

***The Mystery of  
Christ and the Church  
and  
The Covenants***

***Showing God's Purpose to  
Glorify Himself in Christ  
in Two Spheres:***

***The Heavenly  
and  
The Earthly***

Volume 4:

***The Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens  
and of Christ and the Church***

By R. A. Huebner

Made and printed in USA  
2016

Website: [presenttruthpublishers.com](http://presenttruthpublishers.com)



**Present Truth Publishers**

825 Harmony Road, Jackson NJ  
08527 USA

## *Table of Contents*

Volume 1: **Adam Transgressed His Covenant with God**

Volume 2: **Noah's Governmental Administration**

Volume 3: **Moses' Covenant of the Law**

Volume 4: **The Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens  
and of Christ and the Church**

Preface ..... ii

1. Distinctions Between the Testaments .....	1
2. Outline and Survey of Matthew's Gospel .....	24
3. Observations on the Kingdom in Matthew's Gospel .....	43
4. The Kingdom of the Heavens in Matthew Up to Chapter 12 .....	61
5. The Kingdom of the Heavens in Matthew in Mystery .....	82
6. The Kingdom in Mark, Luke and John's Writings .....	99
7. Notice of the Assembly in Matthew .....	105
8. The Transfiguration: Dispensationally, Prophetically & Morally Considered .....	122
9. The Various Commissions in the Gospels and the Acts .....	139
10. The Kingdom in the Book of Acts .....	177
11. The New Covenant and the Millennial Kingdom .....	189
12. The Mystery of Christ and the Church .....	217
13. Concluding Remarks .....	240

## *Preface*

This is the fourth of four volumes about the mystery and the covenants. We began in volume 1 with the silence that had been kept in OT times regarding the mystery of Christ and the church, then the objections of covenant theology, claiming that the silence was only partial, and why this objection is made. The truth about the Adamic Covenant is that Adam had it before he fell, and he transgressed against it in the Fall. After that, in volume 2, we considered the covenant made with Noah and one of the "covenants of promise" (the Abrahamic covenant), which is said in Scripture to belong to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:3-5). Of course, in the ways of God, it will be made good to the new Israel under the new covenant. In volume 3, the three covenants of the law given to Israel through Moses and the covenant of priesthood with Phineas and the Davidic covenant with King David were before us. In this volume 4, we will consider the relationship between the Kingdom, especially in Matthew, and the covenants.

A related topic is the relationship between the various commissions in the gospels and the Acts and the covenants of God. The subjects of the New Covenant and the Millennial Kingdom naturally follow. But what about the present day? Is there a Covenant for the assembly of God at the present time?

The Mystery of Christ and the Church is the topic that concludes this present volume, with some concluding remarks on the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in His death.

Attentive readers will note that the covenants are not, in and of themselves, the organizing principle around which the NT is written, anymore than they were the organizing principle for the OT. Nevertheless, the covenants are still intimately connected with God's relationships with men.

Of course, not all the covenants in the Bible are taken up in this manuscript. If a covenant had God for one of its parties, and if the covenant was apparently of profound significance with respect to the relationship between God and man, then it was selected for treatment in this work. But the covenant that Judas Iscariot made with the leaders of the Jews (God was not a party to it), and the covenant of Nehemiah (the Bible does not say that God agreed to it), and the covenant of the shewbread (a covenant that did not appear to be of as great a significance as some others) are not taken up in this work. There are others.

The manuscript for this book was found among the papers of the late R. A. Huebner and has been prepared for publication without his guidance or input. Except where noted in the text, the changes made to his manuscript were confined to editorial changes for grammar, spelling, reference checking, rearrangements of some of the topics as seemed needed, and mostly minor adjustments of wording for

clarity's sake.

Of particular difficulty for the editor was preparation of a conclusion for this volume. A good conclusion might contain a practical application of the subject matter of the book (all 4 volumes), as well as a summary of the substance of the work, but no conclusion was present in the manuscript left by the author. However, two or three quotations had been selected by the author and had been set aside for the end of the book. These applied the doctrines taught to the desire of our hearts as believers on the Lord Jesus in the remembrance of Him. Accordingly, they now appear as the final chapter called, "Concluding Remarks." In addition, thoughtful readers may be able to draw together for themselves sound and faithful precepts that relate to the Mystery of Christ and the Church and the Covenants with help from the contents of this work. What have we learned? What will we do with what we have read here? Are not the personal glories of the Lord Jesus Christ the goal toward which these four volumes have been directed?

The editor is very conscious that the author would not have wanted this book to appear in public without its being accompanied by prayer for the blessing of the Lord Jesus upon it to the good of the souls that read it.

D. Ryan, editor

Scripture quotations are from the translation by J. N. Darby, unless otherwise indicated, but the KJV may be found in many of the quotations from other authors. Since there is much quoted material from JND, these quotations will be left in 10 point type but each will be marked at the start and at the end in this manner:

❖ Quoted material from J. N. Darby. ❖

Other quotations will be offset, as usual.

## Chapter 1

### *The Distinctions and Connections Between the Testaments*

We shall touch on the subject of the relationship of the two testaments before taking up the subject of the kingdom in Matthew's Gospel. At present, this issue is theologically expressed in evangelical circles as *continuity and discontinuity* between the Testaments. It is generally regarded that Covenantism virtually sees no discontinuity while Dispensationalism sees great discontinuity between the two testaments.<sup>1</sup>

In view of this issue, note that the remnant of Israel that was regathered after the captivity of Judah under the Babylonians for 70 years degenerated, as seen in Malachi. There followed Malachi what has been termed "the 400 silent years" until the appearance of John the Baptist, who broke the 400 year prophetic silence by announcing that the kingdom of the heavens was at hand. With that announcement there were coupled warnings of judgment: the axe would be laid to the tree, besides which the winnowing fan would blow away the chaff. Such would be the work of the coming One (Micah 5:2) in inaugurating the kingdom.

Faithful ones amid that returned remnant from the Babylonian captivity had long before been noted by Mal. 3:16, dwelling amid a people who brooked no rebuke from the prophet Malachi. Sovereignly, God ever had His elect during the years to John's time. It is morally fitting that there be present for our Lord Jesus Christ such as answered to Mal. 3:16 when He came into the world in holy manhood. Such godly souls are brought before us in the early chapters of Luke, where we find them awaiting the consolation of Israel. There are many moral lessons bearing on the state of our souls that may be learned by considering the

---

1. Something called New Covenant Theology (NCT) has been developing recently outside academia, in which system un-named covenants in Scripture are rejected; i.e., the covenant of redemption, covenant of grace, and the covenant of works with Adam are rejected. However, the system maintains, as does Covenantism, supersessionism. The system has the church under the New Covenant. Allegedly examining the OT through the lens of the NT (merely sounds good), the system maintains, as does Covenantism, what I call *spiritual alchemy* as its hermeneutic, *transmuting* Israel's prophecies into fulfilment in a "different way" in the church presently. The articles provided have answers to both these systems.

moral features of this remnant in Luke.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Godly Remnant Held The Literalness of the Prophesied Kingdom*

It has been shown in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, that this remnant (including John the Baptist, the Lord, and the disciples) held the expectation of a literal kingdom -- as did the Jews generally. (In Acts 1:6, 7, we find the disciples still holding that expectancy after all the Lord had said to them. Their timing, not their expectation, was off.) Indeed, had John come announcing a kingdom as imagined by Covenantists, the people would not have held John to be a prophet -- as they would have regarded him as contradicting the prophets they understood to have prophesied of a literal kingdom. No, John was not a Covenantist preaching a spiritual kingdom. That would actually be discontinuity. Here we have continuity with the OT prophets.

We might note that John struck deeply against the system developed by the scribes and Pharisees. Whatever carnal expectations they had about the coming kingdom does not set aside the literalness of the kingdom. Of course, under Messiah's reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23), the Jews will all be righteous (Isa. 60:21), for the Deliverer will come and turn ungodliness away from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). Rom. 11:26 is in continuity with the OT prophecies, of course. The literal kingdom, insofar as the nation of Israel is concerned, will then be also spiritual.

### *The Kingdom Inauguration Postponed*

Yes, the realization of that literal kingdom was postponed for a long time -- for reasons we shall examine in detail -- during which interval the great mystery of Christ and the church unfolded. This brings out discontinuity with the OT *in the sense* that this mystery concerning which silence was kept was hidden from the OT ages and generations (Rom. 11:25, 26; Col. 1:26); hidden in God (Eph. 3, -- not hidden in the OT). This also has been inquired into in detail in the above noted book.

Eph. 1:10 states how the *heavenly* (of which the church is the center) and the *earthly* (of which Israel is the center) will be under ONE HEADSHIP, the headship of Christ, in the final administration in time, the millennium. Thus all prophesied by the OT -- confirmed in the NT -- and the great secret that was hid in God (the heavenly side) brought out while the kingdom (the earthly side) is

---

2. The kingdom inauguration having been postponed, the believing remnant passed into the church formed on the day of Pentecost.

postponed,<sup>3</sup> is displayed under that one, great Headship. What does that do for the continuity-discontinuity inquiry?

### *An Interval Foreseen by the OT Prophets*

In Volume 3, Chapter 16 we briefly reviewed the character of the times of the Gentiles -- which times occupy the epoch from Nebuchadnezzar until Christ, when He, depicted in Dan. 2 as the smiting stone, smashes the power of Gentile empire, and then His kingdom fills the whole earth. The times of the Gentiles includes an interval foreseen by the OT prophets, but they knew not its length, nor did they foresee the secret hidden in God (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph 3) that God brought out during this particular epoch falling within those "times." This occurs during the gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week of Dan. 9. The Spirit of God is, we are assured, the ultimate author of the OT. Jehovah provided a book, the OT, that would be in entire accord with the NT -- but of course! Thus, the OT is structured to leave room for the mystery of Christ and the church to be revealed now. What we have in the Word of God is a harmonious whole. That harmonious whole is seen in God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, with two spheres (the heavenly and the earthly) under Christ's headship (Eph. 1:10).

Besides the break, or blank, between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week of Dan. 9, Psa. 110:1 shows that there must be some time between Christ's having been here in order for Him to be sitting at Jehovah's right hand for some time before He comes to have His enemies made His footstool. Yes, after the 69<sup>th</sup> week of Dan. 9, Messiah was cut off and had "nothing" -- i.e., nothing as to the kingdom in power and manifestation. Thus, He waits at God's right hand now, since His rejection when the kingdom was announced to Israel (but its acceptance entails the acceptance of Himself). Cp. Acts 3:17-21. An interval (its duration unspecified) is required by the OT (see, for example Hos. 3:4; Micah 5) and this leaves room to be filled in the NT with the mystery of Christ and the church, a matter unforeseen by the OT prophets. Is there any continuity there? Of course there is, but not necessarily the kind of continuity demanded by Covenantism.

God purposed to present the kingdom to Israel as entailed with their acceptance of the meek and lowly (Matt. 21:5) Lord Jesus, a test of the first man standing in fallen, Adamic responsibility -- in the persons of Israel -- to show that the first, fallen man was not recoverable. We know what happened, as always; man failed. Subsequently, Christ will come again in sovereign power, judgment, and

3. We speak after the manner of men when speaking of the *postponement* of the kingdom. It is appearance only, for God's predetermined purpose must necessarily be implemented. The Son of man *must* be lifted up! Thus, it could not be otherwise than that the first, fallen man under trial to prove that he was not recoverable would reject the second man. Neither is it the case that God creates moral evil. Man having exercised self-will -- the very essence of sin -- he became evil. God uses evil as the background for the display of His purpose and glory.

glory to take the kingdom. His people shall be willing in the day of His power (Psa. 110:2). That in which man has failed, Christ takes up in sovereignty and makes it good to God's glory.

\* \* \* \* \*

The three following articles seek Scripture's own indication of the relationship of the Testaments to each other:

### *Distinctions Between The Old and New Testaments*<sup>4</sup>

by William Trotter, in *The Bible Treasury*, 1:20-23 (1856).

In turning to Mr. Waldegrave's second proposition, that

in all points upon which the New Testament gives us instruction, it is, as containing the full, the clear, and the final manifestation of the divine will, our rightful guide to the interpretation of the OT,

we wish particularly to guard against being misunderstood. There is much of truth contained in it, beyond all doubt; but all the force that it can justly exert on any Christian mind is the result of what we acknowledge as cheerfully as our author himself. There are distinctions between the OT and the New, which no Christian can fail to recognize. The *authority* is the same in both; for both are the word of God. The grand central *object* is the same; for both testify of Christ. "The law, the prophets, and the psalms," as well as the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, have Him for their glorious, never-failing theme. But how differently is He presented in those two grand departments of divine revelation! The

4. Contributed by the Author of "Plain Papers on Prophetic and other Subjects," and being a review of the following works:

1. *New Testament Millenarianism; or, the Kingdom and Coming of Christ, as taught by himself and his apostles: set forth in eight sermons*, preached before the University of Oxford in the year 1854, at the lecture founded by the late Rev. John Bampton, by the Hon. and Rev. Samuel Waldegrave, M.A., rector of Hanford St. Martin, Wilts, and late fellow of All Soul's college. Landon: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1855, 8vo., pp. 686.

2. Notice of the above, in "The British and Foreign Evangelical Review," No. xiv., October, 1855.

3. Notice of the above, in "The London Quarterly Review," No. x., January, 1856.

4. *Millennial Studies: or, What saith the Scriptures concerning the Kingdom and Advent of Christ?* By the Rev. W. R. Lyon, B.A. London: Ward and Co.

difference is felt even by those who would be at a loss to define its nature and explain its cause . . .

We . . . would now invite the attention of the Christian reader to the whole subject of the connection between the Old and New Testaments. It is one of profoundest interest in itself; while its bearings on the millenarian question are quite as important as our esteemed author represents them to be. The reader himself must judge, whether the path, to which Mr. W. invites us, be one in which the brighter lights of the later revelations become really available for the elucidation of those, which are more obscure in character, and of more ancient date.

That which, first of all, distinguishes the New Testament, is the record it contains of the perfect revelation of God himself, in the person of His Son. Viewed as an inspired writing, its authority cannot be greater than that of the equally inspired writings of the Old Testament. But as to its subject—that which it presents to us, we no sooner open it, and begin to read, than we find ourselves in the presence of God himself. “God was manifested in the flesh.” It is God who speaks in the Old Testament as really as in the New. But in the one, He is in the distance, or causing His voice to be heard from amid the thick darkness in which He dwells; in the other, “Emmanuel” -- “God with us” -- is the wonder which bursts upon us in the first chapter of the book.

Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself” (Isa. 14:15)  
is the utterance even of the evangelical prophet, as he is often termed.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,  
is what the evangelist affirms, (John 1:18); and it is this which stamps its character on the New Testament throughout. God Himself is revealed in the person of Christ. No doubt He was the prophet like unto Moses, whose coming Moses had foretold. But while Moses was

faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after,

Christ was as “a Son over his own house.” He was  
counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

And while  
every house is builded by some one, he that built all things [which Christ did] is God (Heb. 3).

The true, distinctive glory of the New Testament shines upon us in the fact, that  
God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.

Nor is even this the whole. Not only was He, as a messenger, thus pre-eminently glorious; He was himself the glory of the message. God was revealed not only *by* but *in* him, who was “the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person.” “The Word was made flesh,” says the evangelist, “and we beheld his glory, the

glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” “He that hath *seen* me, hath *seen* the Father,” was the language of this blessed One Himself. The Old Testament contains nothing resembling this. The will of God is there partially disclosed; His creating power and providential wisdom are exhibited; His government of Israel and the nations is copiously treated of; man’s dreary history is largely recorded; the grace of God to individuals is placed in striking relief, while testimony is borne to their faith, and its precious fruits; Christ Himself is foreshadowed and foretold, from the pronouncing of the curse on the serpent, and the first institution of slain sacrifices, in Gen. 3 and 4, to the last of the long line of Israel’s prophets, and the re-establishment of Levitical rites, on the return from Babylon, in Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s day. But God Himself was not revealed. “The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness,” is Solomon’s thought of God, in erecting for Him the temple in which He deigned to take up His abode. But there, as in the tabernacle which had preceded it, everything testified of the barriers which sin had raised between God and His people, and of the distance and reserve which marked the relations existing between Him and them. Foreshadowings there were of the Savior, in whose coming this reserve was to be laid aside, and by whose sacrifice this distance was to be destroyed. But it is in the New Testament that we find ourselves actually in the presence of Jesus, who, while a man and the lowliest of men, was yet the full revelation, the perfect display of all that God is, in His wisdom, power, holiness, and love. All this was manifested in Him, moreover, in perfect grace to the sinner. With wisdom, which confounded His adversaries by a word -- power, which controlled the elements, and to which devils themselves were subject -- holiness, so absolute and intrinsic, that contact with man’s evil could not defile Him, His love and grace were such, that a poor sinful Samaritan woman could freely converse with Him, while He revealed Himself to her as the Savior, and His Father as the One who sought such as she, to worship Him in spirit and in truth! God, fully revealed in grace in the person of His Son, is that which constitutes the inexpressible charm with which the New Testament is invested, to all who have been convinced of the reality of their lost estate as sinners against God.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost!

Another distinctive feature of the New Testament is the record it contains of the accomplishment of redemption by the cross. In Old Testament times, it was not only that God was not fully revealed, but that man had little or no access to him. True, He deigned to fix His earthly abode in the midst of His people Israel, and to speak of Himself as dwelling “between the cherubims.” But who could venture to approach Him there? One man only, and he but once a year, and even then it was with blood newly shed, and amid clouds of incense covering the mercy-seat lest he should die. These were the types of that sacrifice by which guilty man was to draw near to God; but so long as the types continued, “the way into the

holiest was not yet made manifest.” Christ only could open the way. To accomplish this He had not only to reveal God to man, but had to present Himself a sacrifice on man’s behalf to God. The whole nature and character of God had to be manifested and glorified *with regard to sin*, in order for any of our sinful race to be admitted to His immediate presence. Sin had to be put away. The believer well knows by whom this has been accomplished. One only was equal to the mighty undertaking; but by Him it has been once and for ever achieved. He “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” At His expiring cry, “It is finished,” “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” No veil remains between God and the sinner who approaches in the name of Jesus.

Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he bath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh {Heb. 10:19},

is now the assured, indubitable privilege of every true believer. But where, save in the New Testament, is this made known to us? And what more real distinction can exist between the Old Testament and the New, than the one we are now considering? Many prophets and righteous men had desired to see and hear what the disciples saw and heard when Jesus was on earth. How would they have rejoiced, had they been permitted, as we are, to react of the exaltation of the risen Jesus to the right hand of God -- of free remission through His blood -- and of access through Him, without a single interposing veil, to the immediate presence of God Himself! Yet such are some of the wonders which the New Testament distinctively unfolds.

But there is one characteristic feature of the later volume of inspiration -- a most important one -- on which Mr. W., in his opening lecture, bestows the slightest possible notice. He does indeed say (page 23)

that there are many things which Moses and the prophets -- even if they knew them -- did not commit to writing,

and adds, that

Jesus, however, has perfected the volume of inspiration.

But it is not thus slightly that the New Testament itself treats of one grand department of truth, the primary and exclusive revelation of which it claims as its own. The divine glory of Messiah’s person, and the wondrous efficacy of His atoning death, had been variously typified and foretold in the Old Testament; and that which, as to these verities, distinguishes the New Testament, is that it *records* what the other only *foreshadows* and *predicts*. But as to one vast range of truth, we have the distinct announcement in the New Testament, that it had been in all previous ages unknown and unrevealed. Hear the Apostle, who, writing to the Ephesians,

of the dispensation of the grace of God,

which had been given him to them-ward, says,

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery: (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand

my knowledge in the mystery of Christ); *which in other ages was not made known* unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3: 2-5).

Again, he describes the objects of his vocation to be

to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world *hath been hid in God*, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9).

Writing to the Colossians, the same apostle speaks of Christ’s body, “which is the church; whereof,” he says,

I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil (or fully to preach, see margin) the Word of God; even the mystery *which hath been hid from ages and from generations*, but *now is made manifest* to the saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1: 21-27).

In these passages, we have the distinct mention of a certain mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, which had been hid from ages and from generations, and was only now made manifest to the saints. Of this previously unrevealed mystery it is said, that by revelation it had been made known to Paul; and that Christ had now revealed it to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The knowledge of this mystery Paul represents as the dispensation of the grace of God which had been given him, in order that he might make all men see what is the fellowship of this mystery; he speaks of the saints as these to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery; and he declares that he had been made a minister according to the dispensation of God, committed to him for the completing of the word of God. Such we take to be the force of the expression “to fulfil,” or “fully to preach the word of God.” Evidently that word was incomplete till this mystery was made known.

We have no intention, in the present paper, to consider the subject of this mystery, as it is developed in detail in the two epistles from which the above quotations are made. The proper place for considering it at large may be, when we come to discuss our author’s statements on the subject in one of his subsequent lectures. For the present, let it suffice to refer to the passages themselves, and to one verse in Eph. 3, not yet quoted, which prove, that *the heavenly unity of the church with Christ by virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost* is the mystery of which the Apostle writes. These are the words in which he himself defines it:

That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel (Eph. 3:6).

“Christ in you, the hope of glory,” are the terms in which he sums up this mystery in Col. 1; but then he declares that it is “among the Gentiles” that “the riches of the

glory of this mystery” have their scope and their development. Now nothing can be more obvious, even to a cursory reader of God’s word, than that the Old Testament abounds with predictions of blessing to the Gentiles under Messiah’s reign. Our post-millenarian brethren will, at all events admit this. It was no unrevealed mystery that, when the Seed should come to whom the promises were made, both Jews and Gentiles should be blessed *under* him, and *by* him. But that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of *the same body*, -- *that* believing Jews and believing Gentiles should be incorporated in one, being brought thus {both elevated and brought} into a position of perfect equality with each other, by both, and both alike, becoming *the body of Christ*; that there should be thus a community or corporation of persons, not only blessed *under* Christ and *by* Christ, but blessed *in* him and *with* him, “quicken together,” “raised up together,” and “made to sit together in heavenly places {i.e., in the heavenlies} *in* Christ,” as the epistle to the Ephesians declares; that Christ should be *in* such, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27), indeed, what had been hid in God {Eph. 3:9} from all former ages and generations {Col. 1:26}, and what was only revealed to the apostles and prophets of the new economy, since the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God, and the descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven.

The importance of this subject, in its bearing on the millenarian question, can scarcely be over-rated. Let it be once assumed that the subject of the prophecies is identical with that of the epistles -- that the latter contain nothing but what was more obscurely revealed in the former -- and the consequence is inevitable. The prophecies are spiritualized in order to raise them towards the level of the epistles; the epistles are brought down to the level of the spiritual sense put upon the prophecies; and each department of divine truth is thus shorn of its peculiar, distinctive character. The church of God, indwelt by the Holy Ghost and thus made “one body” and “one Spirit” with its risen and glorified Head in heaven, is confounded in men’s thoughts with the whole company of the redeemed from the beginning to the end of time. All its peculiar blessedness *as one with Christ*, whether in his present rejection, or in the glory in which He is by and by to be revealed, is reduced to what is common to saints of every dispensation. Old Testament predictions, concerning such as are to be blessed *under* Christ and *by* Christ, are regarded in the spiritual sense sought to be imposed upon them, as expressive of the portion which pertains to those, and those only, who are blessed *in* him and *with* him, “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” This is a theme which we cannot at present pursue; but here is to be found, we are fully persuaded, the fundamental error of the Bampton lecturer, and of nearly, if not quite, all who reject premillennial views. We hope, hereafter, to give the subject the fullest examination in the light of God’s word. We turn from it now, to point out some other considerations connected with the distinction between the Old Testament and the New.

The three great characteristics of the New Testament we have seen to be,

that God is there made known as fully revealed in Christ; accomplished redemption is there proclaimed, with all its blessed results; and there we have the unfolding of the previously unrevealed mystery of the heavenly unity of the church with Christ, by virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Two results naturally ensue, and may be seen to pervade the volume. First the subjects with which it prominently and distinctively deals are not such as relate to God’s government of creation, Israel, and the nations, with which the Old Testament is so largely occupied; but the more vital and momentous questions of eternity, the soul, life, death, heaven and hell. We are far from intending that the Old Testament says nothing of the latter class of subjects, or that the New Testament is silent on the former. It is with the general features -- the predominant character of both volumes, that we are at present concerned; and who can doubt that eternity is stamped upon the one, as prominently as time is impressed upon the other? Now it is to God’s government of the world that prophecy applies; and hence the extent to which the Old Testament consists of prophecy. In proportion as the subject is touched upon in the New Testament, it becomes prophetic; but even in its prophetic parts (as Matt. 13, and 24, 25; 2 Thess. 2; and the Apocalypse as a whole), eternity is connected with what takes place in time, in a way but little known in the Old Testament. Then, secondly, the distinction between Jew and Gentile, so maintained in the older volume of God’s word, begins in the latter one to fade away before the glory of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God; it disappears before His cross, by which the middle wall of partition is broken down; and one essential feature of “the mystery,” revealed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, is this, that in a risen and ascended Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. Not that these distinctions have finally ceased *in the world*, viewed as the subject of God’s government. So far from this, “Jews,” “Gentiles,” and “the Church of God” form the present triple distribution of mankind, in an apostolic precept enjoining upon believers an inoffensive course towards all the three (1 Cor. 10:32). It is in the church, the body of Christ, that these, and all mere human distinctions, have passed away. “Male and female,” as really as “Jew and Gentile,” is an unknown, unrecognized distinction, in regard to the oneness of believers with an earth-rejected, heavenly Christ (Gal. 3:28).

The connections between the Old Testament and the New we reserve as the subject of our next communication. ♦

### *Connections Between The Old and New Testaments*

by William Trotter, in *The Bible Treasury*, 1:39-44 (1856)

Our attention was directed, in our last {the above article}, to the distinctions which exist between the two departments of divine revelation. We found them to



be, in some respects, wider and more important than would be gathered from Mr. W.'s opening lecture; besides differing in character from those on which he there so much insists, and, indeed, from any recognized by him in any part of his volume. We must not suppose however, that the change from the old order of things to the new, was immediate; or, that as soon as we open the New Testament, Christianity, in its distinctive and full-grown character, will burst upon our attention. Some of its grand elements are there from the very beginning; but they present themselves along with much that pertains to the former economy; much that has since passed away. The fact is, that the four gospels (and, in a certain modified sense, even the Acts of the Apostles) describe a transitional state of things, as distinct in some of its features from the Christianity which it introduced, as, in others, from the Judaism which it succeeded and gradually set aside. While, therefore, we doubt not for a moment, that it is in the New Testament God's present testimony is found -- that by which He immediately addresses our souls, whether as sinners or as saints; and while it is therefore most important that the Old Testament should be read in the light cast back upon it by the New; it is equally indisputable, that many things in the New Testament can only be understood through previous acquaintance with the Old. To know ourselves as ruined and undone, and to know Christ crucified and risen as our only Savior, is to have everlasting life: and this knowledge God can, by His Spirit, communicate by means of any portion either of the Old Testament or the New. But if, knowing that the great question of eternity has been settled for us, by the sovereign grace which has blotted out our sins, and accepted us in the Beloved, we are desirous of full acquaintance with our Father's mind and will, as revealed in His word, we may not neglect either the Old Testament or the New. They are mutually illustrative of each other's contents, and neither can be neglected without serious loss. God may now usually begin His work in individual souls by means of truth revealed in the New Testament; but it is with Genesis that He begins the book of inspiration; and if we are, through His aid and teaching, to understand it as a whole, it is there our researches must commence. Should we reverse this order, and begin with the New Testament, we should continually meet with words, statements, and allusions which the Old Testament alone could explain.

Let it be supposed that some one to whom both volumes are unknown, should open the New Testament and begin to read, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." "Who was David?" and "who was Abraham?" are questions which must instantly arise. Where could the answer be found, except in the Old Testament? Nor is there a verse down to the seventeenth, by which similar inquiries would not be aroused -- inquiries which must receive their answer, if answered at all, from the same source. Passing over some verses, on which nevertheless, we might make similar remarks, what could be known of the import of v. 21, had the Old Testament no existence? "He shall save his people from their sins." What people? And, why "his" people? What is the

nature of the relations subsisting between Him and them? What has been their conduct in these relations? Whence their need of being saved? And what are we to understand by the salvation He is to bestow? These are all questions naturally suggested by the words; and if some of them must find their answer in the continued perusal of the book itself, how many of them can only be solved by reference to more ancient records of equally divine authority? A direct quotation from these records is what immediately follows: Isaiah's prediction of Emmanuel, the Virgin's son, was to find its accomplishment in the birth of Jesus. But, enough. We might take any other chapter of Matthew's narrative, and almost any chapter of the narratives by the other three evangelists, and we should find ourselves as continually thrown back upon the law, the prophets, and the psalms, for the import of quotations or allusions which would meet us at every step.

We have referred to the transition from Judaism to Christianity, as having gradually taken place. Of this fact, the New Testament itself affords abundant evidence. Were this evidence to be carefully examined, other facts would be educed -- facts overlooked by Mr. W. and by those generally with whom he symbolizes, but which have a most direct and important bearing on the questions at issue. In the introduction to his Epistle to the Romans, Paul speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ under two distinct aspects: as "made of the seed of David according to the flesh"; and "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3, 4.) As "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" he had special links of connection with Israel. Where the apostle is enumerating Israel's distinctive privileges, such as the adoption, the glory, &c., that by which he crowns the catalogue is, "and of whom, *as concerning the flesh*, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9:5). It is from the same apostle's pen that we have the words,

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Rom. 15:8).

Made of a woman, made under the law (Gal. 4:4).

Let any one read the gospels in the light of these apostolic statements, and how evident it must be to him, that innumerable links with Israel and Judaism, having no place in Christianity as existing in Paul's day, were maintained by our blessed Lord during His sojourn on earth. Circumcised the eighth day, and duly presented by His mother according to the law, He afterwards accompanied her and Joseph to the annual feasts in the city of solemnities. It was in the synagogue that He commenced His ministry at Nazareth, and often it is noticed afterwards that He taught in their synagogues. How frequently were those whom He healed or cleansed directed by Him to go and show themselves to the priests; and how did He charge the twelve not to go into the way of the Gentiles, or enter any city of the Samaritans, but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "The Scribes and the Pharisees," said He, "sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid

you observe, that observe and do” (Matt. 23:2, 3). It was on the night of the passover, and after He had faithfully observed it with his disciples, that He was betrayed into the hands of men. How different is all this from the Christianity of the epistles, and, in many respects, from what we find in the Acts of the Apostles. No doubt there were other elements, new, heavenly, and divine, from the very beginning of the gospels. Christ was there, the Son of the Father, the image of the invisible God; and where ever this full divine glory of His person peculiarly stands forth, the limits of Judaism and of His dispensational links with Israel were not sufficient to restrain the outflow to sinners, whether Gentile or Samaritan, of that grace, to introduce and exercise which “God was manifest in the flesh.” Most true is this, and most blessed. But it nullifies in no degree the fact, of which we have seen such ample proof, that, throughout His continuance on earth, the Savior deigned to maintain many a link with the nation of the Jews, and with the economy {the Mosaic administration} under which they had been placed.

