world”; that it was the “Kingdom of *heaven*” — not of earth, the “Kingdom of *God*” — not of man.