Why were these national and dispensational links maintained by our blessed Lord? A profoundly interesting question, to which, happily, His own words afford an explicit reply. They place it beyond doubt, that as one part of an extensive tract of land might be selected and enclosed, as a specimen of the whole, for the purpose of testing its fruitfulness by actual experiment, so the nation of Israel was chosen of God for the purpose of testing whether man, favored with every advantage of even divine care and culture, would bring forth fruit towards God. Isaiah had long before sung of Jehovah’s vineyard in a very fruitful hill, fenced, and planted with the choicest vine; the stones gathered out, a tower built in its midst, and a winepress made therein. Touching this vineyard, (which the prophet declared to be the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant), it had been asked,

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? (Isa. 5:4).

Because of such strange results of so much diligent, unwearied culture, judgment had been pronounced in Isaiah’s day, and the execution of it had been long impending, when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared. The trial was not complete till then.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin (John 15:22).

A vineyard let out to husbandmen is the figure employed by our Lord, to set forth their privileges and responsibilities, and to describe their guilt (Matt. 21:33, &c.) It is not, as in Isa. 5, the fertility of the vineyard that is in question, but the honesty of the husbandmen, and the consequent productiveness to their Lord, and of the grounds entrusted to their care.

When the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits.

Thus had the prophets been sent to Israel. With what result?

The husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

Thus had Israel dealt with the prophets who had been sent to them. But great is the divine longsuffering. The owner of the vineyard had patience with the husbandmen, and

sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

Was there no hope remaining? Could no further means be tried? Yes:

last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

Such, therefore, is one aspect in which the mission of Jesus is to be viewed. No doubt He came to reveal the Father, and to accomplish redemption by the sacrifice of Himself; but He also came seeking fruit on God’s behalf from those who were responsible for rendering it. Before He became the sacrifice for human guilt upon the cross, He was presented as the final test of man’s condition before God. Israel was the theater in which the experiment was made: but it was human nature itself -- man, as such -- that was put to the test. With God in the distance, or behind the veil, man had, with every lesser advantage of laws, messengers, prophecies, warnings, promises, made no return to God for the pains bestowed: would he, now that God was revealed in the person of His Son, be more submissive or obedient? Alas!

when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

The last astounding proof of God’s forbearing love, of patience which nothing yet had sufficed to exhaust, drew forth from man -- from Israel -- the expression of intense and complete hatred. They cast Him out of the vineyard and slew Him!

The application of this parable was left by the Savior to the Jews themselves. He asks them what might be expected to be done by the lord of the vineyard to those husbandmen, and they are obliged to reply,

He will miserably destroy those wicked nien, and will let out his vineyard unto others.

He then reminds them of the Stone rejected by the builders, and of its high destiny to be the Head of the corner, and adds,

Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

But it was not only as the representative of God’s *claims* -- as seeking fruit -- that the Jews rejected their Messiah: -- it was also as the revealer and expression of God’s perfect grace. A certain king makes a marriage for his son, and sends his servants to call the invited guests -- such as were bidden: “but they would not come (Matt. 22:1-14). Nothing is *claimed* of the guests at a marriage feast; everything is *provided*; and the guests partake freely of the bounty of their host. But the grace which thus provides all for man, and makes him welcome to the whole, is as unwelcome to his heart as those righteous claims of God’s holy law, with which

he refuses to comply. “They would not come.” But what cannot grace do? The death of Christ is itself made the ground of new invitations!

Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are now ready: come unto the marriage.

What can be represented here, but the ministry of the apostles to Israel after the death and resurrection of their Lord! Alas! it was with the same result; save where sovereign grace imparted a new life, and thus subdued the opposition of man’s will, these further invitations met with no better reception than the former.

They made light of it . . . and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully and slew them.

It was for this rejection of the gospel of an ascended Christ, proclaimed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, that judgment was executed on Jerusalem and the Jews.

But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Nor was it till they had thus rejected mercy, offered to them in every form, and pressed on their acceptance in every way, that the proclamation of heavenly mercy went forth universally: -- all being now indiscriminately bidden to the feast.

Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

If we turn now to the early chapters of the Acts, from which Mr. W. extracts the passage on which his opening discourse is founded, we shall find that what they present is this lingering of divine mercy over Israel, before the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. They had indeed committed an unparalleled crime in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, and in a certain sense filled up the measure of their iniquity. But the vinedresser had interceded for the barren fig tree (Luke 13:8). Jesus, on the cross, had cried,

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do: this, their ignorance, thus pleaded by the Redeemer on the cross, is precisely what the Holy Ghost admits by Peter in Acts 3:17;

And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

So far were they, in answer to the intercession of Jesus, conditionally forgiven, that instead of judgment being instantly executed, full, free, absolute forgiveness was proclaimed to them on condition of their repentance. Observe too, that it is national forgiveness of which the apostle treats, and the restoration of their forfeited national blessings, even including the return of Jesus Himself.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted

out, so that (see the Greek <sup>5</sup>) the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord: and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Forgiveness of sins, and the times of refreshing, or restitution, of which all the prophets had witnessed, as well as the return of the Lord they had rejected, are here proposed to the Jews on condition of their repentance. This was the only condition on which Old Testament prophecy had suspended the arrival of these bright and happy days for Israel; and on this condition they are still held out by the apostle.

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world {Acts 15:18}.

He well knew that they who had rejected and crucified a humbled Messiah on earth, would still reject the Holy Ghost’s testimony to an ascended and returning Christ; and everything which ensued was arranged of God accordingly. But if Jesus hHimself, looking down upon Jerusalem, and weeping over it, could say,

If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! {Luke 19:42}.

we need not, in the unchangeableness of God’s purposes, find any difficulty as to vast and wondrous results depending on Israel’s repentance, as taught in Acts 3, even though it was surely foreknown of God that they would persist in their sin, and that wrath would come upon them to the uttermost. We may well understand, that what was long afterwards said by Paul to the Jews of a certain locality was true of the whole nation:

*It was necessary* that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

The martyrdom of Stephen terminated for the present all hopes of Jerusalem’s repentance, or of Israel’s reception of the Lord whom they had crucified; and seeing that every Old Testament prediction of the kingdom (or the millennium) treated of its establishment as dependent on Israel’s conversion, that also was indefinitely postponed. And thus was the way prepared for the revelation of the mystery, till then necessarily concealed, that the period of Christ’s rejection by Israel and the earth should be occupied in the calling and formation by the Holy Ghost of “the Church” -- the elect body or bride of Christ -- to be the vessel of His sympathies and sharer of His rejection while He sits on the Father’s throne on high; and also to be the sharer of His glory when He shall “take to him his great power, and reign” upon the earth.

5. The Greek word ὅπως occurs upwards of fifty times in the N. T. and is never, save in this instance, rendered “when.” Its ordinary rendering, and simple obvious import, are as given above.

But is Israel cast off hopelessly and for ever? Is there to be no fulfilment of those bright visions of rest, and blessedness, and supremacy on earth, under Messiah's sway and Jehovah's smile, with which the Old Testament abounds? Is it anywhere declared by our Lord himself, or by His apostles after Him, that these predictions are never, in their plain and obvious sense, to be fulfilled? that they are to receive no accomplishment but that which is alleged to consist in the amalgamation of any converted Israelites with the church of the present dispensation? Such is the doctrine of the Bampton Lecturer: and such, with more or less of consistency, is the doctrine of the reviewers, Mr. Lyon, and all the modern rejecters of millenarianism. They all deny that Israel is to have any national distinction or pre-eminent place in days to come. Some admit that the Jews may be restored to their own land; others deny this, as savoring of the worst features of millenarian literalism; while some, of whom Mr. Waldegrave is one, treat it as a doubtful, uncertain matter: but all agree in denouncing the expectation of any real fulfilment of those national hopes for Israel, of which Old Testament language, if at all literally understood, constitutes so plain a warrant. "Christ," say they, "discountenances such hopes, and the apostles forbid them." But is this the case? Does the New Testament bear out these bold, confident, and oft-repeated assertions? We believe not. We believe that the New Testament needs only to be candidly, prayerfully, and diligently studied, in its evident and inseparable connection with the Old, to satisfy any Christian inquirer, that these assertions are not only baseless, but contrary to what the New Testament distinctly declares.

First, be it remembered, that the Old Testament itself predicts, in several passages, that for a long season Israel would remain in unbelief; while judicial blindness, rejection by Jehovah, scattering among the nations, and abject misery under the Gentile yoke, should be the result of their sins, and of their having rejected their Messiah. See, among other passages, Isa. 6:9-12; 50:1, 2; 53:1-3; 63:17; 64:7; Hos. 1:6-9; 3:4; 5:14, 15; Micah 3:9-12; 5:1. But, secondly, all these prophecies and numbers more show decisively that Israel's rejection and unbelief are but for a time, however prolonged; and that this dreary period is to be succeeded by the days of promised blessedness and rest. Thirdly, our Lord and His apostles distinctly recognize both these truths. Without doubt they declare, and that most unequivocally, that the Israel of that day were sealing on themselves the calamities by which they had been already overtaken, and bringing upon themselves and their children still heavier judgments than any which had yet been inflicted. Nor do they fail to portray the blessings to the Gentiles which result from the way in which divine mercy has overruled the sin of the Jews and their consequent rejection for a time. But do they anywhere intimate that this rejection is final and irreversible? Do they anywhere teach that the present Gentile dispensation has permanently and unchangeably replaced God's natural relations with the earthly people of His choice? Far from it -- as far as possible. In Matt. 23 -- the sequel, in fact, to the series of parables which have been already considered,

and in which our Lord had told the Jews that the kingdom of God was taken from them and given to others -- after pronouncing upon them the dire and oft-repeated woes which their evil and hypocrisy drew forth from those blessed lips; after declaring that on them should come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, lamenting over them in such pathetic language,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together, and ye would not!

after declaring, as He crossed the temple's threshold,

Behold your house is left unto you desolate;

does He not add, as though He would not leave them utterly hopeless,

Ye shall not see me henceforth, TILL YE SHALL SAY, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?

Can we suppose the Savior to have used these as His parting words, if He knew that they would never nationally welcome Him, and never see Him again, till, as individuals, in common with the whole human race, they behold Him on the great white throne? Could words more clearly intimate, that however they might be in the act of rejecting Him, the days would come when they would welcome Him with all their hearts? that however certain -- sadly, sorrowfully certain -- that *till then* they should not behold Him, yet that *then*, made "willing in the day of his power," {Psa. 110:2} they should see Him again, and see Him to their joy? "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," were words well known to Jewish ears. They form a part of that magnificent Psalm (118) which was well understood to be an inspired, prophetic utterance, prepared beforehand as Messiah's welcome to the throne. These very words had been but a short time before uttered by the disciples and the multitudes on the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Had they been sincerely used -- used, moreover, not only by those who did chant them forth, but by the heads of the nation, and by the nation itself as a whole -- then, what might not have occurred? In that case they would have known the day of their visitation, and everything must have been changed. Alas! they knew it not. The fervor of the multitudes was rebuked by the Pharisees; and on the part of the nation as a whole, the cry was ready to be uttered, "Away with him! Crucify him!" It *behoved* Christ to suffer, "and enter into his glory." "The stone" was to be first "rejected of the builders;" but where was the prediction of this fact recorded? In the very psalm quoted by our Lord when he said, "Ye shall not see me henceforth *till ye shall say*, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thus does He at once interpret and endorse Old Testament prophecy, linking together in His farewell words to Israel their future national reception of Him as their Messiah, His return to them at that time from heaven (where, as the rejected Stone, He is at present exalted), and their own celebration, in that day, of *His* triumphs and *their* deliverance in language prepared for them by the sweet singer of Israel. Read Psa. 118 in the light thus shed upon it by our Lord's words; read it, as the joyful, adoring utterance of the penitent, pardoned, delivered Israel of the latter day, when they see their long-

rejected, but now welcome Messiah, and say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; read it thus, we say, and every line, every word is pregnant with meaning, and redolent with joy. Set aside Israel's hopes, and the attestation of them by our Lord in the moment of Israel's deepest guilt and degradation, and how unmeaning the Psalm becomes!

If we turn, moreover, to the testimony of the apostles, we shall find it confirmatory, not condemnatory, of Israel's hopes. Take, for instance, Rom, 11. The chapter opens with the enquiry, "Hath God cast away his people?" to which the emphatic and almost indignant reply is at once subjoined, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." "Ah," says our author, and many others of his school, "it is the elect -- the Israel of God -- of whom the apostle speaks." This is Mr. W.'s grand solution of almost every difficulty which arises to his theory of interpretation. But what question was there among those to whom the apostle wrote, as to whether God had cast off the souls of His elect? Had God utterly and for ever cast off His people Israel -- the literal, natural Israel? was a question naturally arising out of all that the apostle had been teaching; and it was one of deepest interest to his brethren according to the flesh. No doubt he mentions an election from among them -- "a remnant according to the election of grace." But this remnant is not his subject in the chapter before us; he only refers to its existence as one argument among many, by which he proves that Israel -- the nation Israel -- is not utterly and for ever rejected of God. It is thus that he distributes his theme. Not utterly, seeing (1) that he himself is an Israelite; (2) that in the worst days of the nation's previous history, such as those of Elias, God had a remnant; and (3) that "even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." He thus proves the first part of his proposition, that it is only to part of Israel that blindness hath happened, not to the whole. But is the blindness to be permanent, even to the extent in which it does exist? No.

Blindness in part is happened to Israel,  
not for ever, but  
until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, *and so all Israel shall be saved.*

Mr. W.- has the boldness to suggest whether the word "Israel" in one part of this quotation may not be understood *literally*, and in the other figuratively! whether "all Israel" and "the fulness of the Gentiles" be not one and the same body of men! Could temerity itself go farther than this in dislocating and confounding the statements of God's holy Word? What must be the system of interpretation which requires of its exponents to go to such lengths as these? But it is not at once that the apostle states the conclusion, that "All Israel shall be saved." He reaches it by successive and ascending steps. He argues

(1) that through the fall of Israel salvation has come to the Gentiles, "to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy." Can they be *for ever* cast off, if even God's present mercy to the Gentiles be designed to provoke Israel to

jealousy, and so beget in them gracious and holy desires after him under whose chastisements they at present remain?

(2) If the Gentiles have reaped such profit from Israel's fall, what shall the receiving of Israel be "but life from the dead?" Here is anything but an obscure intimation, that Israel is yet to be received; and not only so, but that the reception of that people is to inaugurate a period of blessedness for the world -- the Gentiles -- with which the present is not worthy to be compared.

(3) The reception of Israel having been thus referred to, the apostle reasons from the very grafting in of the wild Gentile olive to the good olive tree from which the natural Jewish branches have been broken off, that it is *possible* for these latter to be grafted in again.

(4) He advances another step, and proves it to be not merely possible, but *probable*: "*how much more* shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into *their own* olive tree?" Then

(5) finally, he declares the certainty of their conversion and salvation, quoting in proof of it a passage from Isa. 69:20, which inseparably associates it both with the coming of the Lord, and the introduction of millennial blessedness on earth.

No doubt there has been, is, and shall yet be, an election from among Israel; but Israel itself, as a nation, is elected of God, and it is with reference to this election that the apostle says, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Of what other election than that of the nation itself can the apostle say, "as concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes : but *as touching the election*, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes?" Our brethren sometimes indulge themselves in speaking of a certain passage as "a mill stone round the neck of pre-millennialism;" but certainly the eleventh of Romans may not inappropriately be regarded as a like fatal incumbrance to those "high minded" prophetic theories, which deny the validity of Israel's national hopes, and seek to resolve all its bright prophetic future into the present heritage of "Gentile branches," even now through unheedfulness to this warning grown "wise in their own conceits," and ready alas! to be "cut off"!

One remark we must by no means omit, -- that it was not by Israel alone that Christ was rejected when He came before. He was presented to the Gentiles, in the person of Pontius Pilate, the representative of Gentile power; and His rejection is treated by Himself and by the Holy Ghost as His rejection *by the world*. It was, as we have seen, in Israel that the test was applied; but the question to be decided was, whether Christ would be received in His own world. It was decided in the negative. In John's gospel, where Christ is presented in the full divine glory of His person, as the Son of the Father, rather than in His dispensational characters and relations, as in the other gospels, this fact is largely and solemnly insisted on.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and *the world* knew him not" (John 1:10).

This is the condemnation, that light is come into *the world*, and men [not Jews merely] loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

Now is the judgment of *this world* (John 12:31).

The Spirit of truth, whom *the world* cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him (John 14:17).

Yet a little while, and *the world* seeth me no more: but ye see me (John 14: 19).

If *the world* hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

And when he (the Holy Ghost) is come, he will reprove *the world* of sin . . . because they believe not on me (John 16:8, 9).

O righteous Father, *the world* hath not known thee (John 17:25).

Who can read these passages and entertain a doubt, that the Christ of the Acts and of the Epistles is a world-rejected Christ? This is another great truth which our brethren who reject pre-millennialism overlook, or, at least, by their system, set aside. This really constitutes the most essential, fundamental difference between their theories and the Christianity of the New Testament, which consists in knowing, confessing, and serving Christ, and in waiting for him, *as the rejected One of this world*.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, *disallowed indeed of men* (1 Pet. 2:4).

By and by He will arise from off the Father’s throne, and receive to Himself the co-heirs who are now being called; the power of the throne will then be exercised in vindication of His long despised and rejected Name; and when all things are prepared for the solemn event, He and His saints will return, and this earth shall be subdued to His sway. Of these things the prophecies of the New Testament bear witness; the more they are studied, and the better they are understood, the more evident will it be, that no contrariety exists between the Old Testament and the New. The prophecies of the Old Testament leave room for the revelations and mysteries of the New; the latter fill up, but do not contradict, the former. They both exhibit the purposes and ways of God for the glorifying of himself in Christ, as one vast harmonious whole; and in their combined light, grace and righteousness, mercy and truth, Jew and Gentile, heaven and earth, are all seen to be to the praise of the glory of Him, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things : to whom, indeed, be glory for ever. Amen. ♦

## *The Key to Understanding The Unity of Scripture*

In the *Synopsis*, 2:207, J. N. Darby in his introduction to the prophets wrote:

❖We enter, now, dear reader, on the field of prophecy; a vast and important one, whether in view of the moral instruction that it contains, or on account of the great events that are announced in it, or through its development of God’s government, and, by this means, its revelation of that which He Himself is in His ways with men. Jehovah and His dealings, and

the Messiah, shine through the whole. Israel always forms the inner circle, or chief platform, on which these dealings are developed, and with which the Messiah is immediately in relation. Outside of, and behind this, the nations are gathered, instruments and objects of the judgments of God, and finally, the subjects of His universal government made subject to the Messiah, who however will assert His especial claim to Israel as His own people {realized in the millennium}.

It is evident that the assembly and the Christian’s individual place is outside this whole {earthly} scene. In *it* there is neither Jew nor Gentile; in it the Father knows the objects of His eternal election, as His beloved children; and Christ, glorified on high, knows it as His body and His bride. Prophecy treats of the earth, and of the government of God. For after personal salvation is settled, **there are two great subjects in scripture**,<sup>6</sup> the government of this world, and the sovereign grace which has taken poor sinners and put them into the same place as God’s own Son as the exalted man, and as adopted into sonship, the divine glory, and that in Christ, being of course the center of all. If we measure things not by our importance, but by the importance of the manifestation of God, whatever develops His ways as unfolded in His government will have much importance in our eyes. There can be no doubt that the assembly, and the individual Christian, are a still more elevated subject, because God has there displayed the whole secret of His eternal love, and deepest present divine affections. But if we remember that it is not only the sphere of action that is in question, but He who acts therein, the dealings of God with Israel and the earth will then assume their true importance in our eyes. And these are the subjects of prophecy. For the others we must specially look to Paul and John.❖

We must understand that the OT is the history of the (fallen) first man to show that he was not recoverable, with a view to setting him aside and introducing the second Man and last Adam, through Whom God’s purpose to glorify Himself is carried out. The crowning act of the first man’s implacable hostility to, and enmity against, God was the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:23, 24), nailing the Son to the cross. This terminated the testing of the (fallen) first man to show he was not recoverable. Of course, during that time of probation God acted in sovereign grace in the case of individuals, making saints of them. Moreover during that time God also brought in certain things (for example such things as dispensing government, priesthood, judges, kingship, etc.) wherein man failed, but Christ will take up all wherein man has failed and make those things good, redounding to God’s glory.

Another wrote:

Now, like all the prophetic language of Scripture in the Old Testament where the kingdom is treated of, you invariably find the present period omitted, from the sending down of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost till the Lord’s coming for His saints. If we do not see this, we shall never understand the prophetic Scriptures. Time ceases to be counted, and earthly things are dropped (God always secretly watching over all), from the moment that the Lord enters the heavens. Then the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven, to form His body --

6. {Boldface added.}

the Church. When this is done, He will begin to deal with earthly things and the Jew again; time, meanwhile, is not counted. When the Lord comes it will be taken up again at the same point where He dropped it here before. This present period is not, properly speaking, time at all ; it is a heavenly parenthesis in time -- an interval.<sup>7</sup>

There is, then, an *earthly parenthesis of Gentile judgment upon Israel*, “the times of the Gentiles,” and within that parenthesis there is another one, from Pentecost in Acts 2 until the rapture of the saints just before the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Dan. 9 opens: a *heavenly parenthesis of grace*. This was unforeseen by the OT prophets, but the prophecies left room for this great secret hid in God -- to be revealed in due time. I would add that the heavenly parenthesis of grace is not an intercalated age, for Christianity is not an age among the earthly ages. The age we are in is the Mosaic age, as we have considered in some detail in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1.

Nor is it so, as Covenantists claim, that “Dispensationalism” holds to two purposes of God -- because of holding that there is a heavenly people and an earthly people. The unity of the Scriptures is seen in God’s one purpose, to glorify Himself in Christ in the heavenly and earthly sphere united under Christ’s headship (Eph. 1:9, 10) -- Christ in resurrection, as the second Man and last Adam, having displaced the first man, the first (fallen) Adam -- proved unrecoverable in the O.T. That there is a heavenly people and an earthly people involved in this display of God’s glory in Christ is not a valid basis to say that this means God has two separate purposes and claiming that this amounts to undermining the unity of Scripture. Such a conclusion is merely in the eye of the Covenantist beholder. It is his erroneous system which makes it appear that way to him.

Redemption by Christ’s blood is the way God changes sinners into saints who participate in the display of His glory in Christ, in the two spheres. But redemption and/or covenant is not what unifies Scripture.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Ways of God* by F. G. Patterson is recommended to the reader. It appeared serially in *The Bible Treasury* vols. 5 and 6.

Two of the articles by J. N. Darby, in his *Collected Writings* are:

“The Principles Displayed in the ways of God Compared with His Ultimate Dealings” (vol. 5); and,

“The Connection of the Cross with the Entire Development of God’s Ways” (vol. 22).

Also, among other articles, “God’s Promises to Abraham and His Grace to the Church,” in *The Bible Treasury*, NS 2:343, 359, may be read with profit.

7. *Words of Truth*, 7:217.

## Chapter 2

### Outline and Survey of Matthew’s Gospel

#### *The Form of the Offer of the Kingdom and Its Rejection*

Regarding the word “kingdom” in the NT, we are impressed with the range of phrases in which the word appears. The enquiry into the mind of God concerning this subject is not a simple matter, but requires numerous distinctions. A considerable range of truth different than that of the subject of the church is involved.

As we read the Gospels, our understanding of the subject of the kingdom requires discerning the difference in the use of the expressions, “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of the heavens,” this latter expression being used only in Matthew. This distinction will be considered in some detail later. Then there are matters such as the fact that while “kingdom of the heavens” in Matthew is characteristic, yet we need to inquire into the reason for the use of the expression “kingdom of God” used five times by Matthew. For those who show proper respect for the inspiration of Scripture, the notion simply will not do that because Matthew has Jews especially in view, the expression “kingdom of the heavens” was used by him because of Jewish reverence for the name of God. Did the inspiration of the Spirit slip into error five times? Neither will the simplistic, and erroneous, notion do that says the two expressions in Matthew are interchangeable. In Matthew they are not interchangeable, but discriminate some truth. Comparing Matthew with Mark and Luke, sometimes they are interchangeable and sometimes they are not. By defining them as interchangeable, certain truth remains hidden to those who say so. The fact is that the kingdom of the heavens in mystery is not used in a strictly moral sense, yet the kingdom of God may be used in a strictly moral sense (as in John 3, or the Epistles); or, sometimes in a similar way in Mark and Luke.

The initial announcement of the kingdom as at hand means that what was announced as at hand had not begun yet -- did not, in fact, exist in OT times. Texts such as Dan. 4:26 must not be set up against that patent fact. The kingdom announced refers to the kingdom of Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Man, prophesied by the OT prophets of Israel. They did not prophesy concerning the future coming of a kingdom that was already existent in OT times.

Thus after some centuries of the “silent years,” when the prophetic voice was still -- after Malachi, which closed the canon of the OT -- the appointed forerunner

of Messiah, John the Baptist, appeared among the people now under the heel of Rome, with an Edomite (from Esau) ruling over them. How this declared what the state of Israel was in departure from God! Yet, when John the Baptist came, there was a godly remnant awaiting the consolation of Israel. The moral character of this waiting remnant is seen in practice in the early part of Luke, whose Gospel the inspiring Spirit has appointed to specially emphasize moral character and connections (among other things).

In Matthew, at a certain point, we necessarily have what was morally suitable for the kingdom *as then announced* (Matt. 5 - 7), the so-called Sermon on the mount. There may be much more meaning in that sentence than at first appears to you.<sup>8</sup> In the ways of God with man, God first presents something to man in his responsibility, expecting that man under trial will fail; then at some subsequent time, He brings about that very thing by sovereign grace and power. Thus was He doing with the bringing in of the prophesied kingdom of Messiah. It is a pattern of God's ways with man. His Word will not be rightly understood without understanding His ways with fallen man and how all wherein the first man has failed, Christ will take up those things and glorify God in them. It is God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ -- in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly, and they shall be brought under His universal headship in due time (Eph. 1:10).

We know that instead of the announced kingdom of the heavens as at hand actually commencing, the King was rejected. *Of course* He was rejected, fallen man being what he is. That does not change the responsibility of man. Rather, it exposes the state. My inability to pay you that \$50,000,000 I owe you, though I am pennyless, does not prove me correct if I say to you that inability to pay means no responsibility to pay. Inability to pay does not release from responsibility. If you affirm responsibility concerning what is owed *you*, as any one of any sense would do, but you deny that if man owes God and is unable to pay, then man is not responsible, that exposes something about you that it is not the purpose here to address -- other than to say it will cost you much understanding regarding God's ways with fallen man to show that he is not recoverable from the fall by his efforts and own will -- besides showing that you think more of what is due your wallet than you do what is due God. Regarding the fallen, first man -- represented by Israel in responsibility before God -- the presentation of the kingdom to Israel's responsibility is brought out clearly in Matthew's gospel.

This "offer of the kingdom" was couched in a certain form. It was presented as bound up with the acceptance of the Person of the King. The acceptance of the kingdom entailed the acceptance of the King, accompanied by repentance. Contrast John 6 where there was a belly-minded, belly-controlled thought that Christ should be King. I am sorry for those who cannot see the difference. Christ did not take the

kingdom through Satan (Matt. 4:9), nor man (John 6:15), but awaits the Father's time. Considered as Creator, everything belongs to the Son by creatorial right. But He has come here in holy manhood and has died, and through His death He has purchased (bought) everything. That He will reign in holy (and also glorified) manhood, His death had to be accomplished before taking the kingdom. He has *purchased* everything by His *death*, but **redeemed** His own by His **blood**. This is the way Scripture presents these things. Thus the sinner, and everything else, is purchased by His death so that He owns everything, but beside such purchase by His death there is added that the saint is not only purchased by His death, but is also redeemed by His blood. Failure to observe the distinction leads to confounding things that differ.

The rejection of the King gathers momentum in Matt. 11, coming to a head in Matt. 12 where the leadership ascribes the power of the Spirit working in the Person of Christ to the power of Beelzebub, the blasphemy against the Spirit. The end of Matt. 12 shows a transition. To contrast this break by Christ from Israel in Matt 12 with the break by the trial and crucifixion, we will call what happened at the end of Matt. 12 a *moral break* with Israel in contrast to the final, *formal break* at the trial and crucifixion. Consequent upon this moral break with Israel, in Matt. 13 we find He takes the position, not any longer of seeking fruit from Israel, but as bringing something, taking the place of a sower. Consequently, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom as at hand was placed in suspension (until taken up again by the future, godly Jewish remnant) and a new form of the kingdom is introduced, one unforeseen by the prophets of Israel. Hence, we have parables of the kingdom of the heavens in *mystery*. That word denotes that this form of the kingdom was a secret, undisclosed before the Lord spoke of such a form of the kingdom. Matt. 13 gives its character and duration. Observe in Matt. 13 that the kingdom of the heavens in mystery is characteristically a sphere of profession, a mixture of true and false. Several other similitudes of the kingdom in Matthew show this mixed condition also.

It is important to understand that there is on earth a sphere of the profession of Christianity that includes believers and unbelievers. The similitudes of the kingdom of the heavens in mystery form given in Matthew show that unbelievers are in "the Kingdom of the heavens" in its present mystery form. The time will come when evil in the kingdom is purged by Christ's power, whatever instrumentalities He may use.

These introductory notes may help in understanding the following survey of Matthew's gospel by J. N. Darby.

### *Survey of Matthew's Gospel*

A brief survey of the teaching of Matthew by J. N. Darby is presented below as taken from his lengthy paper, "Inspiration and Interpretation," *Collected Writings*,

8. See *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 4, *The Sermon on the Mount: Its Dispensational Place and Meaning*; and, *The Imprecatory Psalms: Their Dispensational Place*.



9:322-330. It was written in a conversational style. To this will be added some footnotes of material taken from other comments of his, in order to emphasize certain matters.

❖ W. What is the aspect in which Christ is presented in this Gospel, as you suppose? What the ways and dealings of God as presented in it?

H. The Emmanuel, Jehovah-Messiah, promised and prophesied of, presented to Israel but rejected, and thus rejected Israel making way for the assembly and the kingdom; but all in earthly or Jewish connection, from that point of view. Hence, as in John, the final scene is in Galilee, and there is no ascension.

Let us now go through its general structure as the evidence of special design -- of a design which has divine largeness of view and object. It begins with the roots of promise to come to the promised Seed, -- Abraham, David, Christ. There are none of the lovely details of the state of the poor and godly remnant in Israel which we find in Luke, but simply the accomplishment of prophecy in the miraculous birth of Jesus, whose name was to be the expression of the coming of Jehovah to save His people.

Next we have the false king seeking to thrust Him out, the Gentiles having come to own Him, God's wondrous testimony according to prophecy, and God providing, when once Jesus was thus owned, for the non-fulfilment of the blessing in legal Israel then, but a recommencing their history in His Son called out of Egypt. All this in Bethlehem, according to prophecy. The result is, that He is cast out into Galilee among the poor of the flock, to be brought up as the separated one from among His people.

Next comes the voice foretold in the wilderness to announce the coming of Jehovah calling for repentance to meet Him, disowning right by birth from Abraham as sufficient. They must meet God. The fan was there to cleanse His floor (Israel), the axe already at the root of the trees. John recognizes the glory of the person of Jesus, but Jesus takes His place according to Psa. 16 among the poor in spirit, and godly ones among the people, the excellent of the earth. There He is owned as Son of God, and anointed and sealed with the Holy Ghost for His service in the earth. Then He is tempted and put to the test, and answers by passages from Deuteronomy, the book which contemplated Israel, not in legal order but under a divine claim of obedience. John is cast into prison, and Jesus begins His ministry and carries it on on the same footing among the people as John, and begins to gather disciples to Himself. The last three verses give a general account of all His service in Galilee, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom, and, by a display of power in goodness, drawing the attention of the whole country.

Thereupon, that there might be no mistake, He sits down and declares to His disciples, but in the audience of the crowd, who they were that would enter into the kingdom, and on what principles. This is the sermon on the mount. Israel was in the way with Jehovah to judgment. If he did not come to agreement, he {i.e.,

Israel} would as to earthly government be cast into prison and remain till all was paid. Note, that rejection is supposed for the disciples (Matt. 5:10, 11). It is "the kingdom of heaven," an expression peculiar to Matthew: that is, the rule of the kingdom is not on earth but in heaven, enlarged, when the full result is seen (Matt. 13), into the Father's kingdom and the kingdom of the Son of man, a name which Christ takes on His rejection as the Christ, and always gives Himself, and which is the passage from the prophecy of Him in Psa. 2, in which character He was rejected and the kingdom not now set up, to His character in Psa. 8, in which He is Head over *all* things.

The special characteristics of the sermon on the mount are what is called the spirituality of the law, <sup>9</sup> the claim of a sanctifying view and obedience, and the

---

9. {JND had held this idea but later saw that this was wrong. He wrote:

The Sermon on the Mount is in no way a spiritualizing of the Law (*Collected Writings*, 24:93).

One thing is clear -- personal righteousness is the ground of entrance into the Kingdom, and, when Christ is dealing with Israel as such, this is the ground He takes, and that He does in Matthew to the end of ch. 12. The disciples were to enquire who in city or village were worthy, and go there, not seek sinners, nor go into the way of the Gentiles or city of the Samaritans. Is this the Gospel? If a Jew had taught against any commandment of God, he was going against God's authority -- if it amounted to hating his enemies in given special cases, and, as such, was.

But it imports to give the true character of this Sermon on the Mount for its own sake, and as the stronghold of the legalist. That the Christian can learn there what is pleasing to the Lord, is not the question -- that is clearly so from even the Law -- but what is its true character, and whether it puts us under law? In Matthew, Christ is seed of Abraham, seed of David, Emmanuel, Jehovah the Messiah come into Israel, sent to the lost sheep there, and first even to the nation, born King of the Jews. It is not, as Luke, first the Jewish Remnant, and then the Son of Man traced up to Adam. It was Jehovah, the Savior to save His people from their sins, before whose face John went to prepare His way, announcing the axe at the root of the trees, and the kingdom just going to be set up. And even he declared, not for Pharisees and Sadducees. The Lord then by His ministry having attracted the crowds, for Matt. 4 gives the whole public ministry of the Lord, gives to His disciples, but in the audience of all, what was the character of those who would have a place in the kingdom. But, save supposing the kingdom announced, there is not a word of Gospel in it. It is those who already there amongst the Jews were fit for the kingdom. So Matt. 5:25, 26, is the history of the Jews. The Lord was in the way with them. If need were, the end of Luke 12 proves it distinctly. And He tells His disciples how they were to behave in taking their place. Every Jew knew there was the *olam hoveh* (this age) under the law, and *olam habba* (the coming age) under Messiah. These are the rules for having part in the latter, the Father's name being withal revealed, but the kingdom not set up. He was rejected, and redemption came in, but of this we have nothing here.

As to details. It is clear He was not, as Jehovah-Messiah, come to set aside His own law, and His own prophets. He came to fulfil them -- not impose on others in continuance, but fulfil them. As I have said, of all the ceremonial part He was the substance and fulfilment. Then as to commandments, personally of course He fulfilled the Law. But even when He says: "But I say," He is not taking up the Law to spiritualize it. In two cases only, He takes up one of the Ten Commandments, murder and adultery, but only as essential parts of His own morality, and given as applying to the state of a man, not his acts, as all through, for this is His subject. And where He seems to change it, yet He fulfils it. Israel was divorced for their sins, yet He returns to God's

(continued...)

revelation of the Father's name. In a certain sense this part of the gospel gives His whole position in Israel. After the sermon on the mount we have details fully bringing out the display of Emmanuel, and the effect on Israel, and the opening the door to Gentiles. These we will go briefly through. We shall see that it passes withal directly on to dealing with the people in the last days in connection with what was then going on.

In cleansing the leper He shows Himself as exercising Jehovah's power in Israel, and yet subject to the law of Moses. In healing the centurion's servant with a word we find Him owned as the divine disposer of all things; and He takes occasion by this faith, not found in Israel, to declare the bringing in of Gentiles to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the children of the kingdom of Israel after the flesh being shut out.

These great principles being established, we have His present condition the blessed fulfiller of Isa. 53, and an outcast in Israel -- the Son of man, but one for whom *all* must be given up.

Next, a picture of the result of being with Him -- to man's eye, a storm which left no hope, at any rate they were in the same ship with Jesus; but He who seemed asleep (and was undisturbed by all), with a word commands all the elements, thus graciously rebuking their want of faith.

In the country of the Gergesenes His word dispels all the power of Satan; but occasion is given to display this power in the unclean, the swine (a figure, I have no doubt, of Israel's subsequent history). At any rate those who have seen this power in Him, when fully informed, got rid of Him. Thus all His power, and Israel's and the Gentiles' history in connection with it, have been displayed.

Note herein the beautiful perfect display of the truth in the first case -- Jehovah

---

9. (...continued)

original institution which was in the Law too, and will own Israel as *Ish* (man) and *Hephzibah* (beloved of God) making good God's own institution, when the governmental force of the Law has run its course, from Babylon till He takes His power and Israel has paid the last farthing. And breaking or annulling "one of the least commandments" is the same maintenance of the Law in all its integrity, and "least" is merely fully enforcing it, for if Christ came to fulfil it, he went against it, was going against Jehovah, and the very thing He came for. But the word "least" is merely to answer to "least," for either it gives a measure and he who taught against the least would get in, beyond that not -- which is monstrous -- or else he who annulled a greater would be less than he, still in the kingdom. But this is not the thought. "Least" echoes "least," and it is maintaining every jot and tittle of the Law, even the smallest, which I fully believe, but to be fulfilled by Christ, not carried on, though many things in it may abide, but it must (*genetai*) never be set aside, but fulfilled by Christ as God's own word. But to say 'Christ only brought out the true contents of the Law,' is simply ignorance of what Christianity is, for grace and truth came by Him. The Law, as a rule, is what man should be for God -- Christianity is what God is for man, and God in Man, and that is our full pattern, and this in general character (not in redemption, and giving up self consequently man's part) -- we have in the Sermon on the Mount, far away from Law; Matt. 5: 44-48. In this, Christ was in life before redemption. But for us the full character is also what He did in redemption; Eph. 5: 1 (*Notes and Comments*, 5:24-26).}

alone cleansed the leprosy. The leper saw His power, but doubted at least His goodness -- could not reckon on it. Jesus, in words which God alone has a right to use, declares His grace, "I will." Now if one touched a leper, he was unclean. But His holiness and nature were such that He could exercise His love to the uttermost in the midst of evil, undefiled and undefilable. And He touches him and says, "I will" -- Jehovah (whom none could defile) -- a man, to bring perfect love in power to the vilest.

W. How a few words, a single act, in these divine records carry a volume of truth! How they prove their divine character by it! It has, we cannot doubt an instant, a divine Author and a divine subject. Much as your explanation interests me, the simple fact in the history you speak of says more than volumes of any explanation.

H. In truth it does. The soul taught of God is in contact with divine power in the word. We may, by God's grace, serve as finger posts to it. He makes us, and it is gracious, helpful to one another; but all must be learned with God. We will proceed.

In Matt. 9, Christ is the Jehovah of Psa. 103. He forgives and heals at the same time. Next, He abounds in grace and calls the vilest; He comes as a physician to call sinners, not the righteous; nor can He put this new power of grace into the old bottles of Judaism. In the rest of the chapter -- picture I do not doubt for a moment, of God's ways in Israel -- He comes to intercept death. When there was individual faith in the crowd of Israel, power went out to heal; but really the object of His compassion was dead before He came. Resurrection must restore Israel. And so it will be with them. Owned as Son of David, He opens the blind eyes and the dumb mouth to praise God.

Such was His work in Israel; but the Pharisees, the nation in its legal pride, committed itself fatally, and ascribed the divine power to Satan. Awful word! But patient compassion was not exhausted, and Jesus-Jehovah went healing everywhere, had compassion on the shepherdless multitudes, saw the harvest plenteous and the laborers few, directing His disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest He would send out laborers. This He does in the next chapter, but exclusively in Israel.

The twelve are sent out {Matt. 10}, but the terms of their mission extend, without taking the assembly into account at all, to the time of Christ's coming again. They are sent out in the midst of a hostile people, seeking the remnant, the worthy in Israel, and forbidden to go to Gentiles or Samaritans. But if rejected, judgment would come. He goes on to the time when the Spirit would be come, and till the time when the Son of man would be come. They had called the Master of the house Beelzebub (showing His estimate of the character Israel thus took), how much more His servants. But He encourages them by every promise, and especially the Spirit's help, and declares that all done to them would be considered as done

to Him. This remarkable chapter shows the Lord, as we have seen the prophets before, passing over here from His first coming unbrokenly to the last days, leaving out wholly the present period -- for He forbids any gospel to Gentiles.

The patience of Christ continued to deal with Israel; but, in a certain sense, this was a closing testimony, I mean as to its character and nature. This is supposed to continue, as we have said, or rather not to be completed, till He came.

What follows in the gospel discusses the moral character of His rejection, showing where rest was to be found, and afterwards what would come in on His rejection. Thus, in Matt. 11, on the enquiry by John, the character of His mission, and their reception of it, and of His own and their reception of that is unfolded, reproaching the cities with their unbelief, but showing rest in Himself for the weary; and that the truth was, all was given to Him the Son; He alone knew the Father, and could reveal Him; and He was the Son: none at all could know Him but the Father Himself. But He did reveal the Father to those who came to Him.

He then shows the triumph of mercy over sacrifice -- that a rejected David had eaten the showbread, and that the priests profaned the Sabbath in the temple; and a greater than the temple was there. The seal of Israel's covenant must give place to the Son of man. The same point is again insisted on with the Jews, and their whole system is judged. This was an all-important point. It was setting the whole system aside for grace (Matt. 12).

His silent and unobtrusive character is declared, but when the people own Him Son of David, the Pharisees repeat their blasphemy, and this leads to the formal judgment of the nation, and a prophecy of their last estate: that as the unclean spirit (of idolatry) had gone out, it would come back with seven worse ones to Israel. Then, on His mother and brethren (the links with Israel according to the flesh) coming, He will not own them, but only what is the fruit of His own word.<sup>10</sup> This is fully unfolded in Matt. 13.

There the Lord takes the character of a Sower, one who does not seek fruit from what is already planted, but brings with Him what is to produce fruit. Then, in the six following parables, He propounds the character and forms the kingdom of heaven would take while the King was hidden, and had not taken to Him His great power and reigned: in three its outer aspect to the multitude; in three its inner to the disciples. Its character as kingdom of the Father and of the Son of man is given at the close. They are things new and old, the new unlooked-for character of what had been told of in prophecy, which a scribe would already know.

---

10. {Matt. 12 marks a great transition point consequent upon the allegation that the Spirit that wrought in Christ was Beelzebub. That is the sin against the Holy Spirit, a unique sin in connection with our Lord's personal presentation to Israel. There is no forgiveness for it. The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom as *at hand* ceases, and the kingdom in the mystery form it was to take is then taught by our Lord beginning in Matt. 13. He takes a new position as Sower, indicating the change in the testimony.}

In what follows we have the signs of the closing scene -- John Baptist is beheaded, and the Lord retires. But, followed by the multitude, His compassions still continue. He acts as the Jehovah of promise, and satisfies the poor with bread; but then retires even from His disciples, and, returning to them, shows that He walks as on dry ground where they are tossed about, and can give power to faith to do it. All here depends on keeping the eye fixed on Jesus. Peter could have walked on a smooth sea no better than on a rough one. When they were in the ship the wind ceased. Who with any sense can doubt this was significant? Israel dismissed; Christ alone on high; His disciples tossed about, yet taught to walk on the water to come to Him. When in the ship all is peace, and, come to land (Gennesaret) -- that world out of which He had been once expelled, they worship Him there (Matt. 14).

In Matt. 15 we have the principles of the kingdom -- truth in the inward parts contrasted with ordinances; man's heart evil, but grace going out to the vilest of an accursed race, where there was faith. The Lord again feeds the multitude, the fact having a distinct character, which for the present I pass by.

In Matt. 16, leaving the adulterous generation, the assembly is revealed,<sup>11</sup> founded on His being the Son of the living God -- as such He had never before been owned, it was proved in resurrection; and also the kingdom of heaven, whose administration was entrusted to Peter. This leads to the clear announcement to His disciples that He must be rejected and die. At this moment, consequently, He charges them to say no more that He is the Christ, the character in which He is presented to Israel.

In Matt. 17 the glory of the kingdom is revealed. But the disciples even could not profit by the blessing and power then present, and He was soon to leave that generation. He owns His disciples as with Him sons of the Great King, but, not to offend, submits as yet to the temple's demands.

In Matt. 18 we have the spirit and flesh -- judging principles of the kingdom. The meek and lowly, and little children, are on His heart; for now it was, not Christ to Israel, but the Son of man come to save that which was lost: and the assembly,

---

11. {In Matthew you get things brought out more in order, and there you get the rejection of Christ {Matt. 12}, and upon that, three things are substituted for what He was down here -- founded though upon His work -- the kingdom of heaven in Matt. 13, the church in Matt. 16, and the coming in glory, i.e., the transfiguration, in Matt. 17 (*Notes and Jottings*, p. 56; see also *Collected Writings*, 14:20-22, 103).

Note as to the Church, where, as often remarked, we get the new ways of God introduced on the entire failure of man (proved definitely in Israel) the Church and the Kingdom of heaven are both introduced distinctly, but it is as to their administration and forming that they are spoken of (*Notes and Comments*, 5:138).

{The reader should note the connection of these great facts with Matt. 24, 25 and its structure and content, RAH}.

not the synagogue, became the place <sup>12</sup> of which within and without could be said.

<sup>13</sup> Forgiveness characterized the kingdom, but judgment when grace was not

12. {We have here {Matt. 18} the Spirit which characterizes the Kingdom, and what belongs to the Assembly, in duty and authority. Unless, as a little child, they should not enter (for it was not yet come) and the most like a little child should be the greatest. What is most opposite to the spirit in which men, accustomed to evil, make as much of themselves as they can -- the world. The child is simple, has no consciousness of place or self-importance, and, in the practical sense, is guileless and confiding, unhabituated to evil. Then as to self, the ruthless excision of everything that would be a snare to lead one into this, or to one such little one believing in Christ. Offences there would be, but woe to the world because of it. But Christ did not come to seek what had a place in this world or its esteem. He came to save the lost. These little ones had great value in His Father's sight, were honored by and present to Him. There Christ's heart could, in a certain sense, find complacency, rest; to Him the spirit of the world was a wearying thing. It is strongly expressed morally in this passage. The application of the parable of the lost sheep is very striking here.

Next, if a brother offended, what was to be done? Grace -- gain him personally, if possible. If that could not be, take two or three. It would not then be mere personal complaint, but persevering wrong proved. If he would not hear them, tell it to the Assembly; if he would not hear the Assembly, they might treat him as a stranger to it. The direction is to an individual, how to deal with an individual, but, in doing it, the Assembly, as locally constituted, replaces the synagogue. Remark here, we have the Church, as Christ builds it, not yet built, and *an* assembly, not *the* Assembly as known to and established by Paul, but a local body, though from other Scriptures we fully learn they act for and in the unity of the Body, as 1 Corinthians. But the assembled two or three to Christ's name, have Christ with them, and here only, as to the Church, have we binding or loosing, not the Keys, they, as we have seen, are of the Kingdom of heaven. Christ's administration from on high, of and by the Word. So, as to prayer here, the agreeing of two or three obtained the request, for Christ still was there. This provision so graciously meets the Church in its ruin, but that has been spoken of elsewhere. It is the element of order before the public body was formed. The unity has not to be given up, but the resource for its practical ruin, as to its full development, is here. We have the general principle that, when two or three are gathered together to His name, Christ is there (*Notes and Comments*, 5:146, 147).)

13. { . . . Matt. 18: 15-17 is a question of wrong done to a brother; and it is never said, concerning the one who has done the wrong, that the church is to put him out; but, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." This may have to be the case, as to the church subsequently, but it is not its character here; it is simply, "Let him be unto thee," etc. -- have nothing more to do with him. It supposes a case of wrong done to an individual, as in the trespass-offering, where it is said, "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor," etc. There is the sovereignty of grace to forgive, even to the "seventy times seven"; but "thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." An individual has wronged me: how am I to act? I go not to the Father's discipline, nor to the Son's discipline over His own house; but, acting towards him in the love of the brotherhood, I go and say, "Brother, thou hast done me wrong," etc. There is, first of all, this remonstrance in righteousness; yet the path is such that it may not get out of the scope of grace. Having done this, if he will not hear me, I take with me one or two more, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses," etc. If that fails, I then tell it to the whole assembly. If he refuse to hear the church, "Let him be unto thee," etc. The thing prescribed is a course of *individual conduct*, and the result, *individual position* towards another. It may come to a case of church discipline, but not necessarily. I go hoping to gain my brother to repentance, to replace him in his right relation in fellowship with myself and God (where there is failure in brotherly love, it necessarily affects communion with the Father): if my brother is gained, it goes no farther; it ought never to pass my lips; the church knows nothing of it, or any other creature, but we two. If there is

(continued...)

owned; and so it happened to Israel.

We then get spiritual power, judging and holding flesh as dead, while the relations formed of God are fully maintained -- the law, the way of life to the Jew, supposing it to be *kept*; but the state of the heart spiritually judged and Christ to be followed (Matt. 19). All this is showing the effect of bringing in new power, applied to what the law treated of. In relationships, flesh not being judged, the law had gone below the original order of God, which was restored, but new power brought in to live wholly to God. The truth of life by law, on the other hand, abstractedly owned, but the state of the heart judged in respect of it (not merely outward conduct), and Christ the true test of this. All this is of vast importance at this moment of transition. Riches, instead of being a reward of righteousness in God's earthly government, were a snare to the heart as to its entrance into the kingdom of heaven; while giving up everything for Christ would surely not lose its reward: only man might judge amiss.

It was a new thing where (Matt. 20) all was grace, and fleshly claim of reward for so much ran athwart the ways of one giving in grace. The Lord then renews His announcement of His immediate rejection; and, James and John looking for a good place in Messiah's kingdom, the Lord shows them the Son of man was to suffer, giving His life a ransom, and they must take up the cross too: this was all He could give them, save as all was ordained of the Father. He that was least among them would be greatest. This closes the instruction.

The closing history commences here with the blind man at Jericho, as in all three gospels -- an additional evidence of a common plan, yet unquestionably not formed by the human authors -- and Christ in the presence of Israel takes the character of Son of David. He then rides in on the ass, according to prophecy, and is celebrated as Son of David coming in the name of the Lord (Matt. 21). The fig-tree, the figure of Israel, is judged. And then, in succession, He judges virtually (each class coming up in succession to tempt Him) the chiefs of the nation, the whole nation being God's vineyard, who were at last rejecting the Son sent for fruit according to the old system. Here the kingdom of heaven according to grace is set forth (Matt. 22), on which He gathers the Gentiles, but judges when they are come in; then the Pharisees and Herodians as to their connection with the Gentile monarchies; then the Sadducees. Then He takes out of the law its divine and eternal essence, and by one question confounds the Pharisees as to how the Son of David could be David's Lord, and be taken up to God's right hand, which was just about to happen. This closes His intercourse with the nation. They had all passed in review before Him.

In Matt. 23 however He recognizes the seat of Moses still, and His disciples'

13. (...continued)

failure, I act to restore him in fellowship to all (*Collected Writings*, 1:339, 340).}

connection with it, owning still existing Judaism; but then judges in the severest way its state, declaring that their last hypocritical excuse would be taken away from them; that prophets and scribes (so He calls the gospel witnesses here, as in connection with the people) would be sent to them, and thus the measure of their guilt be filled up, and their house be left desolate till the last days, when the nation would own Him that came in the name of Jehovah.

In Matt. 24 the disciples are told of the destruction of the temple, and then their ministry on to the last days is spoken of to v. 14; then the last half week of Daniel's seventy weeks is referred to, at the close of which the Son of man would come. The whole history of the Jews in Judea, and the scattered remnant, is given to verse 31; thence to Matt. 25:31, we have practical warnings and parables as to the duty of the Church and saints while He is away; thence to the end of Matt. 25 the judgment of the nations in the earth when He shall be returned.<sup>14</sup>

The historical close now comes -- the attachment of Mary, the treachery of Judas, the closing of Christ's association with them (shown in not drinking of the wine then with them), till in a new way He drank it in His Father's kingdom, the millennial world to come. Kingdom of heaven and kingdom of my Father (the latter its character when He takes it in heavenly glory) are peculiar to this gospel. Then we have fully the sorrows and sufferings of Gethsemane, but not what we found in John -- only He could pray and ask His Father; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. He is in communion with the Father, but the suffering obedient man. So He answers when the high priest adjures Him, according to Lev. 5, but even here refers to His being, from this hour only known as Son of man sitting at the right hand of power as He is now, or coming again in that character. The people give up Christ, and desire a murderer, and say, His blood be on us and on our children -- their true judgment to this day.

We have the details of His humiliation on the cross too, though not stupifying Himself with the offered potion, but obedience to the end. It is marked that it is not by weakness He expires, but crying with a loud voice. But His death closed the

14. According to the character of the whole Gospel, as notably Matt. 16, 17 and 18, this chapter {i.e., chapters 24-25} presents, on the general question connected with the end of the age, first, the destruction of the Temple by itself, then the general state of things for the Remnant, and the closing scene; all is on earth. Then the Church, with the position and responsibility of Christians, and then the judgment of the nations in the Kingdom, all of course seen as where responsibility is. It is historico-dispensational . . .

The parenthesis of warning during the absence of the Lord, from v. 32 to Matt. 25:30 has been {sufficiently noticed}, and that, at v. 45, the Church or Christian matter properly begins, but not definitely that vv. 32-44 are definitely the exhortation, or word to the Remnant, or disciples in the midst of Israel, in view of the Lord's appearing there. It has to do with that generation, and the revelation of the Son of man, and the things coming to pass which concerned Israel. It is thus definitely the warning and exhortation to the disciples, according to what precedes, and then come Church or Christian matters -- the general responsibility of Christians in His absence, at v. 45 (*Notes and Comments*, 5:152, 153).

whole system publicly; the veil was rent, the very characteristic of the Jewish state, where man had no access to God; and the bodies of saints (Jews) arose. At the close it is only His connection with His disciples in Galilee, where He had connected Himself with the poor of the flock, that is noticed, and there is no ascension. Thus it fits into the renewal of a place with Israel on earth when the time comes. The mission supposes this, and sends the gospel out only to the nations: all power being His in heaven and in earth, they were to make disciples of them.

Now no one can doubt that the whole course of this gospel is marked by a character wholly its own, the revelation of Christ to the Jews as theirs, but rejected by them; and thus the dispensational substitution of other things, the assembly and kingdom; while the connection of His disciples with Jewish things, only on a new footing, is distinctly marked and pursued to the last days, the assembly being overlooked in this part.

W. Your review of it makes it very plain, and gives an entireness to it which greatly facilitates the seizing the sense of the different passages.

H. You will see, too, if you examine the passages, that the historical order is neglected to put the events into a just succession with a view to God's dealing with Israel. Where we have the same events in Mark and Luke, these, so far as Luke is chronological, follow the same historical order; but Matthew leaves it, to give a distinct character to Christ's ministry; while in Luke, in the temptation, and from Luke 9 exclusive to the end of Luke 18, we have no chronological order at all, but events morally connected. ❖

### *Outline of Matthew*

The moral rejection of the King is markedly clear in Matt. 12, as the formal rejection is markedly clear in Matt. 26-27. Up to Matt. 12 we have the king and the gospel of the kingdom. From Matt. 13 on we have the kingdom in mystery brought before us. These are two main divisions, however many sub-divisions and sections within those that there may be. Some have taken a recurring phrase in Matt. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1 to indicate five sub-divisions of the book. It follows that Matt. 11:1 - 13:53 forms a sub-division. The fact is that a great transition takes place with the opening of Matt. 13. The Lord takes a new position as the sower rather than seeks fruit from Israel. He brings something, rather than seeking to gather something. As an example of apparent oblivion to this, one writer called the section from Matt. 11:1 - 13:53 "The Kingdom's Confidential Affairs," whatever that is supposed to mean. At any rate, Matt. 11:1 - 13:53 does not form a sub-division of Matthew, and if this alleged sub-division is not true to the subject matter, it is not necessary to merely accept the other alleged sub-divisions predicated on the phrase in question as if it pointed to other subdivisions. Matthew, then, is divided in two main parts, with various sub-divisions.

## I. The King, His Forerunner, and the Proclamation of the Kingdom as at Hand until His Moral Rejection (Matt. 1 - 12).

### 1. Matt. 1-2: The Promised King

#### (1) Matt. 1: His Identity

- (A) Matt. 1:1-17: Genealogy Through David to Abraham
- (B) Matt. 1:18-25: Jehovah the Savior

#### (2) Matt. 2: Gentiles Worship; Jerusalem Rejects; Takes the Place of the Nazarean

- (A) Matt. 2:1-12: Edomite Rejection and Gentile Worship
- (B) Matt. 2:13-18: Divinely Protected from Edomite Hatred
- (C) Matt. 2:19-23: Called from Egypt to Be the Nazarean

### 2. Matt. 3-7: The King and Kingdom Announced.

#### (1) Matt. 3:1 - 4:11: The Kingdom Announced

- (A) Matt. 3:1-12: Proclaimed by the Forerunner, John
- (B) Matt. 3:13-17: The King Anointed
- (C) Matt. 4:1-11: The King Tested

#### (2) Matt. 4:12 - 25: The King's Testimony

- (A) Matt. 4:12-17: Light Sprung Up: Preaching the Kingdom Begun
- (B) Matt. 4:18-22: Fishers of Men Gathered
- (C) Matt. 4:23-25: The Powers of the Kingdom Age to Come Shown

#### (3) Matt. 5-7: The Character of the Citizens of the Kingdom

- (A) Matt. 5: Christ's Place over the Disciple and the Disciple's Character as Suitable for the Kingdom
  - (a) Matt. 5:1, 2: Christ Takes His Place of Authority
  - (b) Matt. 5:3-16: The Disciple's Character and Testimony
  - (c) Matt. 5:17-20: Are the Law and the Prophets Thus Made Void?
  - (d) Matt. 5:21-48: Ye Have Heard It Said, But I say Unto You
    - (1) Matt. 5:20-26: Killing -- Anger
    - (2) Matt. 5:27-32: Adultery -- Lust
    - (3) Matt. 5:33-37: Swearing -- Honesty in the Heart
    - (4) Matt. 5:38-42: Retaliation -- Resist not Evil
    - (5) Matt. 5:43-48: Hate -- Love
- (B) Matt. 6: The Father's Eye in Secret upon the Disciple, for His Support
  - (a) Matt. 6:1-18: Ourselves With the Father in Secret
    - (1) Matt. 6:1-4: The Father Rejects Hypocrisy in Giving
    - (2) Matt. 6:5-15: The Father Rejects Hypocrisy in Prayer
    - (3) Matt. 6:16-18: The Father Rejects Hypocrisy in Fasting
  - (b) Matt. 6:19-34: The Father With Us, Taking Care of Tomorrow
    - (1) Matt. 6:19-24: The Disciple's Object as Going Through the World
    - (2) Matt. 6:25-33: The Father's Care of the Disciple As Going Through the World
    - (3) Matt. 6:34: The Practical Effect Concerning Tomorrow
- (C) Matt. 7: The Disciple's Discerning Walk
  - (a) Matt. 7:1-14: Discernment in the Disciples' Walk
    - (1) Matt. 7:1-5: Fitness to Judge Discerning ly
    - (2) Matt. 7:6: Discerning Holy and Unholy
    - (3) Matt. 7:6-11: Asking Intelligently

- (4) Matt. 7:12: Discerning Conduct
- (5) Matt. 7:13-14: Discerning the Gate That Leads to Life
- (b) Matt. 7:15-27: Discerning The False and The True
  - (1) Matt. 7:15-20: Discerning False Fruit-Prophets
  - (2) Matt. 7:21-23: Discerning False Miracle-Monger-Prophets
  - (3) Matt. 7:24-27: Discerning the True Foundation
- (c) Matt. 7:24-27: True Discernment -- Hearing and Doing Christ's Words
- (d) Matt. 7:28-29: The Teacher With Authority Peculiar to Himself Has Spoken

### 3. Matt. 8-9:34: Works of Powers of the Age to Come Manifested

#### (1) Matt. 8:1-17: Jehovah's Blessing Manifested

- (A) Matt. 8:1-4: Jehovah touches the leper
- (B) Matt. 8:5-13: Heals the Gentile Afar off
- (C) Matt. 8:14-15: Peter's mother-in-law -- Israel restored after the Gentile blessing
- (D) Matt. 8:16-17: Satan's power -- millennial freedom

#### (2) Matt. 8:18-34: Jehovah's power manifested

- (A) Matt. 8:18-22: Let the Dead Bury Their Dead
- (B) Matt. 8:23-27: Power over Nature
- (C) Matt. 8:28-34: Power to Deliver from Satan

#### (3) Matt. 9: Jehovah's Authority Manifested -- Rejected by Pharisees

- (A) Matt. 9:1-8: Authority on Earth to Forgive Sins
- (B) Matt. 9:9-13: Authority to Call Whom He Will
- (C) Matt. 9:14-17: Authority over Law
- (D) Matt. 9:18-22: Bloody Flux
- (E) Matt. 9:23-26: Raised the Maiden
- (F) Matt. 9:27-31: Blind Eyes Opened
- (G) Matt. 9:32-34: Dumb Demon -- Pharisees Oppose

### 4. Matt. 9:35-10:42 Mission of the King's Messengers

#### (1) Matt. 9:35-36: The King Works the Power He Will Give to His Messengers

#### (2) Matt. 9:37-38: The Need Pointed out

#### (3) Matt. 10:1-4: Authority Given to the Twelve

#### (4) Matt. 10:5-15: The Mission of the Twelve to Israel

#### (5) Matt. 10:16-22: A Parenthesis: the Present and Future Testimonies

- (A) Matt. 10:16-20: The Circumstances of the Present Testimony
- (B) Matt. 10:21-22: The Circumstances of the Future Testimony That Follows

#### (6) Matt. 10:23-33: Instruction Regarding Evil to Be Endured

- (A) Matt. 10:23-27: Persecution on Their Mission to Israel
- (B) Matt. 10:28-33: Confession Before Men in View of Persecution

#### (7) Matt. 10:34-42: Guidance for the Perfect Disciple and Christ's Recompense for the Evil Endured

### 5. Matt. 11-12: Forerunner and King Rejected; He Morally Separates

## from the Nation

**(1) Matt. 11: The Moral Rejection Manifesting Itself**

- (A) Matt. 11:1-6: The Forerunner Executed
- (B) Matt. 11:7-15: John's and Christ's Testimony
- (C) Matt. 11:16-24: The Character of "This Generation" Manifested
- (D) Matt. 11:25-30: All Things Delivered to the Son

**(2) Matt. 12: Christ's Moral Break with Israel**

- (A) Matt. 12:1-13: Son of Man Is Lord of the Sabbath
- (B) Matt. 12:14-21: Bows to His Rejection
- (C) Matt. 12:22-32: Blasphemy Against the Spirit's Working in Christ
- (D) Matt. 12:33-37: Fruit Is the Test of the Tree
- (E) Matt. 12:38-42: Divine Government Falls on "This Generation"
- (F) Matt. 12:43-45: Completeness of Evil Overpowering "This Evil Generation"
- (G) Matt. 12:46-50: His Moral Break with the Nation Complete

## II. Consequent on His Moral Rejection, the Kingdom in Mystery Proclaimed, the Assembly to Be the New Center of Administration, More Moral Teaching, Then His Final Rejection, and Resurrection (Matt. 13-28).

### 1. Matt. 13: the Kingdom in Mystery Announced

#### (1) Matt. 13:1-23: In Moral Rejection, Christ Sows, Leading to the Kingdom of the Heavens in Mystery

- (A) Matt. 13:1-9: The New Work of Sowing
- (B) Matt. 13:10-17: Parables Regarding the Kingdom in Mystery Because of Judicial Blinding on Manifested Unbelief
- (C) Matt. 13:18-23: Parable of the Sower Explained by the Lord

#### (2) Matt. 13:24-43: The Kingdom in Man's Hands and the Judgment on it

- (A) Matt. 13:24-33: Evil Results from Man's Hands
  - (1) *Matt. 13:24-30: Parable of the Wheat and Darnel*
  - (2) *Matt. 13:31-32: Parable of the Mustard Tree*
  - (3) *Matt. 13:33: Parable of the Leaven in the Meal*
- (B) Matt. 13:34-35: Things Hidden from the World's Foundation
- (C) Matt. 13:36-43: Man's Results Manifested and Judged

#### (3) Matt. 13:44-52: What Is for God

- (A) Matt. 13:44-50: Good Results from God's Purpose
  - (1) *Matt. 13:44: Treasure Hid in the Purchased Field*
  - (2) *Matt. 13:45-46: Purchased the One Pearl of Great Value*
  - (3) *Matt. 13:47-50: The Good Preserved*
- (B) Matt. 13:51-52: Things New and Old

#### (4) Matt. 13:53-58: Man Stumbled at the Lowly One

### 2. Matt. 14 - 17:21: Results of His Rejection

#### (1) Matt. 14: Lust Murders; He Blesses Meanwhile; And, He Will Protect the Remnant; Millennial Blessing

- (A) Matt. 14:1-12: Denouncement of Lust Resulted in the Forerunner's Murder
- (B) Matt. 14:13-21: Though Rejected, His Ministry of Compassion Continues
- (C) Matt. 14:22-33: The Godly Jewish Remnant Delivered

- (D) Matt. 14:34-36: Millennial Blessing

#### (2) Matt. 15: State of Israel under the Law; Grace in Contrast

- (A) Matt. 15:1-20: The Legal Heart Full of Wickedness
- (B) Matt. 15:21-28: Law Excludes the Gentile, but Faith Is Answered
- (C) Matt. 15:29-31: Grace Meets Every Need
- (D) Matt. 15:32-39: Jehovah Fills His People with Good Things

#### (3) Matt. 16: Manifests the State of Israel Regarding Himself; Notices the New Order to Come in (The Assembly)

- (A) Matt. 16:1-4: The Legalists' Rejecting Heart Tempts Christ
- (B) Matt. 16:5-12: The Legalists' Leavened Doctrine
- (C) Matt. 16:13-20: The Son of the Living God, the Rock on Which He Builds the Church
- (D) Matt. 16:21-28: The Cross of Rejection Is for His Followers

#### (4) Matt. 17:1-21: The Glory Will Follow the Sufferings; Though We Are Weak While Waiting

- (A) Matt. 17:1-8: Christ's Kingdom Glory
- (B) Matt. 17:9-13: Elijah Will Come and Restore All Things
- (C) Matt. 17:14-21: Our Weakness While We Wait for the Glory

### 3. Matt. 17:22 - 18: Meanwhile, Show His Lowliness as Well as His Honor, and in the New Assembly, Which Will Be the Center of Administration

#### (1) Matt. 17:22 - 18:14: The Humble Place

- (A) Matt. 17:22-27: Though Rejected, He, and We, Pay the Tax
- (B) Matt. 18:1-14: The Offenceless Path for His Followers

#### (2) Matt. 18:15-20: Holy Attitude in View of the New Center of Administration (The Assembly)

#### (3) Matt. 18:21-35: Mercy's Place in the Kingdom in Mystery, and God's Governmental Ways

### 4. Matt. 19-20:16: Guiding Principles for His Professed Followers During His Absence

#### (1) Matt. 19: Holiness in Relationships; Forsaking All to Follow Him

- (A) Matt. 19:1-9: Only One Basis for Divorce
- (B) Matt. 19:10-12: Eunuchs for the Kingdom of the Heaven's Sake
- (C) Matt. 19:13-15: Children and the Kingdom
- (D) Matt. 19:16-27: Hindrance of Possessions
- (E) Matt. 19:28-30: Reward in the Kingdom in Manifestation

#### (2) Matt. 20:1-16: He Will Reward as He Will

### 5. Matt. 20:17 - 23:39 Final Presentation of the King to Israel

#### (1) Matt. 20:17-28: The Flesh in the Presence of Impending Sorrow

- (A) Matt. 20:17-19: What Our Lord Had Before Him
- (B) Matt. 20:20-23: A Place Sought by the Flesh
- (C) Matt. 20:24-28: The Lowly Place

#### (2) Matt. 20:29 - 21:1-22: Formal Presentation of the King, the Son of David

- (A) Matt. 20:29-34: Light Received to Follow the Son of David
- (B) Matt. 21:1-11: The Son of David Presented to Israel
- (C) Matt. 21:12-17: The Son of David Cleanses the Temple
- (D) Matt. 21:18-22: Setting Aside of the Old Israel Pre-figured

**(3) Matt. 21:23-46: Opposition Grows, its Character Exposed, and Judgment to Come**

- (A) Matt. 21:23-27: Opposers Confounded Concerning Authority
- (B) Matt. 21:28-32: Parable of the Two Sons: Wilfulness Exposed
- (C) Matt. 21:33-46: Parable of the Vineyard and Husbandman: Wickedness Exposed
- (D) Matt. 22:1-14: Parable of Invitation to the Marriage, Destruction of Jerusalem, Judgment on Those Without a Wedding Garment

**(4) Matt. 22:15-46: The Trespass Offering Tested for Flaws**

- (A) Matt. 22:15-22: Hypocrisy of the Pharisees Exposed
- (B) Matt. 22:23-33: Saduceean Error and Ignorance of Scripture Exposed
- (C) Matt. 22:34-40: A Lawyer Tempts Him and Fails
- (D) Matt. 22:41-46: The Flaw-seekers Silenced by His Test Question

**(5) Matt. 23: Final Indictment of Scribes and Pharisees; and Judgment Pronounced**

- (A) Matt. 23:1-12: Character of the Occupiers of Moses' Seat
- (B) Matt. 23:13-33: Seven Woes on the Scribes and Pharisees
  - (Woe 1) Matt. 23:13-14: for Hindering Blessing
  - (Woe 2) Matt. 23:15: for Proselytizing to Evil
  - (Woe 3) Matt. 23:16-22: for Perverting Sanctified Things
  - (Woe 4) Matt. 23:23-24: for Leaving out Weightier Things
  - (Woe 5) Matt. 23:25-26: for Polished Outside and Dirty Inside
  - (Woe 6) Matt. 23:27-28: for Righteous Outside Appearance While Inside Is Death, Hypocrisy, Etc.
  - (Woe 7) Matt. 23:29-36: for Honoring the Prophets Whom Their Moral Fathers Killed, and They Would Do Likewise.
- (C) Matt. 23:37-39: The House Left Desolate Until . . .

**6. Matt. 24-25: His Return as Regards Israel, the Kingdom in Mystery, and the Gentiles**

**(1) Matt. 24:1-44: Israel and the Godly Jewish Remnant**

- (A) Matt. 24:1-14: The Beginning of Messiah's Birth Pangs
- (B) Matt. 24:15-28: The Great Tribulation; Proclamation of the Gospel of The Kingdom
- (C) Matt. 24:29-31: The Manifestation and Gathering the Elect
- (D) Matt. 24:32-44: Counsel for the Godly Jewish Remnant

**(2) Matt. 24:45 - 25:30: The Kingdom in Mystery**

- (A) Matt. 24:45- 51: Christendom's Failure to Watch
- (B) Matt. 25:1-13: Loss, and Recovery Of, the Expectant Posture
- (C) Matt. 25:14-30: Service in View of His Return

**(3) Matt. 25:30-46: The Gentiles and the Gospel of the Kingdom**

**7. Matt. 26-27: Completed Rejection; the Trespass Offering (Governmental) Accomplished**

- (1) Matt. 26:1-56: The Trespass Offering Marked Out

- (A) Matt. 26:1-5: Man's Plan and God's Control
- (B) Matt. 26:6-16: Love and Treachery Contrasted
- (C) Matt. 26:17-25: The Passover Kept, and the Traitor's Work
- (D) Matt. 26:26-29: The Lord's Supper
- (E) Matt. 26:30-35: All Will Forsake Him
- (F) Matt. 26:36-46: Victory in Gethsemane
- (G) Matt. 26:47-56: Betrayed and Forsaken of Men

**(2) Matt. 26:57-75: Who the Trespass Offering Is**

- (A) Matt. 26:57-68: The King Is the Christ, the Son of God
- (B) Matt. 27:69-75: Peter Fails to Own Him

**(3) Matt. 27:1-26: The Evil Manifested**

- (A) Matt. 27:1-2: Led, Bound, to the Governmental Power
- (B) Matt. 27:3-5: Unavailing Remorse of the Traitor
- (C) Matt. 27:6-10: The Field of Blood Purchased
- (D) Matt. 27:11-23: Barabbas Chosen
- (E) Matt. 27:24-26: Pilate Chooses the Easy Path

**(4) Matt. 27:27-54: The Trespass Offering**

- (A) Matt. 27:27-31: Crowned with the Sign of the Curse
- (B) Matt. 27:32-44: The King of the Jews Crucified
- (C) Matt. 27:45-54: Forsaken by God and the Consequences
  - (a) Matt. 27:45-50: Abandonment; and Dismissing His Spirit
  - (b) Matt. 27:51-54: Pointing to entrance into the holiest, resurrection-life, and Gentile blessing
- (D) Matt. 27:55-66: Buried

**8. Matt. 28: Resurrection and Commission for the Godly Jewish Remnant**

**(1) Matt. 28:1-10: Risen King**

- (A) Matt. 28:1-6: Risen indeed, on the First Day of the Week
- (B) Matt. 28:7-8: Testimony to the Resurrection
- (C) Matt. 28:9-10: He Manifests Himself

**(2) Matt. 28:11-15: First Rationalist Explaining the Resurrection**

**(3) Matt. 28:16-20: Commission for the Future, Godly Jewish Remnant.**

- (A) Matt. 26:16-17: Homage to the Risen One
- (B) Matt. 28:18-20: Commission from Resurrection, for the Godly Jewish Remnant, with Them to the End of the Age



## Chapter 3

### *Observations on the Kingdom in Matthew's Gospel*

Having considered a survey of Matthew and an outline of the book, we now will make some observations on the subject of the kingdom, a subject which characterizes Matthew's Gospel.

#### *God's Power to be Manifested in the Earth*

We will begin with a quotation that surveys the unfolding of God's purpose to bring in His own power into public manifestation in the earth, starting with Gen. 3:15. Next, another quotation will explain the difference between the expressions "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of the heavens." That will be followed by a paper also dealing with the difference. After that, we will examine the presentation of the kingdom of the heavens in Matthew and the change of that presentation (after Matt. 12) to the introduction of a mystery form of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13) consequent on the works of power of the Holy Spirit manifested in Christ being ascribed to Beelzebub in Matt. 12.

The following notes are taken from *The Bible Treasury*, 8:107-108.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" {Gen. 3:15} was God's announcement to the serpent in the hour of its apparent triumph that He would not leave it in undisturbed possession of power over man and the earth. From the time however of man's acceptance of Satan's guidance, violence, self-will, and oppression began to be manifested in the world; but God's purpose must be fulfilled. So, from time to time, during the forty centuries which rolled by between the prophetic announcement and the appearance of the one predicted, God disclosed something of the future concerning the kingdom to be established in power and permanence, where His authority has been disowned and His rights denied.

To Abraham it was promised, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," and to Isaac and to Jacob after him was this promise confirmed (Gen. 22:18, 26:4, 38:14). In the hope of the kingdom saints died. Jacob, before gathering up his feet into the bed, predicted the gathering of nations to Shiloh, who was to come (Gen. 49:10); Moses closed his blessing of the tribes with the prospect of the people's welfare, when the Lord should be reigning in person over the earth (Deut. 33:28); and David's last words are descriptive of the One who is yet to put down all that opposes itself to God (2 Sam. 23). In the days of Israel's triumphs the hope of the kingdom was remembered, for they sang of it at the Red Sea, and looked on

to it as the ark entered Jerusalem under David (Ex. 15; 1 Chron. 16:23-33). Individuals cherished one prospect of it in their hearts: witness Hannah, who, pouring forth the joyful utterance of a grateful heart, cannot close her thanksgiving for special favors without making mention of the king, the Lord's anointed. And David, as he wandered over the land he was one day to govern, and as he sat on his throne in the city of Zion, looked onward to that which we too expect (Psa. 18, 63); whilst the personal majesty of the king he sung of in Psa. 45, and the beneficent character of His reign he celebrates in Psa. 72. After him the prophets took up the strain. Isaiah, Micah, and others predicted the blessings that will be enjoyed under His rule, and Daniel fixed the date of His first coming to earth; while to Nebuchadnezzar God revealed in dreams the crushing power of the stone cut out without hands, and the setting up by the God of heaven of a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

To Jewish ears then it was no strange sound which John the Baptist gave forth, as he proclaimed, "The kingdom of heaven [or heavens] is at hand." After him the Lord Jesus uttered the same words, when He began His ministry in Galilee; but both prefixed to their announcements the imperative call to repentance (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). For the children of Israel being sons of the kingdom (Matt. 8:12), its establishment in power is connected with that nation's blessing, and their future glory depends on it, as Daniel had predicted:

The kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High [or high places] (Dan. 7:27).

To them, then, while announcing the near approach of the kingdom, it was needful to declare the terms upon which they could enter it, and what God looked for from those who should receive it. In Galilee, therefore, the Lord preached repentance; on Nicodemus He impressed the necessity of the new birth (John 3:3, 5); to His disciples He made known the childlike spirit requisite for those who shall enter it (Matt. 18:3), and warned all against mere profession without practice, which would for ever shut out souls from that which Israel had been taught to expect (Matt. 5:20; Luke 13:25-29). To John the kingdom was future, for dispensationally while on earth he was outside it (Matt. 11:11); but the Lord could speak of it as existing on earth, manifested by the power over Satan which He exercised (Matt. 11:28). John spoke of the prospect, the Lord preached the kingdom of God, and commissioned the twelve, and the seventy disciples, to proclaim it likewise (Luke 4:43; 9:1, 60; 10:9). The devils discerned the great change which had taken place consequent on His presence in the midst of Israel, for they felt His power, confessed His authority, and owned what alone they expected from His hands (Mark 1:34; Matt. 8:28-31). He had come, who was to destroy the works of the devil. The people who heard Him, and witnessed His works, should have discerned the great change and have rejoiced; for if He preached to them, as Matthew and Luke express it, "the gospel" or "glad tidings of the kingdom," or as Mark perhaps really wrote "the gospel of

God" (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Luke 8:1; Mark 1:14), the kingdom was in existence, for the king was present. A power which could deliver man from that one into whose hands he had put himself was manifested in Him who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. The people saw it and marveled; the rulers confessed the works and caviled, and blasphemed (Mark 1:27; 3:22-30). Men, released from the tyranny of demoniacal possession, were witnesses none could gainsay. The King was really on earth, and gathering souls around Himself by the words of the kingdom, the seed spread abroad by the sower; all who heard and received His word became really what Israel were only nationally, true children or rather sons of the kingdom (Matt. 13:19-38), wheat or good seed sown in the field . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

### ***Difference Between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Heavens***

In Matthew we read about "the kingdom of the heavens," a phrase occurring only in that Gospel. Surely it has a special significance. Also, five times the expression "the kingdom of God," is used in Matthew (6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43). Surely that also has a significance. Therefore we might have thought that commentators on Matthew, who claim to have a regard for the divine inspiration of the book, would have restrained themselves from saying that because this gospel had a Jewish audience in view, therefore on account of their reverence for the name of God, "heavens" was used instead of "God." Is respect for the divine design of Matthew before the mind when such ideas are put forward in the face of five exceptions?

The expression "kingdom of God" is used in Matthew when the Lord spoke concerning something that was true of the kingdom at the moment He was speaking. That was so because the power of God was present in Christ Himself. He, the King of the coming kingdom to be displayed, was there. It was, so to speak, embodied in Him -- hence present in that sense because *He* was present. The kingdom of God could be among them because *He* was there. "The kingdom of the heavens" in its mystery form commenced when He left this world and entered heaven. The phrase means the rule of the heavens. So He could not speak of the kingdom of the heavens as then existing in mystery while He was yet on earth. It had not yet commenced in its mystery form. As a mystery, it had not been a subject spoken of by the OT prophets.

The following answer by F. G. Patterson, concerning the difference in the expressions, is taken from his magazine, *Words of Truth* 5:118, 119.

\* \* \* \* \*

L. T. -- Would you please define in some measure the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God"? Sometimes they seem interchangeable, and other times not so. Matthew chiefly uses the former, and he only; Luke the latter, as

others too.

◆ A. -- "The kingdom of the heavens" -- the true rendering -- is only named in Matthew. It is a *dispensational* term; while "the kingdom of God" is a *moral* thing. In keeping with the gospels you name, you find the terms used. Matthew groups his subjects together dispensationally; Luke does so morally; both departing from the *historic* order, to which Mark keeps more than any of the others.

With a Jew the term "kingdom of the heavens" was familiar. (See Deut. 11:21; Psa. 89:29; Dan. 2:44; 4:26, 35, and other Scriptures.) It is the "rule of the heavens" owned on earth. It was announced as "at hand," not as come, by John the Baptist (Matt. 3); by the Lord (Matt. 4); by the Twelve (Matt. 10). Rejected; and in Matt. 12 which ends the gospel {of the kingdom} to the Jew, the curse of Antichrist is pronounced upon the nation {Matt. 12:43-45}, and a Remnant owned who obey His Father's will {Matt. 12:46-50}. Then, in Matt. 13, the Lord begins a new action -- as a sower; and the kingdom of the heavens takes a new character, which the prophets did not contemplate: a sphere overrun with evil, and a mingled crop -- the "mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens"; and instead of the true subjects taking their origin from *Abraham*, they do so from the Word of God, which Christ sows; others accepting the authority of Christ nominally, as professors {the tares, i.e., darnel}.

In Luke, who is the great moralizer, <sup>15</sup> the term used is "kingdom of God," of which He could say in answer to the inquiry of the Pharisees if it came with observation, that it was "in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21), for God was there in Christ; while of the "kingdom of the heavens" it could only be said it is "at hand"; and it did not (and could not) commence until the ascension of Christ. To have come in during His presence it would have been the kingdom of the *earth*, so to say. His authority and that of the heavens was owned, even before the coming of the Holy Ghost, during the ten days of interval {Acts 1}, by the disciples, who waited by His directions for that coming. It will run on in its present confused state until the Millennium; hence a good margin of time *after* the Church's history is over, as it had commenced before it. <sup>16</sup>

You get two places where it gets a moral character from Paul --

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17);

15. {Luke arranges teaching, incidents, miracles, and parables in moral order, not necessarily in chronological sequence, which is found in Mark -- where the service of the great Servant is before us.}

16. {Actually, Matt. 13, rightly understood, shows that the kingdom of the heavens in mystery runs on until the wheat is gathered into the granary, pointing to the rapture. Some things in the Lord's explanations have added elements to the parable that go beyond the parable itself, and these added things should not be thought to extend the parabolic meaning beyond the gathering the wheat into the granary.}

The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (1 Cor. 4:20).

It {i.e., the kingdom of God} is the “exhibition or manifestation of the ruling power of God under any circumstances.” A man must be born afresh to “see,” or “enter in” to it, in the verity of it (John 3); not so of the kingdom of heaven, in which tares and wheat mingle {Matt. 13}. Souls may profess and submit to God’s kingdom, as merely profession. Hence, in Luke 13:18, he uses the term kingdom of God where nominal profession is noted in the parable, and where the “kingdom of the heavens” might be used interchangeably. Still, none but the saints would be *really* of it, as born of God.<sup>17</sup>

When the Millennium comes in, the present confused state of the kingdom of the heavens will be set aside by the judgment of the quick {i.e., the living} and it will then be displayed in its verity in a two-fold, heavenly, and earthly state of things. The Son of Man gathers out of *His* kingdom -- i.e., the earthly part of it (see Psa. 8; Heb. 2) -- all stumbling-blocks, and them that do iniquity; and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father -- i.e., the *heavenly* sphere of it. (See Matt. 13:41-43.) ♦

\* \* \* \* \*

The next paper is taken from *The Bible Treasury*, 10:122, 123 and while reinforcing the above, will take up the difference more fully.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ♦ “Kingdom of God” in Luke’s Gospel, and “Kingdom of Heaven” in Matthew’s

Inquiry is often made as to the distinction of meaning between these two terms, the “kingdom of God” which always occurs in Luke; whereas in Matthew “the kingdom of heaven” most frequently appears, that is, thirty-two times, against the “kingdom of God” only four, with one case (Matt. 19:24), where the critics differ owing to a variation of reading as to which list, whether “of heaven” or “of God,” it belongs.

In commencing it may be said that sometimes the terms are equivalent, or apparently so. Compare Matt. 3:2 with Mark 1:15; again Matt. 5:3 with Luke 6:20; Matt. 6:33 with Luke 12:31; and Matt. 13:11 with Luke 8:10, with many other examples. When this identity fails, the difference of meaning arises from the term “kingdom of heaven” having more specific features given to it, whether of good or evil, over that area where the gospel is now preached, or was once preached, and which area is characterized by a departure from the truth originally set forth, the

17. {It is true that the parables of the wheat and darnel (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43), as well as the net (Matt. 13:47-50) are not found in the other gospels. From this, some think that there are only the real (no mere professors) in the kingdom of God, though the parable of the leaven is found (Luke 13:20, 21) but signifies that the true teachings of the kingdom are leavened. However, the parable of the mustard tree does seem to indicate a vast overgrowth due to mere profession. Those who hold that there can be no mere profession in the kingdom of God should explain this.}

king, note, being in heaven.

This departure is alluded to, when our Lord says, Matt. 13:11, “It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” after delivering the parable (v. 3) of the sower, as this parable is followed by six others, where we find things distinctly good, as the pearl and the hid treasure; things distinctly bad, as the mustard seed growing into a large tree, and the leaven leavening the whole lump; and a mixture, as the tares among the wheat, and the drag net with good and bad fish; while in Luke 13:18 (following five chapters after the same parable of the sower) we have the parables of the leaven and of the mustard seed under the expression, “Unto what is the kingdom of God like,” but none others. While then the sphere of Luke’s “kingdom of God” may be equal to Matthew’s “kingdom of heaven,” there is more detail of evil in the latter. In fact the “kingdom of heaven” known in its mysteries, comes into a state, or forms itself into a condition, characterized by a departure from God in those things, which the positive arrival of our Lord in heaven {i.e., His ascension} introduced, namely, the church and its cognate truths, which were brought about by the descent of the Holy Ghost after Christ’s ascent into heaven. Speaking in the large, “kingdom of God” is a more general term in the Gospels, implying power whether morally or personally (cp. Luke 17:20; 18:7); whereas, “the kingdom of heaven” is more dispensational and has peculiar earthly aspects. Compare Matt. 18:23-31; 20:1-16.

At the same time it must be allowed that if “the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:18, 20) necessitates the same interpretation, as the similar parables in Matt. 13, we must connect this term also with a departure from God: only the features would not be wrought out into such details.

While then, the two phrases “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven,” were in a certain sense identical in the beginning, yet “kingdom of heaven” is rarely, if ever, spoken of as a thing of power as to a man’s own conversion, nor was present existence the thought but rather it is mentioned “as at hand,” ἤγγικε. To Peter therefore were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whilst the kingdom of God had a fresh beginning by the preaching of our Lord.

If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you (Luke 11:20).

But Peter opened the kingdom of heaven in the case of Cornelius and his companions, on whom the Holy Ghost descended; and thus the term may be held as including, in connection with its mysteries, every form which Christendom puts on during the time in which the gospel is preached; but in the millennium also passing into a two-fold division perfectly good, described in the words,

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father (Matt. 13:41, 42).

“Kingdom of God” is a more general term, and “kingdom of heaven” more dispensational, with the sense of responsibility. The details of failure and apostasy

pertain more to the latter; as well as descriptions of its future success. See in Matthew 25, the parable of the ten virgins.

Hence we see why the apostles never preached the kingdom of heaven, whereas the kingdom of God was common, especially to Paul. (Compare Acts 20:25.)

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Again Acts 28:30, Paul

received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus.

It is clear that he could not have preached the kingdom of heaven, for it might have been a bad thing and had, in part at all events, the earth for its sphere -- and rarely had the idea of power connected with it, like the kingdom of God, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20).

As to the derivation of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν “the kingdom of the heavens,” neither it nor “kingdom of God” are found in the Old Testament, although the reigns of the kings of Judah foreshadowed both; and such language as “The kingdom is the Lord’s, and he is the governor among the nations” (Psa. 22:28), pointed to them.

Probably we should find their origin (especially “the kingdom of heaven”) in Daniel, clothed in such words as “the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44); again, “after that thou shalt know that the heavens do rule” (Dan. 4:26); and more particularly in the vision of the Son of man (the title belonging to our Lord in the Gospels and under which He dies) coming “with the clouds of heaven,” when a dominion is given to Him, and a kingdom “not to be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13, 14). We know that being presented to Israel He was refused, rejected and crucified; but that we look for Him, received up into glory, to come again. Meanwhile, during the time He is in heaven, everything as to its proper manifestation is in abeyance. The kingdom of heaven is in a mystery; but all will be clear when He takes it in person. He ought to have been received when on earth and the kingdom to have begun, but He was not; and so, the king being in heaven, its mysteries are going on now. We must not then lose in the term “kingdom of heaven,” the fact of the king, who is to have the earth, being now in heaven.

Questions concerning such apparently minute subjects may appear trivial to some; but such an examination wonderfully unfolds the character of the Gospels -- each an independent witness for Christ, both in His person and character. It was never, we are persuaded, in the mind of the Holy Ghost, that we should force these witnesses into one mold, as is the manner of most harmonies and diatessarons. Each evangelist has his own particular view of our blessed Lord, while the four form a combined and admirable portraiture. Our conception of Him, must embrace the traits of them all, and thus we take in the whole mind of God, who has not

written one word in vain.

W. W. ♦

\* \* \* \* \*

### *John’s and our Lord’s Preaching The Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens*

With the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom by John, the time had arrived to bring the trial of the first man to an end by the final test, i.e., the presentation of Christ to man’s responsibility for acceptance. Thus, the Son came into the world through incarnation and grew from a holy babe (Luke 1:35) to a holy boy (Luke 2:41-52) to a holy man. Preceding the appointed time for the commencement of His public ministry, John the Baptist, His forerunner (Isa. 40:3) announced the kingdom of the heavens as at hand, and preached repentance in view of it (Matt. 3:1-4). John’s preaching concerned, of course, the kingdom as prophesied according to the prophets of Israel, which the audiences of the prophets understood meant a literal kingdom, as did John’s audiences. What would make anyone think John meant something other than that very kingdom prophesied by the prophets of Israel, literally understood? The readers and hearers of the OT prophets had no basis to understand anything other than that a literal kingdom for Israel was being prophesied. If John had come preaching that there would be no literal kingdom, that it was going to be a spiritual kingdom, a work of God in the hearts of some, his hearers would not have regarded him as a prophet since he was not announcing what the prophets had prophesied. Is that not obvious? He announced the very kingdom of which Zacharias spoke in Luke 1:67-79, the kingdom that the godly remnant at the time expected (as well as many other Jews), and which the disciples spoke of after the Lord’s resurrection, in Acts 1:6, whose expectation was correct, but their timing was wrong. <sup>18</sup>At that point in time, God was about to begin the gathering of a heavenly people (Acts 15:14; Heb. 3:1; 1 Cor. 15:48) while the introduction of the kingdom in power and glory was in suspension. <sup>19</sup>

18. The subject of the godly remnant’s expectation of the kingdom is discussed at length in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, available from the publisher. John, the godly remnant, the disciples, and the Lord Himself all believed in such a kingdom. The shameful, Covenantist, hostile denunciations of such an expectation by the Jews is quoted in the above book.

19. “We, who form a part of the church of God, and not having anything to do with the earth, are in no sense an age, but are a heavenly people united to Christ above, during the suspension of this age, filling up the gap between the Lord’s leaving the Jews, and His return to them again . . . The church, of course, does fill up a certain place and time, but it is during the suspension of the age to which Christ came (*Collected Writings*, 25:140).

“Israel, the people of God, is become wicked, and, led by the prince of this world, they reject their Savior, their Messiah. God being thereupon active in good in the world, Satan assumes an attitude of active hostility. To spoil the effect here below, is all he can do. But the judgment takes effect upon

(continued...)

After John was in prison, the Lord preached the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:12-17), meaning, of course, the same literal kingdom as John, and as the prophets of Israel had declared. But, in the ways of God, the announcement of the kingdom *entailed* the reception of the lowly One, thus making a moral test in connection with the introduction of the kingdom, to bring out the state of the people. The first man *must* be tested concerning the introduction of the kingdom. Was the first, fallen man in a fit state to receive it? Repent, and receive, then, the King in the person of the lowly Lord Jesus. The offer of the kingdom was bound up with, entailed, the acceptance of Himself. Obviously, God knew that Christ would be rejected and utilized the state of fallen man to accomplish His purpose, as He used Pharaoh, and as He used Judas, and as He used the law, and whatever instrumentalities that He determines to use. God did not originate sin, did not compel man to fall, or Pharaoh and Judas to be what they were, or what Israel was under the law, but being what they were, He accomplishes His purpose through those instrumentalities.<sup>20</sup>

The divine design in Matthew is seen in the arrangement of incidents and teachings to set forth, let us call it, dispensational/administrative/governmental changes that God was bringing to pass. Thus we see the notice of:

- (1) His personal fitness (Matt. 4:1-11);
- (2) The commencement of His ministry after His forerunner's imprisonment (Matt. 4:12-27);
- (2) The Lord's calling His disciples (Matt. 4:18-22);
- (3) then His preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:23-25) and great crowds listening to Him;

---

19. (...continued)

it: the harvest is the end of the age, the reapers are the angels; for the question here is about the government of this world by God. As to the expression "*this age*," we are accustomed to apply it to the church; but it is not here a question of the church, but of the introduction of the kingdom of heaven, Messiah being rejected by the Jews. What was the age in which the Lord was found with His disciples? Was it the church, or the dispensation of the church? By no means. It was a certain age of this world, which was to end by reception of the Messiah, and the re-establishment of the law as a rule by the government of this Messiah. The people of Israel having rejected Him, this age becomes purely and simply *this present evil world (age)*, from which Christ delivers us, but in the course of which God has set up His kingdom, in the way we have just spoken of (*Collected Writings*, 24:12). {see also 5:389.}

20. Some Covenantists have claimed that it would be immoral on God's part to offer Israel something He knew they could not accept, a claim that is startling as coming from Calvinists. It sounds Arminian-like. They are reasoning from self up to God. *You, as finite*, must not make an insincere offer. The *Infinite* knows all His works from the beginning (Acts 15:18), and can test man as He will, knowing all. Let us not attribute insincerity to Him as if he has human limitations or acts as men do.

*Objections* such as, 'what if the people had accepted Christ,' are like, 'what if Israel had obeyed the law,' and a host of other such like questions; they smack of a refractory attitude towards what God has actually done.

- (4) then His teaching in Matt. 5 - 7, which we need not claim was all spoken on one occasion.<sup>21</sup>

The King Himself gave teaching concerning the suitable state of soul for entry into the kingdom of the heavens (as bound up with the acceptance of His person), teaching consonant with God's ways in presenting Christ come in humiliation so as to expose the state of the people. This all led to the rejection of Christ, marked in Matt. 12 by ascribing His works of power by the Holy Spirit to Beelzebub's power. The power could not be denied. The awful sin of ascribing the power of the Holy Spirit working in Christ, when Christ was here, to Beelzebub is the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin not subject to repentance.<sup>22</sup> Consequent upon this daring rejection of Himself, which necessarily entailed a rejection of the kingdom identified with Himself, teaching concerning the kingdom in *mystery* form was brought out in Matt. 13,<sup>23</sup> a form *unforeseen* by Israel's prophets. The instruction concerning the kingdom in mystery form in Matt. 13, the form the kingdom took consequent on Christ's ascension, shows us that the preaching of the kingdom before Matt. 13 was not about that mystery form. The preaching before Matt. 13 concerned the preaching of the kingdom in its literal manifestation. Matt. 5-7 has its place in view of the announcement of that kingdom before the introduction of the kingdom was placed into suspension. Matt. 5 - 7 speaks of the character suitable to the remnant for entry into that kingdom as proposed *at that time*.

### ***The Disciples' Preaching The Gospel of the Kingdom in Matt. 10***

Let the reader give due attention to the fact that first John came announcing the kingdom as at hand, then the Lord proclaimed the same message, and then in Matt. 10 the disciples proclaimed the same message. How absurd to claim they were preaching a spiritual kingdom. Note well, if they were announcing a spiritual kingdom, why in Acts 1:6 did these same persons ask the Lord if the time had arrived for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel? The answer is clear. In Matt. 10 they preached concerning the literal kingdom.

---

21. In Matt. 8:1-4, a leper came to him. The text does not say that he came chronologically at that point in time, but it is brought in here to make a point in accordance with the divine design of Matthew.

22. That sin is not forgiven "in this age nor the coming [one]" (Matt. 12:32); i.e., neither in the Mosaic age (which still runs on) nor the coming kingdom age.

23. There are 10 similitudes of the kingdom in mystery in Matthew. The first parable in Matt. 13 is not a similitude of the kingdom in mystery because while Christ was here the kingdom in mystery had not begun. Moreover, His sowing denotes a new line of things was commenced by Him; i.e., He sowed because the introduction of the kingdom in power was placed in suspension.

Comments on the change in Matthew may be found in *Collected Writings* 11:144-148, etc.

See Ch. 9 for details concerning the disciples' commission in Matt. 10.

### *The Suspension of the Preaching of The Gospel of the Kingdom as at Hand*

The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom by John, by our Lord, and by the twelve disciples (Matt. 10) was interrupted, and suspended, on account of the rejection of Christ. After the cross, and the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ, a new work of God began: the formation of a heavenly company, a work of God unforeseen by Israel's prophets. The earthly matter of the kingdom will be taken up again after this present work of forming a heavenly company is completed, and then the gospel of the kingdom will again be proclaimed by a godly Jewish remnant (Matt. 24:14). Christ will not come in the same character as He came the first time, but in overwhelming judgments, power, and glory to inaugurate that kingdom.

We must ever bear in mind that the cross was the result of the final testing of the first man in the persons of Israel. There is no other testing of the first man subsequent to the cross. Nor will Christ return to earth as He did the first time to present the kingdom in a way for testing the first man to show that he is not recoverable. Christ was, and must be, the final test of man's state as fallen. That is finished. Only sovereign grace and divine power are the way for blessing to come in, as always was the case, but is now made known by the cross.

In Matthew, then, the two discourses on the two mountains point to the two characters of Christ's two advents:

the first discourse (Matt. 5 - 7), in the way of moral test of the state of the first man under trial to show that he was not recoverable;

the second discourse (Matt. 24 - 25), as the second Man, who has displaced the first man via the cross, in judgmental power (cp. Ps. 110).

These two discourses appear in the two different sections of Matthew:

the first discourse appears in the section where the gospel of the kingdom was preached (up to Matt. 12);

the second discourse appears in the section which speaks of the kingdom of the heavens in a mystery form (from Matt. 13 on) -- which was about to be introduced.

This has a bearing on the relationship of the first discourse (Matt. 5 - 7) to the future godly remnant of Jews who will be preaching the gospel of the kingdom during the time of Jacob's trouble, which follows after the rapture of the saints. Let us trace this.

Matt. 5 - 7 was given in connection with the presentation of the kingdom as bound up with the acceptance of Christ as come in humiliation and grace. That was

a moral test meant to bring out the state of the people.<sup>24</sup> Known to God are all His works from the beginning (Acts 15:18). As sovereign, He, and He alone, may form such trials. Man, being what he is as fallen, the outcome was inevitable. The 4000 year history of man in the flesh, i.e., the first man as fallen, led up to the Lord Jesus, presented to his responsibility, and He would certainly be rejected by man in the flesh. We see in Luke 14:15-26 that an invitation is not enough, for they "all began, without exception, to excuse themselves" (v. 18). Therefore a servant is sent to "compel to come in" (v. 23), that servant being, of course, a divine Person who alone has such power -- the Spirit. Thus in Luke's gospel the actions of sovereign grace are seen in bringing sinners to God's great supper of the celebration of grace.

<sup>25</sup>

In connection with the presentation of the kingdom as bound up in the acceptance of the Person of the lowly Lord Jesus, Matt. 5 - 7 shows the character that was suitable for entry into the kingdom of the heavens that was being announced as at hand. This was the suited character for His disciples, to whom he addressed these words (Matt. 5:1, 2). Note well: Matt. 5 - 7 is bound up with the presentation of Christ at His first advent, He being presented to man's responsibility. That is its place in the ways of God. Do not try to make it Christian; do not try to make it fit the coming, godly Jewish remnant; do not try to make it the laws of the future kingdom. It had its special time and place, just as that presentation of Christ had its special time and place -- yet there are things we learn from Matt. 5 - 7 concerning the mind of God, and can profit from it.

The crowds were listening and were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as having authority (Matt. 7:28, 29). Of course He had authority! Did the crowds profit from His teaching? Did that people accept Him? No, He was crucified.

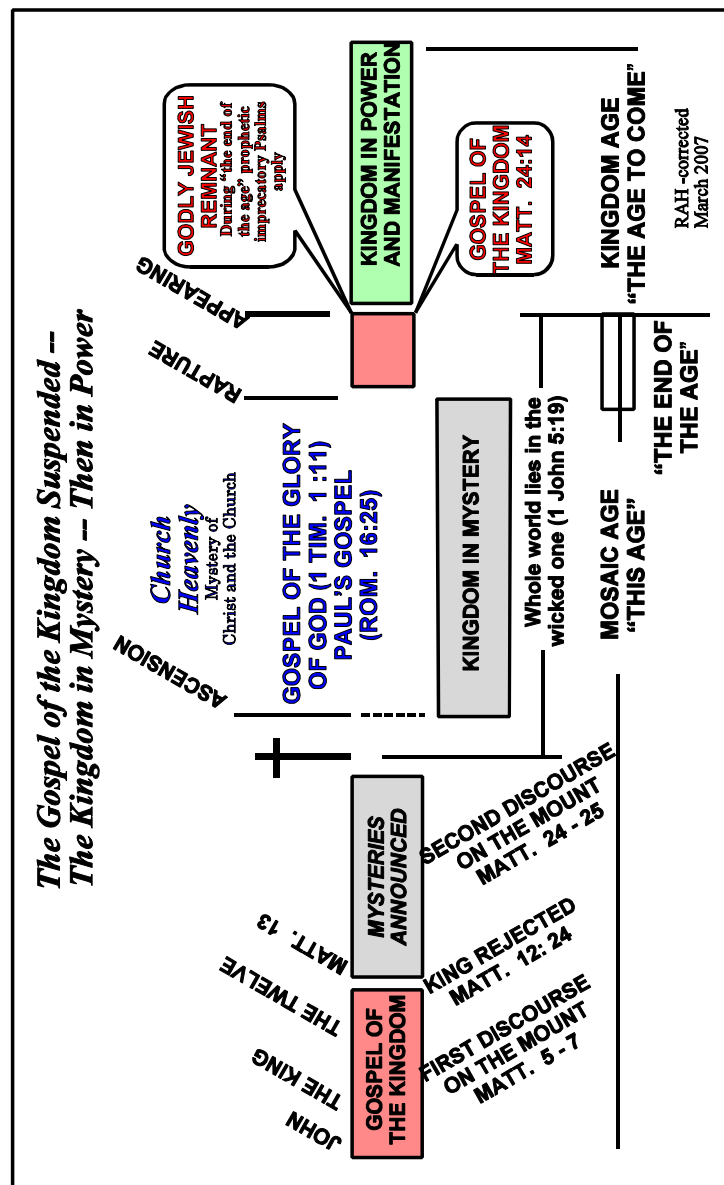
The revival of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom is noted in the second discourse on a mountain, noted in Matt. 24:14. But this does not involve the coming of Christ to Israel in humiliation and grace, to be presented to their responsibility, as the first advent. The kingdom will be introduced, introduced through devastating judgments and power. This necessarily points to some change regarding the so-called Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5 - 7) and its application to those who would enter that kingdom as suitable to it. This change must be in accordance with the two positions of Christ:

the **first** position was in humiliation and grace, with which Matt. 5-7 is bound up;

the **second** position, coming in power and glory {Matt. 26:64; Ps. 2 and 110,

24. In the larger sense, it was part of the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable. The form it took was with the Jewish people.

25. See my, *The Sovereignty and Glory of God in the Salvation of Lost Man*.



etc}, *with which the imprecatory Psalms are bound up.*

Having bowed to God's telling us that:

silence had been kept regarding the mystery of Christ and the church (Rom. 11:25, 26);

it was a mystery hidden from ages and generations (Col. 1:26; i.e., hidden from time-periods and from peoples);

it was not hidden in the OT, but hid in God (Eph. 3:9); and,

the covenants belong to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5);

thus, we have light from God's Word that Covenantism does not have because of Covenantists' refusal to bow to what these Scriptures state. Consonant with the truth of the mystery of Christ and the church is the future establishment of Israel, by sovereign grace, under the millennial reign of Christ. Following the rapture of the saints a godly Jewish remnant will be formed at the time of the revival of the Roman Empire. During that epoch some of that remnant will be martyred and in Rev. 6:10 the souls of some of those martyrs are seen under the altar. Their cry is imprecatory, quite in keeping with the prophetic Psalms:

. . . and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

These are not Christians as Covenantists think. Nor are the two witnesses of Rev. 11 Christians. We noted above that they have a Moses-like and an Elijah-like ministry<sup>26</sup> in the epoch of the final Antichrist of prophecy, after the church is removed from the earth. But Covenantism requires that the imprecatory Psalms be in the mouths of Christians. Thus, Covenantists point to Rev. 6:10 as Scripture evidence of Christian imprecation!

### *Where Are We Now? Are We in the Dispensation of The Kingdom of the Heavens?*

The following comments by J. N. Darby are not as clearly stated as deserving to be expressed. Therefore explanatory comments will be interspersed in this important quotation.

❖ Really this {present time in which we live} is not a dispensation. The Jews had a "this world" and "a world to come," {which really means } "this age" {the Mosaic age} and an "age to come" {the reign of Messiah, the millennial age}.

26. Moses was the law-giver and Elijah recalled Israel from apostasy. Such is the character of the ministry of the two witnesses though they are neither Moses or Elijah, neither of which are subject to death at that point in time on earth. They are simply two witnesses from the godly Jewish remnant, empowered of God for that time of testimony.

Messiah was to bring in the “age to come.” The age of the law went on and Messiah did come, but they would not have Him, and the whole thing {the Mosaic system, not the Mosaic age} stopped; then comes the church between that {stoppage of the Mosaic system} and His second coming; and this is why I said this {present time in which we live} is not strictly a dispensation, but when Messiah comes again, it will close this time {close the Mosaic Age}, and then will be the last day of this age {the Mosaic age}.

The times of the Gentiles in Daniel, and the parenthesis of the church, are not at all contemporaneous; for the times of the Gentiles began in Babylon, being the times of the four Gentiles beasts in Daniel. The times of the Gentiles will not end at the same time with the church, but go on a little after we are caught up. The temple of Jehovah on earth was set aside when the people were carried to Babylon, and they never got the ark again, but a remnant of them was spared to present to them Messiah.

I know what a person means by “the dispensation of the kingdom of heaven,” but we belong to a heavenly thing in an interval while the Mosaic system is set aside {but the Mosaic age rolls on}, and there are no dispensations in heaven {nor are there ages of time in heaven}. The kingdom of heaven is a dispensation {on earth of Messiah’s reign from heaven}, the dispensation of the gospel is an administration.<sup>27</sup> ❖

This last remark does not mean that he believed that the present is the dispensation of the gospel. He had said: “Really this is not a dispensation.” The gospel was an administration committed personally to Paul, which he carried out and completed.

### ***Then What Is the Present Time and What Is God Doing?***

We just saw JND affirm the important truth, truth much needed to understand dispensational truth properly, that we are in the Mosaic age. That the present age is the on-going Mosaic age until it is displaced by the age to come as has been discussed elsewhere.<sup>28</sup> An additional quotation from JND not found in that reference cited is this:

❖ Prophecy gives the career of *earthly* events, the wickedness of man, or the dealings of God. But the church is not earthly; its life is hid with Christ in God; it has its place with Christ while He is hidden; when He appears it will appear {Col. 3:4}; we await the manifestation of the sons of God. Hence it was hid in God from the foundation of the world (Eph. 3), and the prophets do not speak of it. Only it is true that it

27. *Collected Writings* 25:243-244.

28. *Elements of Dispensational Truth* 1:5-7, 107, 109, 118, 132, 141. It is illustrated on various charts in this book.

maintains (or ought to have maintained) the testimony to the kingdom, during the interval of the rejection of the Jewish witness. As inheriting the promises as being in Christ the seed of Abraham, it comes in and maintains by divine wisdom their constancy and unfailingness. But the age is the same age as that in which Christ was upon earth<sup>29</sup> -- “the harvest is the end of the age.”<sup>30</sup> Hence the church cannot be the subject of prophecy. It *was* not -- as being a kind of wisdom hid in God and now made known to principalities and powers, and now it is not -- the subject, but the depositary of prophecy, {and it is} not earthly but heavenly, though on earth in testimony of what is heavenly, and of a hidden Christ with whom it is as one. Hence what relates to it is, as I have said, only seen when it comes down out of heaven having the glory of God. Hence it has no place in prophecy.<sup>31</sup> ❖

### ***The Two Great Systems of God with Respect to the Earth***

The church of God is not one of the great systems of God with respect to the earth. The saints that compose the church are being called out now (Acts 15:14), are heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48), with a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), and in fact are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). This is in clear contrast to Israel which is earthly, having an earthly calling, under covenants, and which will have a supreme place in the earth when planted in the land of promise by sovereign grace. The church is not earthly, not one of the earthly ages, but is above ages, something heavenly, though here on earth concerning responsible testimony, but not belonging to this world.

So, the present time is the Mosaic age during which the Mosaic system has been set aside and the heavenly work connected with the unforeseen mystery of Christ and the church (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9) is effected by the Spirit sent down at Pentecost for these special operations. But this is not one of the great systems of God with respect to the earth. God’s work regarding these two great systems in the earth, the first advent of Christ and the announcement of the kingdom as at hand, Christ’s rejection and what that entailed, was well summarized in a letter by J. N. Darby:

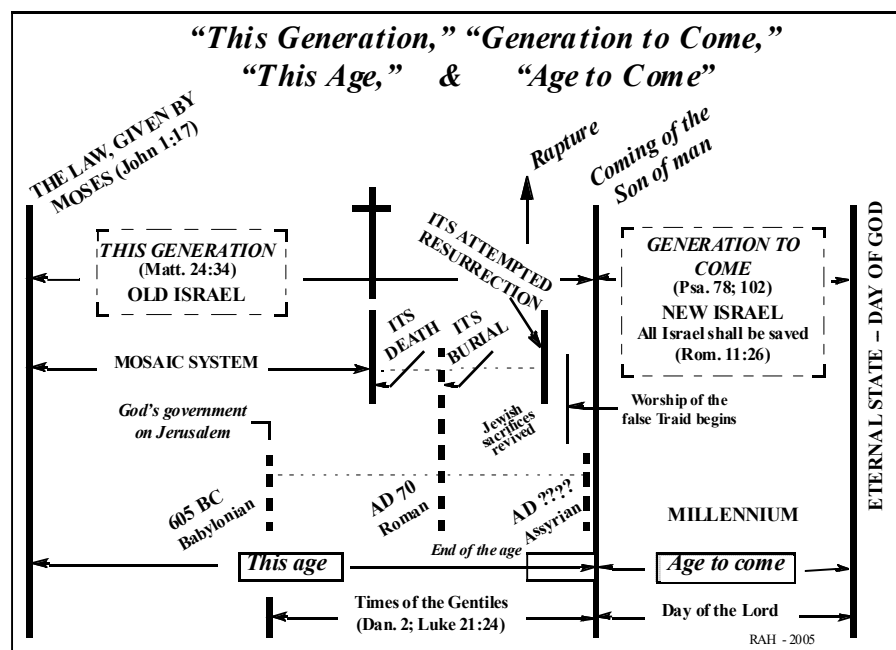
❖ It is important to pay attention to the place where these passages are found in the gospels {Matt. 11:12; Luke 16:16}. In Matthew, chapter 11 marks the

29. {That is, we are in the Mosaic Age. The Church is not an age; it is above and outside ages.}

30. {“The harvest is the end of the age.” What age? -- the end of the Mosaic age which is now running on. See *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1 for more about this.}

31. *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 1:131.





transition from the presentation of Christ to the nation, the Gentiles being excluded. What is found in ch. 10 speaks of this presentation until the return of the Son of man, and the new order of things which took place in consequence of the rejection of Christ. Verses 20-30 of ch. 11 present this change in the most striking manner. The Savior upbraids the cities where He had labored, for their deplorable unbelief, and submits to the will of God in this dispensation. This submission opens for His heart the enigma of that grace which appears in all its simplicity, and in all its power. It is a question of knowing the Father, and the Son alone can reveal Him; but He invites “all that labor and are heavy laden” to come to Him, and He will give them rest. His Person, and not Israel, is the center of grace and of the work of grace. He alone reveals the Father. The judgment of Israel is developed in Matt. 12, and the mysteries of the kingdom are brought out in Matt. 13. On the occasion of this transition we see the testimony of John and that of Jesus equally rejected.

This transition is, if possible, still more clearly marked in Luke at the end of ch. 13. The rupture between Jehovah and Jerusalem is complete: the house which belonged to the children of Jerusalem, once the “house of God,” is abandoned, and they will not see the Lord until Psa. 108 is accomplished in their repentance. Then in Luke 14, the change in the ways of God is clearly shown,

and the sphere of the activity of His grace is no longer the now rejected Israel, but the whole world, after having gathered in the poor of the flock of His people (vv. 16-24). Then the ways of God in sovereign grace towards man -- towards sinners -- are brought out in that treasury of grace and love, which is found in Luke 15; and in Luke 16, the Lord shows the use that man ought to make of that which he possesses according to nature, being now that which had been particularly proved in Israel -- a steward who was dismissed. He should make use of it in grace, in view of the future; instead of enjoying it as a thing possessed in this world. He should think of eternal habitations. It is here that the passage relative to the kingdom and to John the Baptist is found. His mission was the pivot of the change. *In this point of view* the mission of Christ on the earth -- His ministry -- was but the complement of that of John the Baptist. Compare Matt. 4:17; 3:2. Only the latter sung the doleful dirge of judgment, and the former the joyful song of hope and of grace, just as our chapter explains it to us.

In the passages which occupy us, Matthew speaks as thinking of Israel; Luke, as thinking of all men.

Two great systems of God with respect to the earth are found included in His counsels, and revealed in the word. One depended on the faithfulness of man to the responsibility which weighed upon him, the other on the active power of God. These are the dispensations {or, administrations} of the law and of the kingdom. . . .

There is only this difference between Matthew and Luke, that Matthew speaks exclusively of the character of those who seize on the kingdom, and the position of the latter, and does not therefore go beyond the application of these thoughts to the Jewish people. Luke had formally spoken of the highways and hedges, and had by his expressions opened the door to the Gentiles without formally pointing to them as the “whomsoever,” so often quoted by Paul. “Every one,” he says, “forces his way into it.” Since it was a matter of preaching and of faith, the Gentile who would listen to the preaching and have that faith would enter in, like any other. Nevertheless, he only opens the door by a principle, according to the doctrine of that gospel from ch. 4. The parable which follows these verses in Luke goes farther. It decidedly opens heaven, and completely overturns the Jewish system, which made earthly blessings to be a proof of God’s favor. <sup>32</sup> ❖

32. Letters 3:400-403.

## Chapter 4

### ***Some Questions Concerning The Kingdom of the Heavens in Matthew Up to the Moral Rejection of the King (in Matt. 12)***

Note that a survey of truth regarding the Kingdom is found in *The Bible Treasury*, 8:107-112. Also, F. G. Patterson's, *The Ways of God*, is quite helpful.

The presentation of the kingdom of the heavens before Matt. 11-12 is unlike its presentation after Matt. 12, where the sin against the Holy Spirit was committed. That sin marked what we are considering as the *moral rejection* of the King, whereas the crucifixion was the *formal rejection*.

#### ***Could One Speak of the Kingdom of God Existing Before Christ Came?***

It is not scriptural to argue that since God has always been in sovereign control, the kingdom of God has always existed. Of course, He has always been in sovereign control, but let us be subject to what Scripture states.

Very precious are the words that the throne upon which Solomon sat was the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 28:5). If that proves that the kingdom of God existed, then when that throne was set aside, what does that mean? <sup>33</sup>

It is implicit in the initial announcement of the kingdom as at hand that what was announced as at hand had not begun yet -- did not, in fact, exist in OT times. Texts such as Dan. 4:26 must not be set up against that patent fact. The kingdom announced refers to the kingdom of Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Man, prophesied by the OT prophets of Israel. They did not prophesy concerning the future coming of a kingdom that was already existent in OT times. <sup>34</sup>

This answers the incorrect notion that Matt. 21:43 means that the kingdom of God (the reference is to the millennial reality of the kingdom, in power and glory) must have been in existence for it to be taken away. Not so; it belonged to the Old Israel prospectively, but Old Israel proving to be unworthy of it, it is

33. The throne of Jehovah was committed to man in responsibility, and as always, man failed. The Lord Jesus Christ will take that throne and completely glorify God with respect to it. Christ will glorify God in all things wherein man has failed.

34. See also *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 14, 15.

taken away from the Old Israel in that sense.

Why not simply bow to the plain import of the announcement of the kingdom as at hand? This applies to both expressions: "The kingdom of the heavens," as well as "the kingdom of God." Both were at hand.

#### ***Why Do Matthew, Mark and Luke Speak of The Mysteries of the Kingdom?***

The Kingdom in manifestation was the subject of OT prophecies, which does not mean that the NT can not add to what was prophesied. What was prophesied in the OT was not a mystery, for a mystery is a secret, something not spoken of in the OT. Since the Old Israel, Israel under the Mosaic Covenant, was being set aside, and the kingdom in power was not to be immediately manifested, there was a form of the kingdom filling an interval, a form not foreseen by the prophets of Israel -- hence a mystery, the kingdom in a mystery form.

#### ***Why Does Matthew Use the Expression Kingdom of the Heavens?***

See previous Chapter.

The designation "kingdom of the heavens" has in view the seat of kingdom authority being in heaven. Dan. 4:26 is a precursor to this point. The Gospel inspired by the Spirit to present our Lord especially as King is where this particular designation is only used in the Gospels: Matthew. The kingdom of the heavens means the rule of the heavens.

#### ***What Is the Difference Between the Kingdoms of God and of the Heavens?***

See previous chapter. "Kingdom of the heavens" always has a dispensational, or governmental character whereas "Kingdom of God" may have a dispensational character or it may have a moral bearing (as in John's gospel, Rom. 14:17, and 1 Cor. 4:20). The expression, "kingdom of God" does not always have a dispensational/administrative character. Sometimes "kingdom of the heavens" and "kingdom of God" appear as if interchangeable whereas that could not be so in some other cases. However, the Spirit of God has directed the exclusive use of "kingdom of the heavens" to Matthew -- with five exceptional uses of "kingdom of God" (see below). In some 'parallel' cases in Mark and Luke, "kingdom of God" is used where Matthew had used "kingdom of heaven." For this reason it has been said that there are cases where the expressions are interchangeable. It is true that in some cases the same ground is covered. However, a parable in Matthew concerning the kingdom of the heavens has a

dispensational/governmental/ administrative bearing while a similar one in Luke has a moral connection and bearing. When calling parables ‘parallel,’ it is well to keep this divine design in mind.

The kingdom of the heavens (in its mystery form) did not begin while the Lord was here. In Matthew, since the kingdom of the heavens did not yet exist when He spoke and if He said something about the kingdom that was true at that very moment, then He used the expression “kingdom of God.” The power of the kingdom was present in Himself and so He could speak of it as present in that sense, as He spoke.

❖ When the King was here, the kingdom of God could be said to be present, but, for that very reason, the kingdom of heaven was not come; the kingdom of heaven could not come until He went away. When the kingdom of God shall be set up in power, it will still be the kingdom of heaven. When He comes again, it will be the kingdom of God according to Mark and Luke, and will be the kingdom of heaven according to Matthew. The moral force of it is the great point of difference. <sup>35</sup> ❖

### ***Then Is It Incorrect to Say that the Kingdom of God Always Speaks of What is Real?***

It is incorrect to say that the kingdom of God is only used in speaking of what is real. Mark and Luke use “kingdom of God” in connection with what is mere profession (cp. Matt. 13:33 with Luke 13:20-21). John does not, only using “kingdom of God” concerning what is real (as in John 3). <sup>36</sup>

### ***What Is the Significance of Matthew’s Use of “Kingdom of God” Five Times?***

First of all, we must keep in mind that the kingdom in mystery began when the Lord was above, not when He was here sowing the seed. In Matthew, when “kingdom of God” is used, it applies to something concerning the kingdom that was true at the moment He spoke, or had to do strictly with what was true

35. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 14. See also *Collected Writings*, 2:54, 55 note, 63; 25:47 note; 11:360; 24:94; *Notes and Comments*, 5:76;

36. August Van Ryn wrote:

I believe then that the kingdom of God in Scripture always presents the kingdom as composed only of those who are real; whose subjects are truly born again souls. I believe John 3:3 proves this when our Lord says that it is necessary to be born again to see or enter the kingdom of God. No such thing is said of the kingdom of heaven (*The Kingdoms of God and of Heaven*, New York: Loizeaux, p. 24, 1946).

Of course, John 3:3 proves no such thing. Such remarks are quite unhelpful. There are parables in Mark and Luke which embrace profession.

morally at all times.

Secondly, it is the fact that the “kingdom of the heavens” is *governmental* in character while “kingdom of God” may be both moral in character as well as governmental in character. By “moral” is meant reality, what is really of God as its source. “Governmental” allows of mere profession without moral reality. It should be noted that “kingdom of God” is more comprehensive than “kingdom of the heavens.”

**Matt. 6:33.** Israel had sought righteousness under the law but the law should have taught them that man’s righteousness was not capable of being thus established; God’s righteousness must needs be their righteousness. In view of the announcement of the kingdom of the heavens as at hand, the Lord here stated what was suitable for entrance into the kingdom *in its reality*, therefore “kingdom of God” is used as well as God’s righteousness.

**Matt. 12:28.** The powers that the Lord Jesus displayed were works of power of the age to come (Heb. 6:5), i.e., the millennial age. They were present because those powers were present in His Person, even as the offer of the kingdom was entailed in the acceptance of His Person. He, the King of the kingdom of God was present with them and therefore it was said that “then indeed the kingdom of God is come upon you.” The moral power of the kingdom was present in His Person at the moment He spoke. “Kingdom of the heavens” is dispensational in character and could not be present while the Sower was still here. It is the second parable in Matt 13 which is the first similitude of the kingdom of the heavens in mystery, and that parable views Him as absent from this world.

**Matt. 19:24.** There are interpretations based on the erroneous idea that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the heavens are to be equated, or are synonymous. Matt. 19:23-24 is offered in proof. The real meaning of this error is that the inspiring Spirit makes a distinction without a difference, which is no distinction after all. No doubt greater respect for verbal inspiration might have hindered such allegations.

(23) A rich man shall with difficulty enter into the kingdom of the heavens;

(24) and again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to enter a needle’s eye than a rich man into the kingdom of God (Matt. 19:23-24).

These texts are not synonymous or equated. In v. 23 it is *possible*, though difficult; in v. 24 it is *impossible*. The distinction is precisely in accordance with the change in expression from kingdom of the heavens to kingdom of God.

Are riches considered a favor of God? A rich man could enter the sphere of profession (i.e., the kingdom of the heavens) without reality in his soul, as we know from many parables, the same as anyone else, though riches might hinder him from desiring to do so. The kingdom of God, considered here as a moral sphere of reality, he *cannot* enter, anymore than a camel can go through the eye of a needle. It is impossible -- riches enable him not one bit and have no advantage. The disciples’ response shows that this *impossibility* is the meaning, but with God it is possible (Matt. 19:26) because sovereign grace can accomplish this (cp. Col.

1:13) though riches cannot.

**Matt. 21:31.** Notice that our Lord placed into the mouth of the first child the words, “I will not,” but into the mouth of the other a refined expression, “I [go], sir.” Yes, and the self-important, emphasized *I* in the second case is significant. Can you not see how the Lord puts the fine pretension of His opposers into the mouth of the deceiving child? But concerning those despised ones, the righteous rebukes of John were used by the Spirit to bow them to God’s word. Not so the self-righteous. They would not enter the same way as tax-gatherers and harlots. Therefore our Lord said to them:

Verily I say unto you that the tax-gatherers and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you (Matt. 21:31).

Here, mere, empty profession is dealt this moral blow, therefore the expression that bears a moral, rather than a governmental, import is used. The refined state of our Lord’s opposers was exposed for what it is: disobedience to God -- awful self-righteousness. But that self-righteousness was a cloak hiding what the heart was really like.

**Matt. 21:43.** Here, regarding the kingdom, moral, acceptable fruits for God is the issue. Therefore “kingdom of God” is used, because the kingdom in its moral aspect is before the Lord’s mind. The promised kingdom to Israel is taken from the Old Israel, as under the Mosaic Covenant, and is given to the New Israel which will be under the New Covenant; i.e., “given to a nation producing the fruits of it.” It is because of sovereign grace acting (Rom. 11:26).

### ***Why Did the Lord Wait for John to Be Delivered Up? (Matt. 4:12, 17)***

The Lord’s statement in Mk. 1:15 indicates the time for the commencement of His public ministry. John’s ministry as the forerunner, in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), was completed. See Luke 4:18. What had preceded His public ministry had been fulfilled and now it was time for Him to commence His own public works.

### ***What Is the Place of the Sermon on the Mount?***

The Sermon on the Mount has been considered in detail in another book.<sup>37</sup> It is shown there that the Sermon has a special place regarding Israel’s state at the time John and the Lord announced it as at hand, in view of the Kingdom being presented as entailed with the acceptance of the King come in lowliness among them. It is not a spiritualizing of the law. Nor is it the rule of life for a Christian, though there are moral principles we learn from it. Moreover, it is not to be

37. In *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 4: *The Sermon on the Mount: Its Dispensational Place and Meaning*; and, *The Imprecatory Psalms: Their Dispensational Place*.

imposed wholesale upon the future, godly Jewish remnant, when the imprecatory Psalms have their bearing, as well as when the judgmental ministry of the two witnesses (Rev. 11) is transpiring. Read the book noted in the above footnote where these things are considered, as well as the Christian’s relationship to government.

Before leaving this matter of the bearing of Matt. 5 - 7, we note what is shown in the referenced book, namely, that the Lord’s prayer was for the disciples in *their then state*, as not having the Spirit of sonship, as now, whereby we cry Abba, Father (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). It is quite erroneous to place the Christian under the Sermon on the Mount, as such. But this is not to say that there are not principles we learn from it that are carried out in Christianity (cp. Matt. 5:5; Luke 6:36; Matt. 18:21-35; Col. 3:12; Eph. 2:4; 5:1). Read the referenced book.

### ***What Is the Place of the So-called Lord’s Prayer?***

It was suitable to the disciples before the cross, before the Spirit of His Son whereby we cry Abba, Father was given. It was suitable for their then state, at that time, in connection with the manner in which the kingdom as entailed with the acceptance of Christ come in humiliation was presented to Israel in their responsibility. This is fully dealt with in the book noted in the last footnote above.

### ***What Does Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness Mean? Matt. 6:33***

The kingdom of the heavens is dispensational in character. The kingdom had not yet come and what is said in Matt. 6:33 refers to what is moral, hence “kingdom of God” is used.

The righteousness of God is God’s self-consistency with what He is in Himself (as light and love). The righteousness of God which we have been made is that very thing, God’s righteousness; not Christ’s righteous law-keeping imputed to us as if that might be the righteousness of God. This matter has been dealt with in several papers by J. N. Darby and the following is an extract from one.

❖ On the other hand, where righteousness is said to be imputed, it is that Christ was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith {Rom. 4:25-5:1}.

Another thing, ay, another thing is presented as the object of justifying faith -- He was delivered for our offences.

The promise . . . was not . . . through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. {Rom. 4:13}

God imputes, or reckons, righteousness without works {see Rom. 4:6}

We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law (*choris ergon nomou*). {Rom. 3:28}

It is impossible to have a more complete denial that it is by works of the law, keep them who may.

Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law, *choris nomou*, apart from law {Rom. 3:20-21}. How comes it, if Christ's keeping the law is our righteousness, that these statements are not guarded? -- that it is never said that it was by His keeping the law? -- that it should be said, not that it was not by our keeping it, but not by law at all? -- not by Christ's doing it as a representative, but apart from law altogether? Could these teachers of the law say what stronger language could be used, if the object of the apostle had been to show that it is quite apart from law and on another principle?

I do not see how it is possible that statements could be made stronger to prove that the Christian is not under it. "As many as are of the works of the law" (that seek life on this principle) "are under the curse" {Gal. 3:10}. Our justification by faith is rested on what? Christ being delivered for our offences and raised again. In Rom. 10 there is a righteousness by law -- Do this and live. Well, is not, then, righteousness to be by law only -- Christ fulfilling it and I getting the benefit? No; "the righteousness by faith speaks" quite differently. "Say not in thine heart," etc. The two righteousnesses speak quite differently. So the apostle insists. I may leave this point. I do not see how language could make it plainer than the apostle has. Let any unprejudiced person read the Galatians, and say if righteousness be by law or not for the Christian; and whether righteousness by law, get it how you will, is not rejected, and another proclaimed.

But we are told more particularly, that wherever the phrase, "righteousness of God," occurs, it "always comes back to this, that it is the accomplishment of law."

First, it is said,

Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith {Rom. 1:17}.

How this is the accomplishment of the law, I do not know. There is not the smallest hint that it has anything to do with it, save that it is of God (i.e., not man's keeping it before God), and that it is on the principle of faith. "And the law is not of faith" {Gal. 3:12}. Indeed, the writer admits that it seems to be in God, as the wrath is. Matt. 6:33:

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Here there is no possible connection with Christ keeping the law vicariously for sinners. It was their own walk which was the question. Men are to seek, not the comforts of this world, but God's kingdom and righteousness, to have a part in the blessing, and glory, and acceptance which He was setting up.

If our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:5).

Here, clearly, it is equally far from the thought of Christ fulfilling the law. It is God's consistency with Himself and faithfulness to His promises, even when man is unfaithful; as before -- our unbelief, the faithfulness of God: God was true, if every man was a liar. It is expressly

the righteousness of God without law (Rom. 3:21).

The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22).

Ignorant of God's righteousness . . . have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3).

But this is so far from being the righteousness of the law, that it is specifically contrasted with it.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

For Moses describeth the righteousness of the law. . . but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise {Rom. 10:4-6}.

That is, it does not say that the man that does them is righteous, for they are done by Christ, and if I believe in Christ, they are done for me; but it is not now living by doing, but living by believing, and believing that One, Jesus, who was dead, God hath raised from the dead. In this passage the writer has attempted to say, that the end of the law can only mean that fulfilment which the law demanded, and could not but demand, till its end or accomplishment was reached. This is, I must say, impudent. *Telos*, he says, means fulfilling a demand till the accomplishment is reached. It is too barefaced -- the rather, as the apostle says, Christ is the end of the law, because the law says so-and-so, but the righteousness of faith says quite otherwise, and hence the say of the law is at an end, and something else comes in as righteous. Righteousness is on another principle.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:31).

But this is explicitly Christ not keeping the law, but His being made sin. "Who knew no sin" marks a Christ, who has lived holily through this world. I have not heard that they have been bold enough as yet to say, it means -- God has no consciousness of sin, but was made it in incarnation. But if this most painful thought, even to mention, is not their opinion, then it is not keeping the law which is spoken of here, but Christ's being made a sacrifice for sin upon the cross. It is again contrasted with law:

Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:9).

Titus 3:5 leads to the same point, but the word "righteousness of God" is not there. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:30). This, clearly, can in no possible way refer to Christ keeping the law. The wrath of man cannot produce a righteousness according to God, a righteousness which

has its character in His nature. ❖<sup>38</sup>

### *Was the Offer of the Kingdom Immoral?*

Instead of Covenantists objecting that dispensationalism means God was insincere in the offer of the kingdom to Israel, they might think about Covenantism meaning that God deceived the Jews through the OT prophets prophesying that there was a coming kingdom under Messiah, when *the Jews had no other way to understand those prophecies than literally*. Does not Covenant Theology mean that God deceived the Jews? John the Baptist was regarded as a prophet because he announced that kingdom as at hand. He would not have been regarded as a prophet if he was announcing a kingdom to the Jews as conceived by Covenantists. The Covenantist assertion that the NT gave a larger scope and meaning to the OT prophecies means:

1. not actually a larger meaning and scope to the literal kingdom, but,
2. rather a transmutation of the kingdom as literally understood into a non-literal kingdom by the spiritual alchemy of the Covenantist hermeneutic.

In the OT, the scope and meaning of the prophecies that there was to be a kingdom for Israel under Messiah could only be understood literally by the Jews (including the saints among the nation). Covenantism produces something *differing in kind*, not really giving a larger scope and meaning to the OT prophets.

Concerning the offer of the kingdom to Israel in Christ's person, W. Trotter commented as follows.

◆ The fact is, that the kingdom of God, which will exist manifestly in the millennial reign of Christ . . . , exists now in mystery, and is found wherever there is the acknowledgment, real or in profession only, of the name and authority of Christ, while He Himself is hid in God on high. It is within this kingdom of course, that the church has its existence at present. Nay, more; it is at present the only thing in the kingdom which is really precious to Christ; and we shall have to look at passages which, on this account, speak of the church, or rather of those who compose the church, as the kingdom. Still, it is not as the church that these passages contemplate it, and the kingdom itself is a much wider thing.

For full instructions as to the special or distinct place and blessedness of "the church," we look in vain, except in the Ephesians and other Epistles of St. Paul. The kingdom of God, one would repeat, exists now in mystery, and comprises the whole sphere in which the name and authority of Christ are recognized, whether nominally or really, during the period of Christ's session at the right hand of God. There is, of course, a wide difference between a

sovereignty exercised openly and visibly in the form and character of royalty on the earth (Jerusalem its center and the whole earth its sphere), and a sovereignty exercised from heaven by invisible agency and moral means, such as Christianity is now. This latter is the kingdom of God in mystery; the former is the kingdom of God as the Jews were taught by ancient prophecy to expect it, and as it will yet surely exist in the millennial age. Modified, however, even then by the introduction and co-heirship with Christ of the heavenly saints, for which room was made by Israel's rejection of their Messiah on the earth.

When He takes the kingdom, it will be as the glorified Son of man; and the heavenly body, the church, now forming by the Holy Ghost, will be united with its Head in the administration of that kingdom, so that even then it will have the character of the kingdom of heaven.

As the open establishment of the kingdom is inseparably connected with the repentance of Israel<sup>39</sup> and their reception of the Messiah, it pleased God, by the proclamation that His kingdom was at hand, solemnly to put to the test whether Israel was in a condition, morally and spiritually, to receive it. Accordingly the preaching of John the Baptist, and the earlier preaching of our Lord Himself and His disciples, was simply this, the announcing that the kingdom was at hand, and calling upon Israel to repent and believe the glad tidings. God knew, of course, that they would reject the kingdom thus preached to them; and He had arranged everything accordingly. The kingdom they hoped for was to be put off on account of their unbelief; and the kingdom which was actually at hand was

39. {W. Trotter wrote:

Then, further, it was foreseen of God, that the human instruments in effecting Messiah's sufferings and death, would be His own people, the Jews. It was foreseen, yea, and foretold, that instead of receiving their Messiah with open arms, they would reject and crucify (Psa. 22:16, compared with Zech. 13:10) their long-promised and long-expected King. It was also foretold that on account of this, instead of the kingdom being immediately introduced, their heaviest sufferings and longest dispersion should ensue on the rejection of Messiah. (See Psa. 69:19-28; Isa. 5:5; 6:9-12; 8:14-17; 28:16-22). Other like passages there are, too numerous to be quoted.

Again, notwithstanding the rejection of Messiah by Israel, and the judgments which were to come on them in consequence, it was distinctly and largely foretold in the Old Testament, that eventually Israel shall repent (see Hos. 5:15; 6:1, 2; Psa. 110:2, 3; Ezek. 20:43, 44; Joel 2:15, 18; Zech. 12:10-14, &c.); that, confessing and bewailing their sins, they shall anxiously look for Him Whom they once rejected, and that then He shall return, forgive their iniquity, deliver them from their Gentile oppressors, on whom judgments the most solemn and terrific shall be executed, and that then the long-foretold and long-expected kingdom of Christ shall be actually set up; His government openly and visibly extending over all the earth. These events form the great burden of prophetic testimony: as the apostle expresses it, summing up the whole in a few words, they "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow" {1 Pet. 1:11; see also Luke 24:26.}. W. Trotter, *Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:7-8.}

38. *Collected Writings*, 7:371-374. See also p. 314-315.

the kingdom in mystery, as it has existed from that time until the present.

Though God knew well that they would reject the kingdom, both in the rejection of its royal Heir and in the rejection of His fore-runner -- though God knew this, I say -- the responsibility of Israel was not thereby diminished in the least. All was ready on God's part; "the Child was born to Israel, the Son given," Whose name was to be called Wonderful, on Whose shoulders the government was to be, and Who was to sit on the throne of His father David, executing judgment and justice for ever. He gave full proof that to Him belonged these dignities and glories; . . . But God knew that they would not receive Him. He knew they would crucify and slay Him, and He delivered Him into their hands to be thus crucified. But did that make them less guilty? Not in the least. The foreknowledge of God is one thing; man's responsibility is another.

- God knew men would break the law; yet He gave it, that what was in man's heart might be manifest. God knew that Israel would, by their sins, forfeit the land of Canaan, and have to be scattered, as at present. He told them that He knew this before He brought them in. (See Deut. 31:16-21). Still, He brought them in. He knew that they would reject the prophets and messengers by whom He spake to them, and offered them forgiveness and mercy, if they would but repent. (See Ezek. 3:7-9.) Nevertheless, He sent them, rising up betimes and sending. Was their responsibility diminished by God's foreknowledge of the manner in which they would treat the messengers of His mercy? Surely not. So when, last of all, He sent His Son, sent Him as the One born to be King of the Jews, He knew all that they would do unto Him. From the slaughter of the innocents by Herod, to the last taunt that was addressed to the holy Sufferer on the cross, God foreknew all.

Why should this hinder Him from presenting the kingdom to them, and offering them its felicities and its glories on condition of their repentance, any more than the foresight of their failure under any former test should have hindered Him from applying it? God would make manifest what man, what Israel, was, and so appealed to them in the most affecting way, through the medium of the hopes which, for so many generations, had been indulged by them as a nation -- hopes based on the prophecies considered in our last. And they understood that Jesus claimed to be the One Whose coming was the object and center of their natural hopes. The superscription in Latin, and Greek, and Hebrew, placed over the cross by Pilate, told plainly enough that it was as King of the Jews He was rejected by the nation. Thank God, He did foreknow what they in the hatred of their hearts would do. Their sin has thus been overruled to our salvation; their fall has become our riches. In due time, when the church has been formed and perfected, and caught up to meet its Head in the air, when all the "mysteries of the kingdom" have had their accomplishment, Israel, as we have seen, humbled and broken-hearted, shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in

the name of Jehovah {Matt. 23:39}; and the kingdom shall be established manifestly and in power.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
{Rom. 11:33}. <sup>40</sup> ♦

### ***Matt. 8:11-12:***

### ***Lying Down at Table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of the Heavens; and, Who Are the Sons of the Kingdom?***

Not even in Israel have I found so great faith. But I say unto you, that many shall come from [the] rising and setting [sun], and shall lie down at table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness . . . (Matt. 8:10-12).

It is important to bear in mind that the future kingdom will have two aspects, or two sides. The earthly side is called the kingdom of the Son of man while the heavenly side is called the kingdom of the Father. Thus, all saints will have a portion in the kingdom, whether they are in heaven, or are on earth. All will be under Christ's headship (Eph. 1:10). Matt. 8:11-12 anticipates our Lord speaking of the righteous dead being resurrected and shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:43), i.e., the heavenly part of the kingdom.

The patriarchs will be resurrected with the other OT worthies (Heb. 11:40) at which time they shall be made perfect, *not without us*, as the text states, thus they and saints of the church will be resurrected together as concerns the point in time, though not swamping out any distinctive church blessings. The present saints are either resurrected or the living changed, at the time of the rapture. The great stage of the first resurrection (of which Christ is the firstfruits) will occur at the time of the rapture. While such resurrected and changed saints, along with the subsequent martyrs of the tribulation period, will enjoy the company referred to in Matt. 8:11, the text is making the point that there are many beyond those of Israel who shall enjoy the blessedness of the kingdom noted in this text. Thus, its point is that Gentiles will enter into this blessed portion in the kingdom of the heavens, as v. 10 shows.

It is implicit that the fellowship, *figuratively depicted*, will be in the heavenly side of the kingdom of the heavens when it is implemented in power in the earthly side. While there will be a distinct place and blessedness of the church, the bride of the Lamb, there is also that which is common in blessedness that all saints in heaven will feast on together in spiritual delight before the

40. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:23-25.

Father.

A similar passage is found in Luke 13:29 where the kingdom is looked at in its moral bearing, while in Matthew we have the dispensational bearing of the kingdom.

The phrase, “sons of the kingdom,” only appears in Matthew. In Matt. 8:12 the sons of the kingdom means those who, in name, will be the physical seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and who will have a right to the kingdom, but in reality they will not have the *faith* of even the Gentile centurion of Matt. 8:5-13, which *faith* would have secured that kingdom for themselves. Thus, these sons of the kingdom, as faithless, natural heirs, will be cast into the outer darkness, i.e., hell. The fact that the kingdom was taken from them does not imply that they already had the kingdom. It only means that *prospectively* it was theirs and in that sense they lost it. And consider this:

Therefore I say unto you that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it (Matt. 21:43).

They did not yet possess the kingdom of God, yet it is taken away from them. It was theirs prospectively, just as “sons of the kingdom” is used prospectively in Matt. 8:12. They shall neither have the kingdom nor be in actuality sons of the kingdom. The nation producing the fruits will be the new Israel under the New Covenant, the deliverer having turned away ungodliness from Jacob. Thus, this divine operation by Christ will make good to Israel the description “sons of the kingdom.”

In Matt. 13:38, the “sons of the kingdom are the good seed.” That refers to the epoch of the kingdom in its mystery form (i.e., now). Such are the righteous of Matt. 13:43 who shall shine in the Father’s kingdom, i.e., the heavenly side of the coming kingdom, when all is under Christ’s headship (Eph. 1:10).

Matt. 17:25 only says “sons,” referring to those who are free. Implicit in this is the thought that kings sons are not made to pay tribute. They are free. The Lord Jesus associated Peter with Himself as being in such a free position with respect to the temple tax. He was Lord of the temple! But not to offend, He would provide for the tax by His authority even over the fish. He had not come in grace and humiliation to assert His rights. When He comes in glory and judgment and shall have set Himself down upon the throne of His glory (cp. Matt. 25:31), He will sit and rule upon His throne as King and Melchisedec priest, and build the millennial temple (Zech. 6:12, 13). Then His rights will be enforced.

Meanwhile, the Son has made us free, yet we pay our tax to the powers that be (Rom. 13).

### ***Which is the Nation that Will Produce the Fruits of the Kingdom?***

Therefore I say unto you that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you

and given to a nation producing the fruits of it (Matt. 21:43).

It is clear that those from whom the kingdom of God is taken are Israel; but not merely Israel; it is taken from the Old Israel under the Old Covenant. While many believe that the nation to whom the kingdom of God is given is the church,<sup>41</sup> I suggest that the Lord meant that the kingdom of God will be given to the nation of the New Israel under the New Covenant. At that time fruits will be the result of the action of sovereign grace on behalf of Israel.

### ***Was the Kingdom Preached by the Lord (Matt. 9:35) and by the Twelve (Matt. 10) an alleged “Spiritual Kingdom as Now”?***

The expression in this question, “a spiritual kingdom” is only used to describe the way some objectors to a future millennial kingdom speak. Such often equate the kingdom and the church. The answer is, of course, that the kingdom preached before the Lord’s moral separation from the nation shown to us in Matt. 12 is the kingdom prophesied by the OT prophets. In Matt. 9:25 we see Him continuing the preaching noted in Matt. 4:23.

We all really know that the OT prophets prophesied a literal kingdom. And that is the only way that Israel could understand the prophecies. The Jews knew it and dispensationalists know it. Covenantists really know it also, know it as is evidenced by the spiritual alchemy they use to transmute the prophesied, literal kingdom, into their notion of a present spiritual kingdom. The notion that John, the Lord, and the twelve preached a different kingdom than was prophesied by the OT prophets is absurd. We know that the remnant at the time of that preaching, as well as the other Jews were expecting a literal kingdom as the OT prophets had prophesied. The people would not have accepted John as a prophet had he come proclaiming a kingdom such as is thought by many Covenantists to presently exist.

You will take note of the fact that the Lord restricted the mission in Matt. 10 to Israel. Why would that be so if the preaching of the kingdom as at hand was a kingdom having the character of the church as many Covenantists view it? Think about this: the Lord excluded Gentiles from this mission (Matt. 10:1-15). The Covenantist view is that saved Jew and Gentile today form “the spiritual Israel.” Was that the message of the mission in Matt. 10? If you think so, let us have an account of what you think they said.

When was the kingdom as viewed by Covenantists first manifested if not at Pentecost (Acts 2). But in Luke 19:11-27 there is a parable on account of the fact

41. The *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1029 says: “given to the Gentiles (Rom. 9:30-33).” That text does not address the matter. In Rom. 9 - 11 we find the Gentile profession warned of being cut off as Israel was cut off (Rom. 11:22). It will happen and after that all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26). They shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21). The kingdom of God will be theirs.



that the disciples thought the kingdom was about to be manifested immediately. I suppose one can imagine a Covenantist working around that. Then in Acts 1:6, 7 the disciples asked if the time had come. They were still asking about the kingdom of which the OT prophets had prophesied; this text is dealt with elsewhere. Keep in mind that the form of the kingdom in mystery was given later (Matt. 13). In Matt. 9 and 10 the form of the kingdom preached was the same as in Matt. 3 and 4, namely the Messianic kingdom prophesied by the OT prophets.<sup>42</sup>

The mission in Matt. 10 was not completed but will be recommenced in the future and the audience vastly enlarged (Matt. 24:14).

A rather full consideration of Matt. 10 will be found in the section on the Commissions in the Gospels where we will note that Matt. 10:16-20 anticipates the rejection of Christ and their consequent testimony; then Matt. 10:21-22 refers to the future testimony to the gospel of the kingdom, noted in Matt. 24:14. After that there is instruction concerning how to act amid persecution.

***What Does It Mean that the Law  
and the Prophets Were until John?  
What Is the Meaning of the Least in  
the Kingdom Being Greater Than John?  
and, What Is the Meaning of  
Taking the Kingdom by Violence?***

But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet: this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say to you, that there is not arisen among [the] born of women a greater than John the baptist. But he who is a little one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he. But from the days of John the baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is taken by violence, and [the] violent seize on it. For all the prophets and the law have prophesied unto John (Matt. 11:8-13).

There are helpful writers on Matthew who take “a little one in the kingdom of the heavens” to point to us now. The kingdom in mystery, in which we are, is not yet brought out here in Matt. 11 (not until chapter 13). Rather, as W. Trotter observed, it points to Israel under the future reign of Christ:

In Matt. 11:11 the Baptist is declared by our Lord to be as great as any that had been born of women. The Savior affirms, nevertheless, that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. John had but announced its approach. The least of those who actually enjoy the blessedness of that reign of heaven is in a position more blessed than John’s. Our Lord then adds,

42. The expectation of John, the Lord, the disciples, and the remnant, is taken up in detail in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent take it by force.

Instead of its being an ordered and established system, into which men had been introduced at their birth, and in which all that was required of them was to walk obediently to the laws and ordinances then existing, it was a kingdom preached as at hand, and the question was of entering into it. Such too was the total failure of man under the old system, and the rancorous opposition of his heart to the new kingdom and its accompaniments, that it was only at the risk, or even cost, of every thing that any one could enter in. It was only by bursting asunder every tie, doing violence to all the dictates and interests of nature, that any one could enter in. It was grace undoubtedly, that supplied the energy and fortitude thus to hate father, mother, brother, sister, houses, lands, yea, and a man’s own life, for Christ’s sake; still, this was the way in which grace led a man to act. And those who did not thus value Christ and the kingdom He proclaimed above every thing besides, so as to abide the loss of all things for His sake, proved themselves unworthy of it, and failed to enter it.<sup>43</sup>

There is no implication that the kingdom was already in existence. If it was, then John was already in it and you introduce contradiction into the passage. Moreover, the fact that the new form of the kingdom in mystery was going to be introduced does not change the matter of entering if it is a true entry.

As to this remnant at the time our Lord was presented to the first man in his responsibility (in the persons of Israel), in God’s arrangements they were in due time incorporated into the church. They shall indeed enjoy the blessedness of the kingdom, but in a higher way, even in the heavenly department of it (so to speak), i.e., the kingdom of the Father.

Concerning taking the kingdom by violence, physical violence is not meant. It refers to the breaking through all that would spiritually hinder one from entering the kingdom. Some texts to consider are: Luke 13:24; 16:16; 18:24.

Concerning the development of God’s ways in government in the earth, for the future godly remnant of Israel to be included in the future New Israel under the New Covenant under the reign of Christ is an immense step upward in blessing and privilege in the earth. This has to do with God’s ways in the *earth*. The Church has its blessedness in the *heavenlies*, in Christ Jesus.

John was a prophet, yet greater than the other OT prophets, for He was the immediate forerunner of the Christ.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied unto John (Matt. 11:13).

John did not *prophesy* about a coming kingdom; he *announced* it as at hand.

Here He notices three ministries -- the law, the prophets, and John. But these extended only down to our Lord’s own ministry, and therefore now, in the further progress of the divine counsels, we can to these add others. {Up to the

43. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:71, 72. See New Series 1:144 also; *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 3:402; *Synopsis*, 3:59.

Lord, then, we have these three:}

The Law. -- This dispensation put Israel under a covenant which exacted obedience as the condition upon which they were to continue in the land, and in the blessings which Jehovah had given them. But we know that they broke it.

The Prophets. -- After trespass and transgression had come in, prophets were raised up; among other services, to warn and encourage Israel to return to Him, from whom they and their fathers had revolted, that they might recover their place and blessing under the covenant. But Israel, we know, refused their words, stoning some, and killing some.

John. -- The Baptist is then raised up, not as one of the prophets merely, to call Israel back to the old covenant, and to the obedience which it required, but to be the herald of a kingdom that was then at the doors, the forerunner of One who was coming with the sure blessing of His own presence. He summoned the people to be in readiness for Messiah. But John they beheaded.

The Lord. -- Thus introduced by John to Israel, the Lord accordingly comes forth and offers the kingdom in His own person to them, and Israel is summoned to own it and worship Him. But we know that the heir of the vineyard was cast out by the husbandmen. "His own received him not." The builders disallowed the Stone. They crucified the Prince of life; but God raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.<sup>44</sup>

The Christian is dead to the law (Rom. 7:4) but it is untrue that the law is dead (1 Tim. 1:8-11). No such teaching as that the law is dead is found in Scripture. In 2 Cor. 3, the handwriting in ordinances refers to *the sentence of the law* against sinners (not to the law itself). For us, *that sentence* was nailed to the cross. The law will yet be written in the hearts of the New Israel under the new Covenant (Heb. 8). The law does not have to be taken down off the cross for God to do that because the law never was nailed to the cross. Moreover, the law is not written in our hearts, else we must be Sabbath-keepers and engage in the Covenantist hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy to transmute the seventh-day Sabbath into the first day of the week. Christ is written in the Christian's heart.

Our Lord spoke well of John before the crowd. John showed confidence in His Person, having a question about Himself. John had thought (rightly so) that this One was the coming King. But now his thought was why was he, the forerunner, in prison if the Lord Jesus was the King of Israel? So John had to receive, as a disciple, the testimony of Christ as others had to receive it (Matt. 11:4-7), that testimony which tested the nation's state. The point is that though John was the forerunner, still, he must take the place of a disciple as others. Moreover, this was the occasion used by God to state the relationship of the law to the change that was taking place. The change was not what John had thought, but change it was, and John was a harbinger of change, a new order, though the new order took another

44. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 7:217. See *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 3:402, 403; *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 21:56; *Synopsis*, 3:59.

form before the coming of the kingdom in power when Christ appears in glory.

### *The Above Leads to the Question: Was John the Elijah to Come?*

Note well the answer: **JOHN WAS THE PROPHESED FORERUNNER OF OUR LORD'S FIRST ADVENT.**

And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, who is to come (Matt. 11:14).

In a footnote to "is" the Darby translation says:

By saying, 'who is to come,' it is left in the abstract as in Greek -- the one who had this character in their mind.

Elijah is not one of the two witnesses and he is unaccounted for in the book of Revelation. God has not been pleased to tell us his activities. With respect to such matters which are unrevealed, it is spiritual gain to be content in not knowing. It does not follow from the silence of the book of Revelation concerning Elijah that therefore John the Baptist was Elijah.

There are two Scriptures prophetic of John the Baptist:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God! Every valley shall be raised up, and every mountain and hill shall be made straight, and the rough places made plain. And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see [it] together: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken (Isa. 40:3-5).

Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to his temple, and the Angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts (Mal. 3:1).

There is one Scripture prophetic of Elijah:

Behold, I send unto you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of Jehovah. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Mal. 4:5, 6).

### *Was John Elijah?*

The following bears on whether or not John was Elijah:

1. The disciples understood, as did the scribes, that Elijah would literally come (Mark 9:11; Matt. 17:10).
2. John was asked, "Art thou Elias? And he says, I am not" (John 1:21). So John denied that he was Elijah.
3. The Lord quoted Mal. 3:1 for John (Matt. 11:10) but never Mal. 4:5.
4. An angel of the Lord told Zacharias this:

And many of the sons of Israel shall he turn to [the] Lord their God. And *he* shall go before him in [the] spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of fathers to children, and disobedient ones to [the] thoughts of just [men], to make ready for [the] Lord a prepared people (Luke 1:16, 17).

It is most important to observe that the comparison of John with Elijah is in the call to repentance. John was not Elijah, of course, but went before Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah, regarding the call to repentance.<sup>45</sup>

5. *Faith* could receive that view of John, seeing in John the moral similarity; i.e., John's role in the call to repentance preceding the presentation of Christ to Israel. And this is what our Lord meant in speaking to His disciples about John.

- a) The occasion of speaking about John and Elijah in Matt. 17 was what happened on the mount of transfiguration. That was the occasion of seeing Christ in His kingdom glory (see 2 Pet. 2:16-18).<sup>46</sup> And that was the occasion for bringing up the subject of Elijah coming first, before the establishment of the kingdom in the day of the Lord<sup>47</sup> (inaugurated by the appearing of Christ in glory).

- b) The Lord expressly told them that Elijah would come first and restore all things:

*Elias indeed comes first and will restore all things.* But I say unto you that Elias has already come, and they have not known him, but have done unto him whatever they would. Thus also the Son of man is about to suffer from them. Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist (Matt. 17:11, 12).

When did the Lord say this? He said these words, "*Elias indeed comes first and will restore all things,*" **after John was dead.** Moreover, John denied being Elijah (John 1:21).<sup>48</sup> *Faith*, then, sees that in the moral sense the forerunner had come and was rejected, and that the one before Whom he came would also be rejected. But *disbelief* will feel the result in a future day, for another forerunner, as it were, will indeed come in judgment (Elijah), and so will the rejected One subsequently come in judgment. The respective moral suitability of the two different forerunners, so to speak, for the two comings, is evident. It is clear from the passage in Matthew and Mark that the death of the Lord was left out of the scribes' view, and, no doubt, of the disciples' too. And so the Lord

45. In *Notes and Comments*, 3:35, J. N. Darby referred to John as a "provisional Elias."

Shiloh was also provisional. What is provisional is something God provides ahead of the fulfilment of what is prophesied in order to bring out what the state is with which He is dealing.

46. Observe that in Mark 9:4 Elijah is named before Moses. Mark is the gospel of the (perfect) *service* of our Lord, and Elijah will have a future *service* to perform in connection with the coming of the millennial kingdom.

47. The reader might find profitable remarks in E. Dennett, *Malachi*, on Mal. 3:1 and 4:5, 6. Also see W. Kelly, *Isaiah*, on ch. 40:6. There is a full and helpful review in *Notes and Comments*, 5:293, 294, by J. N. Darby. See also *Collected Writings*, 25:37; 28:165; 30:258; 32:274; *Synopsis*, 3:98, 99, 171.

48. The Lord made an application, not interpretation, of Mal. 4:1 to John.

brings that matter in as bearing upon the question of John and Elijah. There is a forerunner suited to each of the two comings of Christ; one for the time when the kingdom was announced as entailed with the reception of Christ as the meek and lowly One, and the other for when Christ comes in glory and judgment -- John and Elijah respectively -- one when Christ and the kingdom were presented to man's responsibility, the other preparatory for the sovereign establishment of Christ over the kingdom. And there is a link between the two in the moral call to repentance. As J. N. Darby said:

Elias shall effectually accomplish his mission before the great and terrible day of Jehovah; in order that the curse of God may not fall upon the land of His delight in that day when He will definitely execute His judgments.<sup>49</sup>

Elijah will not be here again to die. It was the other forerunner, John, who died, as did the One before whom he went. Elijah shall be here before the *resurrected* Lord appears. Elijah also has a body suited to the place where he is even now in the body. The two witnesses will be killed; Elijah cannot be one of them. Moreover, Moses will have been raised at the time of the rapture (Heb. 11:40), so he is not one of the two witnesses either.

6. In fact, John did not restore all things, as would be expected in view of the fact that Christ was rejected. These two facts are morally connected and consonant with one another.
7. It is so very important to understand that regarding the first coming of the Lord Jesus that He was presented to the first, responsible man as the final test to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. Elijah's coming has to do with the coming in sovereign power and judgment. John the Baptist was suitable for the coming in which Christ was presented to man's responsibility while Elijah is suitable to the coming in judgment.

### ***What Role Will Elijah Have in the Future?***

We know only what was quoted about Elijah's role from Malachi. Precisely when he acts we do not know other than one very important fact: he will come *before* the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord (an epoch of time) begins when the smiting stone strikes the image of Dan. 2 on the feet. That, of course, is at the Lord's appearing in glory. Elijah will appear before then and have a role among the Jews involving a call to repentance. He will be present during a state of apostasy from Jehovah, as was the case when he lived here on earth. And there will be what answers to the 7000 who have not bowed the knee (no submission to Baal) *neither kissed him* (no affection for Baal) then also. Saying more than this would be

49. *Synopsis*, 2:436.

speculation, and of no edification -- rather feeding the flesh, as prophecy is turned from its holy purpose of causing us to withdraw from evil, from separating from that which God will judge, to indulging the fleshly mind.

## ***Chapter 5***

### ***Some Questions Concerning The Kingdom of the Heavens in Mystery, Following the Moral Rejection of the King (in Matt. 12)***

We have considered the ways of God in first presenting something to the first man (to his responsibility) in his trial to show that he was not recoverable. Similarly, the coming kingdom prophesied by the Jewish prophets was presented to Israel in their responsibility. However, in the ways of God, it entailed acceptance of the meek and lowly (Matt. 21:5) Lord Jesus, the Christ. He was rejected, *morally* in Matt. 11-12, and *finally* at the cross.

Under three main headings, we turn now to questions that illustrate the change that took place consequent upon the moral rejection of the King. The coming kingdom in power is bound up with His Person such that rejecting Him entailed a rejection of that coming kingdom. Consequent, then, on His moral rejection in Matt. 12, a mystery aspect of the kingdom -- unforeseen by the OT prophets -- was taught by our Lord, particularly in the ten similitudes of the kingdom, which were accompanied by adjunct parables to bring certain issues to bear on this change.

### ***The Moral Rejection of Christ and the “Postponement” of the Kingdom***

#### ***What is the Difference in the Rejection of the Christ, Seen in Both Matt. 11 and 12?***

Matt. 11-12 is a transition from the proclamation of the kingdom of the heavens as at hand, in John's and our Lord's preaching, and the mission of the Twelve, to the moral separation of Christ from Israel in chapter 12, consequent upon which the kingdom of the heavens in mystery is brought out in Matt. 13, the rejected One taking the place of a sower of seed rather than seeking for fruit from Israel. A note by J. N. Darby concisely notes the distinction between Matt. 11 and 12:

❖ Note. -- Is not the end of this chapter {Matt. 11} the closing of Israel's history in grace, and Matt. 12 in judgment? But this may be looked into further. Chapter 11 is more personal, both as to Christ and as to man. Christ can reveal the Father as Son, and the weary and heavy-laden are invited to Him, as giving rest, and, in taking His lowly yoke, finding it for their souls. Chapter 12 is the more dispensational setting aside of the nation, and what replaces it is then brought out, in chapters 13, 16 and 17, while Christ still

continues acting in sovereign goodness, as long as He is here. What is in chapter 11 was then and always true, for it was Himself in contrast with the unbelief which rejected Him, saw no beauty in Him to desire Him. Chapter 12 is the separation of the Remnant individually to Christ in Person, when the nation, as a whole, had been deaf to John Baptist and to Christ. Chapter 12 is apostasy and blasphemy in their chiefs, and the final effect in judgment.

<sup>50</sup> ❖

### *What Is Meant by the “Postponement” of the Kingdom?*

William Trotter wrote this:

❖ In Matt. 9:35 we find Jesus still continuing His blessed labor of preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. In Matt. 10 He associates the twelve apostles with Himself in this work, charging them to go not into the way of the Gentiles, or any city of the Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

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

But while this ministry of grace is thus continued, and even extended, the twelve are distinctly forewarned that they need not expect their testimony to be received. Fearful was to be the responsibility of the rejectors. It was to be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them. Still, the apostles were to calculate on rejection.

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord (Matt. 10:24, 25).

It was to be their comfort amid all this, that whosoever confessed Jesus before men should be confessed by Him before His Father in heaven.

He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me (Matt. 10: 39, 40).

For none such were to lose their reward.

I could not doubt that this preaching of the kingdom of heaven by the twelve, interrupted by the definite and utter rejection of Christ on the part of Israel, will be resumed in days yet to come, and that it is to this resumed testimony that much of Matt. 10 has its most definite application. See particularly vv. 18, <sup>51</sup> 22, 23, compared with Matt. 24:6, which evidently speaks of the final sins and sorrows of the house of Jacob. The rejection of Christ by Israel has not only made way for the existence of the kingdom of heaven in mystery, but also for a far deeper mystery, viz, the church and its union with its Head in glory. When this is completed by the

50. *Notes and Comments*, 5:129.

51. {Matt. 10:16-20 speaks of their testimony following the death and resurrection of Christ.}

rapture of the saints, in order to the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, God will resume His dealings with His earthly people Israel, and with the Gentile as such. Witnesses will be raised up to proclaim this gospel of the kingdom to both Jews and Gentiles {Matt. 24:14}, and scarcely will they have finished their testimony before the Son of man shall come. (See Rev. 11; also 14: 6, 7.) Any who wish to pursue this subject, I would refer to the papers already published in *The Prospect*, entitled “The Testimony of the End,” and “On the Gospel by St. Matthew” (particularly the remarks at the close), which throw much light on this deeply interesting inquiry. <sup>52</sup> ❖

### *The Lord’s Sowing and the Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens What Is the Significance of the Lord’s Sowing in Matt. 13?*

❖ The kingdom of heaven is likened to a sower, etc. He has altered the ground on which He deals with the people -- He sows; He brings something with Him, instead of seeking something from man. The King is obliged to take this mysterious character of sowing in the world. Then, mark, He does not sow only on Jewish ground; as to outward nearness to God, that was gone. God does not look for fruit. He is going on ground that is settled by judgment. Therefore He is not seeking fruit from man. This goes against man’s good opinion of himself. Man is cut down as the good-for-nothing tree, spite of all culture from God. The trial has been made of all men in the Jew. All flesh is grass; and the grass is withered. He sows; He is not exercising His royal title in sowing. It is a new work, different in kind. All are given up (Matt. 12) and He sows (Matt. 13). The field is not the Jewish people, but “the world.” God goes outside guilty Judah to begin a fresh work everywhere. The time of the harvest is the judicial time of the kingdom -- not the sowing time. Christ lets all go on as if at the beginning, and He saw nothing of the corruption; but then He begins a judicial character. Personally He deals with it on earth. That is the kingdom in the mysteries of it, or hidden. Its outward character is a great tree; the sowing is in the world. Pharaoh was a great tree, and the Assyrian was another. Christendom is now a great tree -- an influential power in the earth. It is ruled from heaven, if it be the kingdom of heaven, but the sphere is this earth. The sowing the field -- the harvest -- the search for the treasure or the pearl -- the net -- are not in heaven, but on earth. <sup>53</sup> ❖

52. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:42, 72.

53. *Collected Writings*, 30:95, 96.

### ***What Is the Difference in the Character of the similitudes of the Kingdom of the Heavens in Matt 13 and in Later Chapters?***

The seven parables in Matt. 13 (of which six are similitudes of the kingdom of the heavens in mystery) gives a complete view of time and features of that kingdom. It is from these that we learn the duration of the time of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens. It is very important to be aware that the time is determined by the parables, not by things that the Lord added to the explanations of several parables. The explanation of the parables, then, have some things added by the Lord to the meaning of the parables themselves. These added things have caused many to err in using those added things which are not in the respective parables to extend the duration of the kingdom in mystery beyond its actual time -- so as to confuse things by bringing in the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom that will be recommenced by the future, godly Jewish remnant. That is not part of the kingdom in mystery.

The subsequent similitudes of the kingdom bring before us various aspects that the kingdom will assume, or events that shall take place as a consequence of there being such a kingdom. Some have a few points brought in before the actual commencement of the kingdom, or after its end, in order to complete the picture. These few points ought not to be used to attempt to begin the kingdom in mystery earlier or end it later than we learn in Matt. 13.

The similitudes of the kingdom of the heavens are considered in detail in another book.

### ***What, and How Related, Are the Kingdom of the Father and the Kingdom of the Son of Man?***

The coming kingdom displayed in power and glory will have two departments, or spheres, so to speak. There is the heavenly side, the kingdom of the Father -- for we, the co-heirs with Christ, shall reign with Christ -- and there is the earthly side, of which Israel will be the center, the kingdom of the Son of Man. J. N. Darby remarked:

❖ “The kingdom of God” is general, and embraces all the rest. “The kingdom of heaven” is God’s kingdom when the rule is in heaven -- when the king is there. This results in a special division {of the coming kingdom}, the full heavenly part which is the kingdom of the Father, and the subject earthly part the

kingdom of the Son of man.<sup>54</sup> ❖

❖ Jehovah’s determination is to set His kingdom in Zion {Psa. 2}. The kingdom is not confined to this setting up of the King. In Matt. 13:43 we have the “kingdom of the Father.” There we get its heavenly character, not setting aside the kingdom on earth, which is to be established; but it goes farther and higher. “Every scribe instructed . . . brings out of his treasure things new and old.” The scribes had the old things concerning the kingdom, but they stumbled at the Christ having to suffer. If they had received Christ, man would not have been proved to be such a sinner. But they hated both Him and His Father, and so proved there is no good in flesh. There would have been something good in flesh if they could have received Him. The kingdom was not set up then through their not receiving Him. Two things came out after that: the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, and the church.

Another thing, often not understood, is the difference between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. If the kingdom of God had been accepted on earth, it would not have been the same as now, not the actual form of the kingdom of heaven {as it now is}. Matthew takes up the change {in the preaching of the kingdom of the heavens} in consequence of the King’s rejection {in Matt. 12}, and speaks also of “the Father’s kingdom” for the heirs who follow Christ in His rejection; because He takes it from His Father when rejected { . . . its character when He takes it in heavenly glory<sup>55</sup> }. He is set down, not on His own throne (and so the judgment in this Psalm {72} brought in), but for the present on His Father’s throne {Rev. 3:21} . Divine righteousness is shown in God’s setting Him there and justifying us according to all He had accomplished. There was righteousness due to set Him on the throne of God. That is what we have. “I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me,” etc. {John 17:4, 5}. Christ then sits down there {see Psa. 110:1}; and there is no judicial kingdom at all now -- it is postponed, and known only to faith. The kingdom of the world is not become that of our God and of His Christ {see Rev. 11:15}.<sup>56</sup> ❖

### ***Marks of the Moral Rejection of Christ and the Consequent Change in God’s Ways***

“Why is the Church mentioned in Matthew?” we may ask. Matthew is

54. *Letters*, 3:533; see 3:124, 411; see article, “The Kingdom of the Father,” *Notes and Comments* 2:246-251.

55. *Collected Writings*, 9:329. See 2:277.

56. *Collected Writings*, 30:94, 95.

exactly where the church ought to be mentioned. It is the gospel that has especially to do with God's governmental dealings and administrative changes consequent upon the moral rejection of Christ. The subject of the church and the kingdom will be discussed at length in Volume 4, chapter 12.

***Why No Longer Say That  
He Was the Christ (Matt. 16:20)?  
What is the Bearing of the Lord  
Taking the Title, The Son of Man?***

The Lord's title as Son of Man is a title pointing to His rejection, yet a title in which that rejected One will have universal dominion. It is an important title regarding which we ought to have some understanding concerning how it came about that the Lord took the title, and its use in Scripture. Therefore two quotations will follow, the first a survey of the Scripture use of the title Son of Man by W. J. Hocking, the second by J. N. Darby bringing out the bearing of certain points, including matters following Matt. 12.

\* \* \* \* \*

◆The Lord advanced this claim of Lordship of the sabbath not as the Son of David, nor as the Seed of Abraham, nor as Immanuel, but as the Son of man.

The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath {Lk. 6:5}.

This title of Christ is remarkable for more reasons than one. In the New Testament it is found almost exclusively in the Gospels. The exceptions are two passages where the Lord is seen in vision and thus named as the future Judge of men (Rev. 1:13; 14:14) in accordance with other scriptures (Dan. 7:13; John 5:27); and a quotation from the Psalms which is used in Hebrews,

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Heb. 2:6; Psa. 8:4).

Stephen, when arraigned before the Jewish council, also uses it (Acts 7:56). In the Gospels it does not occur in the narrative itself, nor in any utterances made by others either to the Lord or about Him, but is strictly confined to His own sayings. And it is by far the most frequent term applied by the Lord to Himself. Thus in Mark's Gospel "Son" is recorded once (13:32); "Lord" twice (v. 19; 11:3); "Christ" once (9:41); "Master" (teacher) once (14:14); "Lord of the sabbath" once (2:28); "King of the Jews" once (15:2); "Sower" twice (4:3, 14); "Master (lord) of the house" once (13:35); "Bridegroom" three times (2:19, 20). But "Son of man" occurs fifteen times, which is more than all the others added together. A similar proportion is found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, while in John "Son" used alone is more prevalent than "Son of man."

We may now inquire what is the significance of this title assumed by the Lord. This can only be learned by a careful study of the passages in which the title occurs. And with the intention of providing assistance in such a study the

various references in the Synoptic Gospels are collated under headings which indicate their general tenor and form a basis for further research by such readers as are so disposed. The Lord refers to Himself as the Son of man when

1. Foretelling His betrayal, sufferings and death -- Matt. 17:12, 22; 20:18, 28; 26:2, 24, 45; Mark 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21, 41; Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31; 22: 22, 48; 24:7.
2. Foretelling His coming glory and kingdom -- Matt. 10:23; 13:41; 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 13:26; 14:62; Luke 9:26; 12:40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8; 21:27.
3. Foretelling His resurrection -- Matt. 12:40; 17:9; Mark 9:9; Luke 11:30.
4. Foretelling His session on high -- Luke 22:69.
5. Declaring Himself the homeless One -- Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.
6. Declaring Himself the Forgiver of sins -- Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24.
7. Declaring Himself Lord of the sabbath -- Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5.
8. Declaring Himself the Savior -- [Matt. 18:11] -- Luke 9:56; 19:10.
9. Declaring Himself the Sower -- Matt. 13:37.
10. Referring to men's opinion of Him -- Matt. 11:19; 12:32; 16:13; Luke 7:34; 12:10.
11. Referring to the confession of His name -- Luke 6:22; 12:8.

In the Gospel by John it is recorded that the Lord used the term when speaking of --

1. His death -- 3:14; 8:28; 12:34.
2. His glorification -- 1:51; 12:23; 13:31.
3. His ascension -- 6:62.
4. His authority to judge -- 5:27.
5. His personal glory -- 3:13.
6. Himself as an object of faith -- 6:27, 53; [9:35].

A consideration of the whole of these references is at this time impracticable; but a cursory glance is sufficient to instruct us that this title is one taken by the Lord in view of the fact that the kingdom of God which He proclaimed was not accepted by the people of Israel. On the contrary, He Himself was met with personal hatred, and in view of the culmination of this hatred in His crucifixion under a coalition of Jews and Gentiles, He adopted the designation of Son of man -- a title of wider limits than Son of David. Thus, when Peter, speaking for the other apostles, confessed Him as the Christ, the Lord

charged them that they should tell no man of him. And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days

rise again. And he spake the saying openly (Mark 8:27-32).

And as may be seen from the above classification, a great proportion of the passages in the Gospels containing this term allude to His approaching death. The greater part of the remainder refer to His resurrection, ascension, glorification, and to the future manifestation of His kingdom in judgment and glory, which will be not only national but universal in its scope. But all the passages coincide to point out this title, though of wider significance than “Messiah,” as that assumed by the Lord in consequence of His rejection by the chosen nation to which He expressly came.

The use of this phrase in the Old Testament corroborates this interpretation of its significance. Passing over the general prophetic sense of the term in Job 25:6; Psalms 8:4; 80:17; Daniel 7:13; it is applied by Jehovah to two of His prophets, viz., Daniel and Ezekiel (Daniel 8:17; Ezekiel 2:1, etc.). Now both of these men were raised up as witnesses during the period when the nation, on account of its apostasy from the worship of Jehovah, was under a foreign yoke. Sovereignty was transferred from Israel to the Gentiles, and it is remarkable that these two contemporary servants of God who prophesied outside the land of Israel during the captivity are the only ones who are so designated. So that the Lord, in describing Himself as the Son of man, adopted a title hitherto borne only by prophets in exile. It was even then a title of reproach, inasmuch as it indicated that the nation of Israel, like Esau, renounced the privileges of its birthright. But what was the departure in the day of Daniel and Ezekiel to the departure in the day of the Gospel? Was it not an incomparable privilege that the Messiah should offer Himself to the Jews, insignificant as they were nationally at that period, and enslaved moreover to the Romans? But the people deliberately refused Him,<sup>57</sup> whereupon the Lord instructed His followers to proclaim Him no longer in that character (Matthew 16:13-28; Mark 8:30; Luke 9:21), but to know Him as the Son of man who was to pass through the depths of suffering to the heights of glory in the kingdom beyond. This was a difficulty to His disciples then even as it is still; only faith can adequately sustain him who seeks to walk in the pathway of the despised and suffering Son of man.

The Second Man, the Lord from heaven, was in a world different in nature from that in which the First man, Adam, was placed. He was in a world into which sin had entered, and in which it “reigned unto death.” And in this world, when it demonstrated its implacable hostility to all that is divine by refusing to receive Him or to recognize Him, He took the title of Son of man. This title implied that the Servant of Jehovah was in the world outside Eden, the same world into which Cain and Abel, Seth and Enosh were born, begotten in the

57. In Matthew, treating specially as it does of the presentation of Messiah to the Jews, it will be seen that more emphasis is laid on His rejection, by the construction of the Gospel, than in Mark or in Luke.

likeness and image of fallen Adam. But Jesus was “without sin,” Son of man truly, but not son of a man. He was “born of a woman,” but the “Holy Thing” {Luke 1:35} born was the Son of God.

He was to be the Son of man -- a title the Lord Jesus loves to give Himself - - a title of great importance to us. It appears to me that the Son of man is, according to the word, the Heir of all that the counsels of God destined for man as his portion in glory, all that God would bestow on man according to those counsels (see Daniel 7:13, 14; Psalm 8:4-6; 80:17; Proverbs 8:30, 31). But in order to be the Heir of all that God destined for man, He must be a man. The Son of man was truly of the race of man -- precious and comforting truth! born of a woman, really and truly a man, and partaking of flesh and blood, made like unto His brethren.

In this character He was to suffer, and be rejected, that He might inherit all things in a wholly new estate, raised and glorified. He was to die and rise again, the inheritance being defiled, and man being in rebellion -- His co-heirs as guilty as the rest.<sup>58</sup> ♦

\* \* \* \* \*

The Lord’s title as Son of Man embraces what is broader than His title as King of Israel. As Son of Man is the title of His rejection so must it be the title of universal dominion.

❖ . . . in Psalm 2 after giving the character of the remnant in Psalm 1, we have the determination of Jehovah to set His King on the holy hill of Zion, the anointed Man, the Son of God as born in this world, who is further to ask for dominion over the heathen, whom He will rule with a rod of iron, and break in pieces like a potter’s vessel. (Compare Revelation 2:26, 27.) But for the present He is rejected. The kings of the earth and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed (Christ or Messiah). Adonai, sitting in the heavens, shall laugh at them. In Acts 4:26, 27, the Holy Spirit expressly applies this to Christ’s rejection and death.

In Psalm 3-7 we have the consequent sorrows of the remnant, on which I do not enter. But in Psalm 8 Christ is celebrated in another character, when the Jews can celebrate Jehovah’s name excellent in all the earth, and as having set His glory above the heavens, and as their Lord or Adon: a state of things not yet accomplished in fact, while the second verse is used by the Lord in the passage first quoted from Luke, as the testimony enforced, so to speak, by God, when the Savior was here and rejected, quoting also Psalm 118, of which we may speak as specially referring to this future time of Christ’s return in power. Now I quote this to show that it is identified with man’s being set over the works of God’s

58. W. J. Hocking, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 8:216-219.



hands. The Son of man, which the Lord constantly applies to Himself,<sup>59</sup> coming specifically into view, a passage as applied to Him in its full import as inheriting all God's purposes as to man used as defining the whole position in the results of divine administration more than once by the apostle Paul, as (Eph. 1:22)

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body (compare Col. 1:15-18); and again, in 1 Cor. 15:20-28, when all things are to be put under the feet of the risen (the second) Man, except Him who put all things under Him. Here the whole scheme is unfolded; and again in Hebrews 2 we are told that we see not as yet all things put under Him; but we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. Nothing can be more precise to both the divine purpose and the measure of its accomplishment, than these passages.

The general fact is again brought before us, in quite another part of scripture, in contrast with the earthly power of evil in Dan. 7. The chapter is divided by the expression, "I saw in the night visions," vv. 1-6, 7-12, to give the last beast (the principal one) more particularly, then 13, 14; from 15 to the end, inquiry and explanation, bringing in both the saints killed by the beast (and who, as is confirmed in Rev. 20 go into heaven) and Israel. I quote v. 13:

I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, etc.

This was when the thrones had been set for judgment. But afterwards we find it was the Ancient of days who came when judgment was given (v. 22) to the saints of the most high (the high places). So in Ps. 80, where Israel is crying out (not merely Jews) for their final deliverance, it is (v. 17):

Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.

Thus the rejected Messiah, cut off, and who took nothing of the kingdom and glory, but cut off Himself, is the one who is the head over all things as Son of man according to the purpose of God.

This truth runs through the Gospels where no passage perhaps is quoted. Nathanael owns Jesus to be the Christ according to Ps. 2:

Thou art the Son of God, the king of Israel.  
Thou shalt see greater things than these,

says the Lord.

Henceforth thou shalt see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man.

He takes His place as Son of man in contrast with and beyond that of Ps. 2. In John's Gospel the Jews are treated as rejected and reprobate from the first

chapter (John 1:10, 11), a remnant born again and believing, alone owned, because Jesus is God, and Him man never received, but was enmity against.

The three other Gospels present Him as Messiah, Emmanuel, Jehovah, the Savior (Matt.); the prophet-servant (Mark); the Son of man in grace after the first two chapters, a lovely picture of the remnant in Israel (Luke). Hence we have genealogy from Abraham and David in Matthew, up to Adam in Luke.<sup>60</sup> When the Jews are utterly rejected at the end of Matt. 12, so that He no longer seeks fruit in His vineyard and fig-tree (vv. 46-50), He goes out to sow {Matt. 13}, but He that sows the good seed is the Son of man; the kingdom in mystery, that is, without a present king (Matt. 13), the church (Matt. 16), the kingdom in glory (Matt. 17), are substituted for Israel under the old covenant, but in chapter 16:20 they are charged to tell no man that He was the Christ. The Son of man (Matt. 17:12) must suffer of them; more immediately contrasted, in Luke 9, which ends the chronological history (see v. 21) when Peter, taught of God, owns Him to be the Christ,

He straitly charged them and commanded them to tell no man that thing, saying, The Son of man must suffer . . . but be raised the third day;

and then He shows them the glory of the coming kingdom; the Son of man would come in His own glory, in the Father's, and of the holy angels, as Son of man, Son of the Father, and as Jehovah. But (Matt. 17:9) this belonged to another scene, and man as a new creation. They were not to tell it till He was risen again from among the dead, and (Luke 9:36) they kept it close, withal wondering what rising from among the dead should mean<sup>61</sup> (Mark 9:10), and from that day began to press upon them that the Son of man must suffer; Matt. 16:21; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:44. In John we have this under another form, namely that of a full testimony from God, when Israel had rejected Him, as Son of God, Son of David, and Son of man. The first is raising Lazarus; John 11:4.

This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, and that the Son of God should be glorified thereby.<sup>62</sup>

He is the Resurrection and the Life. Then (John 12:13), they meet Him, according to Ps. 118, crying,

Hosanna! [save now, I beseech thee] blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Then the Greeks (*Ellenes*) coming up, the wider scene of Gentiles, the Lord says:

The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and

60. I should read Luke 3:23: "(Being, as was supposed, son of Joseph), of Heli," etc. *tou Eli* is connected with Jesus, not with Joseph.

61. All as Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead.

62. The stupid rationalists cannot, of course, see why this miracle was brought in here.

59. He never calls Himself the Christ save to the woman of Samaria (John 4) when He had left Judaea.

die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit {John 12:24};

and (v. 32),

I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

So in His rejection, abjured by the High Priest, He owns He is the One spoken of in Psa. 2, the Christ, the Son of God, but adds:

Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven {Matt. 26:64}.

Thus that which dispensationally set aside the Jews under the old covenant, and ended their title under the promises, brought out the far deeper truths of the enmity of man's heart against God in goodness --

They have both seen and hated both me and my Father {John 15:24} --

but the accomplishment of that glorious work in which salvation was provided for Gentile as well as Jew, and God perfectly glorified in all that He is; the Christ rejected, Messiah cut off, as Daniel declared; and that as Son of man, not now taking the glory, but as suffering, yet vindicated of God as such; the whole truth of Psa. 2 and 8, Adam the image of Him that was to come (Dan. 9, 7) brought into light and accomplishment, and this not in quoted passages, but in realizing facts, and then, when the Holy Ghost was given, the passages applied and explained, as in Acts 4 and Eph. 1, 1 Cor. 15, Heb. 2, with no appearance of putting together or arrangement by those who uttered these things, but showing one mind and thought and plan behind it all, the word and counsel of God. I might multiply passages as to the use of Son of man, but I have only quoted what brought the bearing of Psa. 2 and 8 together. But the death of Christ closed the earthly history of Scripture, till the Son of man shall come in His glory. Hence Stephen {Acts 7}, summing up that history from Abraham, when the promises began, shows the law broken, the prophets killed, the Just One betrayed and murdered, and the Holy Ghost resisted; and then sees the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. He had taken His heavenly place, though not yet set down. Now He sits at God's <sup>63</sup> right hand till His enemies are made His footstool, having by one offering perfected for ever (*eis to dienekes*) them that are sanctified. It was the time of the church, His body, and the habitation of God through the Spirit. Hence the Son of man is no longer spoken of, save as giving Him His place on high; Heb. 2:6. But as soon as I come to the Revelation, what Christ had declared before the high priest, partly as seen by Stephen and taught in Heb. 2, the accomplishment of Psa. 110 is, as to the latter part, brought out prophetically in Psa. 14, coming as Judge for the ripe harvest of earth and the vintage of God's wrath (vv. 14-20). We find Him judging the church as responsible on earth in Rev. 1. But from Acts 7 to Revelation He is

63. Christ had interceded for them on the cross, to which Acts 3 is the answer; but this also, Christ glorified, is rejected; and so all man's history closes in Stephen, and He sits down till Christ's enemies are made His footstool.

never spoken of as Son of man, save that Psa. 8 itself is quoted (Heb. 2), to show where we are in this history. Even then He is not called so. <sup>64</sup> ❖

### *What Does the Twelve Sitting on Twelve Thrones in the Regeneration Mean?*

Then Peter answering said to him, Behold, we have left all things and followed thee; what then shall happen to us? And Jesus said to them, Verily I say unto you, That ye who have followed me, in the regeneration <sup>65</sup> when the Son of man shall sit upon his throne of glory, ye also shall sit down on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).

❖ The answer, founded on the glory already revealed on the mount of transfiguration {Matt. 17}, is, that when the Son of man shall return in His glory, in the regeneration, the twelve shall be in their place on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This answer leaves all aside {in the present interval}, until the restoration of Israel, and places again the disciples in connection with this principle, omitting what, in the interval, was for the church; but it is also wholly outside the legal relationships of the people with God. If the law were accomplished, life would be the result. Those who followed Christ, when the Jews under the law rejected Him, should judge Israel in the day of the glory of the Son of man. They had followed the Lord in His rejection by Israel; they should participate in His glory when He should be the glorious Head of His people and of the world. Moreover, whoever had acted faithfully in this relation and taken Christ for his portion should receive an hundredfold here below, and besides life everlasting. Nevertheless we can judge nothing beforehand as to the relative degree of individuals by their present position. <sup>66</sup> ❖

Judas, never a child of God, fell from the place he had and Mathias qualified to fill it, was selected (Acts 1). There needs be twelve. Twelve speaks of the perfection of governmental administration in the hands of man. "Regeneration" means (not new birth, but) a change, a new state, and such will be the millennial earth experience. In Rev. 12:1, the sun-clad woman is not Mary (a Romanist idle dream and deceit) but Israel -- Israel as she is in the mind and purpose of God, Israel in millennial glory. From the sun-clad woman sprang the male of might destined to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod -- in due time. And rule He shall, by whatever instrumentalities that please God. Associated with Him in a special place in His reign will be the 12 apostles who shared in His earthly ministry and trials (Luke 22:28), though all we of the

64. "Have We a Revelation from God?" *Collected Writings*, 29:102-106.

65. On the word "regeneration," used only here and in Titus 3: 5, see W. Kelly on *Titus* in loco; or *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 7:26.

66. *Collected Writings*, 24:39-40.

church will share in this reign.

Indeed, *the church as the bride* is seen in Rev. 21 (as v. 9 makes certain) as a city characterized by the number 12.<sup>67</sup> Thus it is a millennial scene with the church seen in the glory of governmental administration. In Scripture, the gates of a city denote the place of government. On the 12 gates are the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, because from the city the rule emanates through the gates of the city to be executed on earth through Israel instrumentally, but that government has its source above as the kingdom of the heavens in manifestation. It is clear that we shall share Christ's reign (Rev. 3:21). Thus we all reign with Him, but the 12 apostles have a special place in this reign.<sup>68</sup> The bride seen in governmental

display has the names of the twelve apostles on the twelve foundations of the wall. The details of how this will be carried out is not given in Scripture. The great moral facts are given us to know.

The church, then is not reigned over, but reigns jointly with Christ, the 12 apostles (includes Matthias) having a special place in that reign concerning the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30). It is pointless to speculate on

---

67. Rev. 21:9 *states* that it is the bride that John would be shown. If He was shown a literal city, it would not be the bride of Christ. The city is symbolic of the bride viewed in governmental glory. The sun-clad woman of Rev. 12 is Israel in earthly glory *as viewed in accordance with God's purpose* for Israel, the supreme power on earth, depicted therefore as clad with the sun, used in a symbolic way in Revelation for supreme earthly power -- as the moon signifies lesser power reflecting the sun, and the stars as lesser power. She has a crown of 12 stars, for the perfection of the administration of earthly government crowns her in millennial display. No doubt God expects that you have read Joseph's dream about his parents, concerning the sun, moon, and 11 stars (Joseph would be the twelfth).

Concerning the bride being a figure, and the city a symbol of the bride: lest a hermeneutics 'expert' descend upon us with a rigorous hermeneutical principle that you cannot interpret a symbol with another symbol, the attention of such is directed to Rev. 4:5 where we read of "seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

68. As is so often the case with seven things in Scripture, seven signifies something complete: they are divided in 4 + 3, as for example the seven parables of Matt. 13. Twelve is 4 x 3, the number 12 signifying completeness in administration. Regarding the 12 apostles, it has been observed:

We get here the first quaternion of the disciples. Wherever the twelve are mentioned, they are always in three fours. Philip is always the first of the second four, and James the less the first of the third four. Andrew was one of the two that heard John speak, and followed Jesus, and then found his own brother Simon. This is a real call to service. They did not give up their business and turn to the Lord's service because it was a decaying trade. They had never had such success as fishermen before. This made it the greater test. Why leave this to turn to a less profitable employment? The great thing is to have the Lord's mind. It was unmistakable here. The Lord may call us to leave prosperity for spiritual service; but when they say, "we have left all," we wonder what the "all" was. We do not get a hundred per cent, but a hundred-fold. We can plead for others as we cannot for ourselves; there is nothing for us but the ground of grace. They made a mistake who bargained for a penny a day. God is righteous always, yet He is sovereign and can be gracious (*The Bible Treasury*, New Series 11:274).

how this will be carried out, though there are Christians who waste their time on such speculations; and worse yet, seek to occupy others with such time-wasters also.

The apostle born out of due time (Paul) shares with the church the reign with Christ but does not have a special place such as do the twelve in this governmental view.

The viewing this city as literal is deplorable. Its depiction as the literal home of saints as a pyramid is revolting (Rev. 21:16 refers to a cube, as the sanctuary of the tabernacle and of Solomon's temple was a cube). The imagined pyramid shape more easily allows scope for fleshly imagination than does a cube. The notion that Christ is presently building it (John 14:1-3) is repugnant. What is taking Him so long? Is He deficient in power? The truth is that the moment He entered the Father's house as victorious man over sin and death and hell, the place was *ipso facto* ready for His co-heirs.<sup>69</sup>

### ***What is the Everlasting Gospel?***

The following is found in JND's Letters, 2:29:

As to Matthew 25, I cannot doubt a moment that it is the separation of the wicked and righteous -- in a word, goats and sheep. "Them" (ver. 32) is merely those who compose them: indeed in Greek it does not agree with nations. We have the same form in other cases. As to the knowledge of Christ, it was very imperfect. Still He was looked for, but connected with judgment. The gospel preached was the everlasting gospel -- Revelation 14 -- answering to the judgment on the serpent in paradise: (Psa. 96 and Matt. 24) -- "this gospel of the kingdom." It was now too late to have the other gospel, so to call it. They had not to do with Antichrist, at least, only in a distant way. He was in Palestine, and subservient to the beast out of the bottomless pit, and these were judged by Christ coming from heaven, the rest by Christ sitting on His throne when come.

### ***What Does Drinking Wine New in the Kingdom of the Father Mean?***

But I say to you, that I will not at all drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father (Matt. 26:29).

In a footnote to his translation JND remarks:

Not 'anew,' but (*kainos*) 'in a different manner,' 'of another kind': see Heb. 12:24.

---

69. More concerning this city is found in vols. 1 and 2 of *Elements of Dispensational Truth*. See also, *The New Jerusalem*, Present Truth Publishers.

The sense of “new” conveyed by *kainos* is that what is referred to as new is wholly different in kind. The Lord Jesus is not here speaking of literal drinking of wine in the kingdom of the Father. It is wine figurative of the new joy in the Father’s kingdom. In an Article on the Passover and the Lord’s supper,

R. Beacon wrote:

The Lord’s supper is not properly a type of His death as was the passover. It is truly a memorial. Types in scripture are the shadows of things to come; and when the true Lamb was come, there was no more room for the type. The eating and drinking of the bread and the wine are commemorative of the body and of the blood, and was so ordained by the Lord. For He was going away and leaves a memorial of His dying love, though in Matthew and in Mark the prominent thought is not “do this in remembrance of me,” but that the blood is shed “for the remission of sins.” This would be their joy, the time was coming when He would share it with them again -- “drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” It is evident from this that Matthew does not give the church aspect of the supper, while equally plain that it is an advance upon the original passover. For the Lord’s supper as enjoyed by the church will cease before we enter the Father’s kingdom. But we, beside being the house of God and Christ’s one body, we follow in the wake of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. We share with them in the Father’s kingdom, not in the kingdom of the Son of man, i.e. the millennial earth, but as risen and in bodies of glory. Then the Lord as the risen man in His body of glory, the model after which ours shall be fashioned, will partake with all the risen saints of this new wine “which cheereth God and man.” They will rejoice in the presence of the risen Lord, and He will rejoice over and with them.

This is the Father’s kingdom, which does not mean eternity but the heavenly portion of the glorified saints, during the time that man upon the earth is enjoying the blessings of Christ’s millennial reign.

For the present the Lord would no more drink of the fruit of the vine. He waits to drink new wine with them in a new scene. Clearly the Lord here is not speaking of the joy of the church while here below; for the church of God is never called the Father’s kingdom. Nor is the earthly remnant so called, who will again have their feast of the passover, and after a fuller sort (Ezek. 45:21). Not a lamb, but a bullock, to be followed by sacrifices of each of the following seven days. For then even the earthly remnant will know remission of sins; then will be the new covenant in contrast with the old which sealed death upon the transgressor.

Mark gives the supper from the same stand-point as Matthew, in connection with the kingdom, but with the differences characteristic of each Gospel. In Matthew we see the rejected Messiah with the gathered but despised remnant; In Mark the Lord speaks as Servant . . .

### ***The Transfiguration, Dispensationally Considered in Matthew***

For a discussion of the transfiguration of Christ in Matthew, see Chapter 7.

## Chapter 6

### *The Kingdom in Mark, Luke, and John* *What Was the Character of the Lord's Miracles?*

We are presently in the Mosaic age. The cross did not change the age, nor did the coming of the Spirit in that special capacity to unite saints to the glorified Head in heaven, placing the saints "in Christ," seating them together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). In John 17 the Lord had anticipatively said of His own that they are not of the world as He is not of the world (John 17:14). Correspondingly, we are said to be heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48). The formation of the church did not change the age, the Mosaic age continues on until it is displaced by "the age to come."<sup>70</sup>

Here we ask a different question, "What is the point of the moral rejection of Christ as indicated in the Gospels?"

### *Where Does the Preaching of the Seventy in Luke 10 Fit In?*

The preaching of the seventy fits in with the character of Luke's gospel as emphasizing God's sovereignty and grace. It was an extraordinary mission of grace, occurring as it does after the Lord had enjoined them to tell no one that He was the Christ of God. He spoke of His death and resurrection (Luke 9:20-22). Then in Luke 10 He was transfigured according to His millennial glory. This is a moral connection, as characteristic of Luke. Following that, the mission of the seventy took place.

Note that He was on His way to Jerusalem for the last time (Luke 9:51) and in Luke 10, He appointed seventy to go before Him. We are not told that they preached that the kingdom of God was at hand. No, they did not preach the gospel of the kingdom. Preaching about the kingdom of God is not the same as preaching the gospel of the kingdom, namely, that it was at hand. They were told to say:

... the kingdom of God is come nigh to you (Luke 10:9).

The kingdom of God was entailed with His Person. The King was near to them.

The power of the King was there and the disciples rejoiced in casting out the power of the enemy (Luke 10:17). That was a foreshadow of the power of the coming kingdom prevailing against the Enemy, who shall be bound in chains in the sealed abyss for 1000 years (Rev. 20). This is the reason for the Lord saying He beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18). These events were anticipatory of that coming day of power of the kingdom of God in manifestation.

70. Details concerning the identity of the present age with the Mosaic age are found in *Elements of Dispensational Truth* 1:4-10.

F. G. Patterson wrote:

The mission of the "Twelve" was, as sent out by the Lord the Messiah of Israel, before His ministerial rejection, which in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt., Mark., Luke) is seen before the "Transfiguration." His final rejection was in His humiliation at the cross, and supplementally, in His glory, witnessed to by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (Acts 2-7).<sup>71</sup> They were sent out to preach the kingdom of God, and were given power over all evil spirits, and to cure diseases -- the samples of the "powers of the world {age} to come" or millennium, when Satan will be bound, and man's diseases cured. Their mission was general and final, and not specifically confined to Israel. No provision for the journey was to be taken, for Messiah's power commanded the hearts of men for all their need.

When this mission was over (v. 10) they returned, and in v. 18. the Lord seems to ask what the results of His own mission (chap. 8) and theirs (Luke 9) had been. It was refused. Some said one thing, some another (v. 19). Discussion and reasoning is not faith, and no real results as a general thing were seen. Those who had faith confessed Him (v. 20) as "*the Christ*," which is no more to be preached (v. 21); the testimony was over. "*The Son of Man*" was now about to suffer, being rejected; and His followers would have a path of sorrow and rejection in this world like His own (vv. 23-26). The transfiguration scene follows to sustain their hearts in such a path of suffering, unfolding the glories that would follow when that day would come.

The seventy are sent out on their mission now (Luke 10), which is founded on His rejection as the *Messiah*; and the declaration of His coming glory as *Son of Man*, head over all things. His full glory as Man while Son of the Father, is the result of and follows His rejection here.<sup>72</sup>

## *The Kingdom in Luke*

### *What is the Meaning of Luke 16:16?*

❖ Two great systems of God with respect to the earth are found included in His counsels, and revealed in the word. One depended on the faithfulness of man to the responsibility which weighed upon him, the other on the active power of God. These are the dispensations of the law and of the kingdom. But there was a moment of transition, when the kingdom was preached, and preached in the midst

71. {What is meant by supplementally is that Israel was given opportunity to reject Christ *in heaven*, as Stephen saw Him, rejecting Him there as Israel had rejected Him when down here. Two parables in Luke have a bearing on this as showing clearly the moral state involved. Luke 13:6-9 shows us there was a year of grace, which brings us to the stoning of Stephen, a turning point in the Acts. The other is Luke 19:11-27 where the embassy of Luke 19:14 turned out to be Stephen, the Christian proto-martyr.}

72. *Words of Truth*, 6:219. See *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:20.

of Israel by John the Baptist and by Christ, without its having been established in power. . . . Now the preaching of the kingdom had for its effect to separate the remnant (namely, those who had ears to hear) from the evil and hypocrisy which reigned in the midst of the people, to prepare them for the entrance of the kingdom, if it had been established in power; and in fact, Christ being rejected, that they might become the nucleus of the assembly which, according to the counsels of God, was about to be revealed. Then the kingdom took the character of sowing and other similar forms, and not that of the kingdom of a king in power, and it continued to be preached as about to come; although the salvation and the glory of the church were to occupy, from the coming down of the Holy Spirit, the principal place in the doctrine of which the Spirit is the source.

It was therefore at the moment when the relationships of Israel with God by means of the Messiah had become impossible, and when the relationships founded on the law, and maintained by the testimony of the prophets, were drawing to an end, through the publication of the kingdom ready to be established and, in a certain sense, present in the person of the King – it was at that moment that the Lord pronounced these words. Now the first thing that they state was that “the law and the prophets were until John.” Israel was placed by God on that footing until John’s ministry. They had but to observe the law, and to rejoice in the hope given by the prophets, and all was well. This was no longer the case after John. The kingdom was not established; if it had been, the power of God would have settled everything. Order and peace would have reigned; the remnant would have been blessed in the kingdom where the King would have reigned in righteousness. But it was not so; it was preached, and preached by prophets who were reviled and rejected, and for whom the wilderness and death were an abode or a reward. The hypocritical nation, a generation of vipers, would have nothing of it. It was only the energy of faith, going through sufferings, which could seize on it. Satan and the heads of the nation would do all they could to prevent people from entering, and even soil their hands with the blood of the righteous. Those who preached the kingdom suffered, and those who entered it were to have their portion with them. The kingdom was not being established in power; the King did not reign; He was preached. It was only by violence that one forced one’s way into it. It was the violent ones, those who were not stopped by obstacles and opposition, but who opened to themselves a way through all, these alone it was who opened to themselves a way through all, these alone it was who were securing a place for themselves.<sup>73</sup> ❖

### ***What Does “The Kingdom of God is Within You” Mean?***

73. J. N. Darby, *Letters* 3:401-2.

And having been asked by the Pharisees, When is the kingdom of God coming? He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor shall they say, Lo here, or, Lo there; for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you (Luke 17:20-21).

On His way to Jerusalem (Luke 17:11), the Lord Jesus showed a work of power of the age to come (Heb. 6:5) by healing ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). In this gospel which brings out forcefully the sovereignty of God, grace reached out to a Samaritan (Luke 17:16). This demonstration of the power of the age to come thus present in Israel is followed by the question of the Pharisees regarding the time of the coming of the kingdom of God, which is the occasion of our Lord’s bringing out its future introduction with judgments. But before that occurs, He had something to say to those Pharisees regarding a moral bearing of the kingdom of God concerning themselves.

There is indeed something strange about the translation, “the kingdom of God is within you,” which would mean that the kingdom of God was within those Pharisees. That could not be so. As the Lord usually did when asked a question, He did not answer the question (He did not tell them “when”) but spoke about where the kingdom was at that moment, thus dealing with the state of soul from which the question arose. I suggest that this is the reason the account of the healing of the lepers is placed in Luke just before this question by the Pharisees. He had been accomplishing healings that manifested the power in the earth of the future kingdom of God. The fact is that the kingdom of God was present in His Person (cp. Matt. 12:28) but there was an incapacity in these Pharisees to see it. They had no moral sight. The Lord’s statement regarding the kingdom being among them means the kingdom in its moral aspect.

The kingdom does not come “with observation,” as if they might by human sagacity discern it. Moreover, “Lo here, or, Lo there” will do nothing but deceive. This statement is applied by our Lord twice; in v. 21 regarding His first coming, and in v. 23 regarding His second coming -- His moral presentation in humiliation to Israel as well as His coming in judgment, power, and glory. Mere human observation is worse than useless because the pretended capacity leads to disaster.<sup>74</sup>

No doubt they thought of themselves as qualified to determine such matters, but the result of this pretension was the crucifixion of the Lord.

That the kingdom will be introduced by judgments, power, and glory in a future day is clear from Luke 17:24-37, as well as Luke 24, Mark 13, and Matt. 24.

### ***The Kingdom in the Gospel of John***

The word “Kingdom” occurs only twice in John’s gospel and not at all in his three

74. See *Collected Writings*, 25:153 on this passage, as well as *The Bible Treasury*, 8:328, 329.

epistles. In John 3 he uses “kingdom of God” in its true, inward meaning -- reality of relationship to God (John 3:3, 5) -- and of the moral source of Christ’s kingdom (John 18:36).

### ***Are There, Then, Two Ways of Entering the Kingdom of God Now?***

To enter it in profession only is of course not only possible, but most of Christendom has done this. To enter into the moral power of the kingdom, to enter the kingdom of God in its spiritual character, is also to be in that kingdom in profession, but also as in the moral power of it.

### **What Does “My Kingdom is Not of This World” Mean?**

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom was of this world, my servants had fought that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence (John 18:36).

This is not about the kingdom in mystery, as it now is, but about a kingdom of power in this world. That was what Pilate meant when he asked, “Thou art the king of the Jews?” (John 18:34). Well, of course He is the King of the Jews, but He is much more than that. However, here our Lord asserts that the moral source of His kingdom is not found in this world. Kings whose moral source of power is in the world have servants who fight with earthly means to maintain their kingdom. True it is that God placed the governmental sword in the hands of Noah, but man has repeatedly failed in its discharge, as Pilate himself was here failing in the case of the very One who had given the sword of government into Noah’s hands. “The way, the truth, and the life” stood before him and he sarcastically remarked, “What is truth” (John 18:38). He will find out at the great white throne. “Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice” (John 18:37). Pilate’s ears were spiritually deaf. “Of the truth” speaks of the moral origin of one who hears His voice. This also is not of this world (as John 17 shows concerning the believer). Satan has had vicious power in the world all along but since the cross fully brought out the lostness of man under trial to show that he was not recoverable from the fall, there is recognized this fact:

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked [one] (1 John 5:19).

It should not be surprising then that Satan will be bound for the 1000 year reign of Christ (Rev. 20). Nor should we forget that meanwhile the believer is not of the world. That is not his moral origin.

Jerusalem cast out the King come in humiliation and was quite otherwise than being the city of truth. But when He comes again and reigns, then:

Thus saith Jehovah: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called, The city of truth . . . (Zech. 8:3).

The passage has been pressed into the illegitimate service of denying the

restoration of the kingdom to Israel (cp. notes on Acts 1:3-9). The point to John 18:36 is not to deny the future, literal kingdom, but it shows us that it has a different source than the kingdoms of this world. The ruler will be “the second man, out of heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47). He is characterized as “the heavenly [one]” (1 Cor. 15:48). Government will pass into His hands and He will impress His own character and origin upon the millennial kingdom. Thus, He says in John 18:36, “now my kingdom is not from hence.”

It was considered elsewhere that the offer of the kingdom to Israel was bound up with, entailed, the acceptance of His Person. He was rejected. When He comes to set up the kingdom through sovereign power and glory, the kingdom is still bound up with His Person, only then sovereign grace will have prepared a people for Him. First there is the presentation of the kingdom in a form to test the fallen first man in his responsibility, then by undertaking all in sovereignty. In either case, He was not of this world and His kingdom is not of this world.

Rev. 19:15 depicts Him coming from heaven to crush the nations and take the kingdom. There (heaven) is the moral origin of the kingdom administered on earth (cp. Jude 1:14, 15).

### ***The Kingdom in the Revelation***

We might notice that in Rev. 1:6 we are told:

and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father: to him [be] glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

Rev. 1:9 refers to John himself:

I, John, your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience, in Jesus . . .

Rev. 11:15 refers to the kingdom in glory and judgment, prophesied by the prophets of Israel -- what we call the millennial reign of Christ. Rev. 12:10 shows us that this kingdom is “the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.”

## Chapter 7

### *Notice of The Assembly in Matthew*

The reader will find excellent papers on the church and the kingdom in vol. 1 of J. N. Darby's *Collected Writings*, as well as notes in his other books. Here we will notice some questions regarding the Church and the Kingdom.

#### *Why Is the Assembly Spoken of in Matthew?*

The emphasis in Matthew is about administrative, governmental and dispensational matters. In view of Israel being set aside as the place where there is a spiritual administration, the church would be where Christ's spiritual administration is presently centered. That does not mean that Matthew contains some revelation of the mystery, which is another matter. In Colossians the mystery is Christ in you, the hope of glory. In Ephesians the mystery is that we are in Christ before the Father. These two epistles respectively develop what these two complementary aspects of what the mystery mean.

Note three remarkable matters found after Matt. 12 (which mark Christ's moral separation from the Old Israel:

1. The kingdom of the heavens in mystery -- its present form -- is unfolded by our Lord (Matt. 13).
2. The change from Israel being the place of the administration of God's order to the assembly as the place of administration of order (Matt. 16, 18).
3. Three apostles are given a view of Christ's kingdom glory (Matt. 17).

O. T. Allis had written:

On dispensational principles, the mention of the Church in this passage is very difficult to explain.

I wonder how he knew it was difficult to explain on dispensational principles? Of course, he knew no such thing. The fact is that it is exactly in Matthew's Gospel where it is most appropriate that we have this subject -- a mark of inspired perfection.

We have noted elsewhere that Matt. 12 brings out Christ's moral separation from the nation of Israel consequent upon their moral rejection of Himself in attributing the power that worked in Him to Beelzebub, thus labeling the operations of the Spirit of God to the prince of demons (His final rejection on earth was the cross). Then in Matt. 13 He takes the place of sowing instead of looking for fruit from Israel.

Consequent upon His rejection in Matt. 12, the heretofore undisclosed form of the kingdom of the heavens as in mystery is brought out as we see in Matt. 13. Matthew was particularly the suited Gospel for this -- and for other changes also consequent on Christ's rejection. Therefore, in Matt. 16 the fact that there was to be an assembly that Christ would build, founded upon Himself as Son of the living God, was brought out. After the time of the kingdom in mystery, as well as the assembly that Christ would build, there would follow the kingdom in glory. Thus, in Matt. 17, there is a pledge, as it were, that even though rejected now there would be the future kingdom and so three of His disciples saw Him transfigured in His kingdom glory (Matt. 16:27 - 17:1; 2 Pet. 1:16-21).

In keeping with not merely the Jewish character of Matthew, but also with the fact that the church is governmental in character, the church is spoken of in Matt. 18 as the new place where God's order would be administered -- since Israel has lost that place. It is in Matthew that these matters are brought out and it is a pity when the appropriateness of Matthew's Gospel for this unfolding of such matters is not apprehended. Still that is not a revelation of the mystery of Christ and the church which was committed to Paul to reveal.

In Colossians the mystery is that *Christ is in you*, the hope of glory, and Colossians takes up the bearing of that truth. In Ephesians the mystery is that *you are in Christ*, and Ephesians takes up the bearing of that truth. These things are not found in Matthew -- i.e., the mystery of Christ and the church is not found in Matthew. To claim that the mystery of Christ and the church is found, or mentioned, in Matthew because we are told that Christ would build His assembly is to be quite simplistic regarding God's truth concerning these matters. In Matthew there is no teaching concerning Christ in you, or you being in Christ

#### *I Implore Brethren to Weigh Anxiously This Point*

The thrust of Covenant Theology is that it centers upon the salvation of the redeemed in all ages and allows of no blessing outside of covenanted blessings. One result of this is that what is distinctive of saints now and outside of covenanted blessings must be forced to mean something that is covenanted. Since we know from Scripture that covenants are for Paul's kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5), those things forced into a covenant must receive a strong earthly bent to them. Things that are common to all saints of all ages (as, for example sainthood) are used to swamp out what is distinctive now. J. N. Darby warned:

I implore brethren to weigh anxiously this point: they may be assured it is of the greatest practical importance -- I mean the distinctness of the church's hopes or their blending with the ancient promises to Israel. The life and spiritual energy of a saint depends on his faith in what is proper to his own dispensation. This is so true, that, if he only believed what belonged to the last



{i.e., the ancient promises to Israel}, it would not be life to him; it has ceased to be the test of faith to him. To Abraham, faith in Almighty God was living faith: is this (though living faith surely owns it) what living faith consists in now? A Jew, not owning Jehovah, would have failed from the covenant. And it is true of power too. If the Holy Ghost be not fully owned, if the proper heavenly place of the church be not fully owned, no general idea of salvation, however true, will give the power, nor form and guide for Christ's glory {to} those who neglect the former {i.e., the church's hopes}. What is special to the dispensation is the power and testimony of the dispensation, and not what is said to be common to all.<sup>75</sup>

The blending, swamping, lumping, and merging of distinctive things is seen in the treatment Matthew receives by Covenantist Theology. Here is a hint at something much better.

There has been little real research into the character of the Gospels. The Fathers say Matthew wrote in order -- chronologically in fact; Mark, on the contrary, no one knew how (supposed as he heard it from Peter; this from the foolish notion that an apostle must be the author, from not really believing in inspiration). Now it is exactly the contrary, Matthew's Gospel bringing forth Christ as Messiah, Emmanuel sent to the Jews, but rejected of them; the kingdom of heaven {in mystery; Matt. 13}, and the church {Matt. 16} and the kingdom in glory {Matt. 17} being substituted for the present establishment of Messiah's glory, gives a perfect moral order of subjects with this view. Hence, too, you have in fact no proper history with a chronological sequence. This is given in one single verse (Matt. 4:23); and we have His service in Galilee, and at the very end no ascension, but the whole closed with the remnant in Galilee and their mission to the Gentiles. In all the three Gospels blind Bartimaeus at Jericho begins the last events. There He is Son of David.

Regarding Matthew's gospel being "Jewish" and the mention of the assembly, this is just the gospel where it ought to appear. This gospel is not merely Jewish but shows the change to be brought about consequent upon Israel's refusal of the King -- for the kingdom is bound up with His person such that the rejection of His Person includes the rejection of the kingdom. The state of the Old Israel is brought out in the first three Gospels in connection with the way the Lord is presented in human office and/or station in each gospel: Matthew as King; Mark as Servant-Prophet; Luke as perfect, dependent Man among men. John has its distinctive character and

75. *Collected Writings*, 8:112-113. {Notice how JND here uses the word "dispensation" in a conventional manner, meaning to refer to this present time period. When, however, he addresses more formally the question of the assembly and dispensations, he teaches that the assembly is not really a dispensation at all.}

76. *Collected Writings*, 32:197.

supposes in John 1:11 the rejection and proceeds from there.<sup>77</sup>

We need to keep in mind that Christ's second coming in glory and judgment will sovereignly establish the kingdom concerning which the OT prophets spoke. That is not how Christ came the first time. In the ways of God, the kingdom was first presented to Israel in responsibility. That is, the first, fallen man was still under trial to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. That trial included this presentation to Israel while it stood in responsibility with respect to this very trial. Thus, the King came in meekness, not in glory and judgment. So, fallen man must be tried regarding responsibility concerning the kingdom. The King was rejected and this was the occasion of God introducing a form of the kingdom unforeseen by the OT prophets, the kingdom of the heavens in mystery. But besides that, the assembly is established, substituting for the Old Israel while it is set aside.

Matthew's gospel is not only Jewish but also dispensational and governmental concerning God's ways. Thus, the assembly was to be the new place where God's order was to be administered. The notice of these things is most appropriate in Matthew's gospel where the suspension of the kingdom hopes, and the suspension of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom as at hand are particularly marked.

### ***O. T. Allis' View of "I Will Build My Church"***

Dr. O. T. Allis' book, *Prophecy and the Church*, has gone through many printings since it was published in 1945. He took a "sabbatical" from his teaching post at Westminster Theological Seminary to write this book against dispensationalism. His arguments based on the book of Acts have all been refuted in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1. Here we will examine his Covenantist statements concerning the mention of the church in Matthew's gospel. In this quotation, the interspersed letters in parentheses refer to the letters below the quotation where the points are discussed.

"I will build my church." We need not pause to consider the papal claim that Peter is the rock and that as such he was the first Pope, the head of the visible Church, Christ's vicegerent on earth. Protestants recognize that it was Peter in his representative capacity as a professor of belief in the Deity of Christ who was the rock, or that the rock was the profession itself. This helps us to understand the meaning of the words "my church." The organization<sup>(a)</sup> which Christ will build is founded on faith in His Messiahship.<sup>(b)</sup> As such it is definitely connected with the Old Testament economy,<sup>(c)</sup> with Israel: it is a congregation, a church. But it is also distinct from the Old Testament Church; Christ calls it "my church"; and it belongs to the future, "I will build." This

77. The reader should read "Compared View of the First Three Gospels" in *Collected Writings*, 24 and 25.

implies that it will come into being after the redemptive work of Christ on which it rests has been accomplished. Consequently, the word “church” does not appear again until after Pentecost. Then, both in the Acts and the Epistles we read of the “church” as consisting of the body of Christian believers brought into being through the preaching of the gospel especially by Peter and Paul.<sup>(4)</sup> That the Church was built upon Peter in the sense that he was one of the first to confess the Deity of Christ and the first to profess the crucified and risen Lord before men is evident from the statements of the Book of Acts.<sup>(6)</sup> The body which came into being through the preaching of Peter at Pentecost,<sup>(9)</sup> is called the “church” in Acts 5:11, where Peter’s summary judgment on Ananias and Sapphira is described as causing great fear to the “church,” and again in 8:1 where we are told that the “church” was scattered abroad, except the disciples.<sup>78</sup>

Implicit in what he says is the denial that Rom. 16:25-26, Col. 1:26, and Eph. 3 mean that the mystery of Christ and the church was not mentioned in the OT. This denial is standard Covenantism. What is meant by the mystery of Christ and the church was unfolded by Paul, not by our Lord in Matthew’s gospel. This is not a theological game about words, but concerns what God has done in the unfolding of truth. Theological nonsense can be built around referring to the congregation of Israel as the assembly in the wilderness (Acts 7:38); that is not what is meant by the assembly of God in the NT. However, it shows that the use of the word “assembly” must be considered in the context where it is used and that we must not load it with meaning it was not meant to have in its context. Thus, in Matthew we have no revelation of the saints indwelt by the Spirit being members one of another and united to the head in heaven. In Col. the aspect of the mystery of Christ and the assembly is that *Christ is in you*, the hope of glory, and Colossians brings before us the implications of that truth. In Ephesians, the aspect of the mystery of Christ and the church that is brought before us is that *we are in Christ* and the implications of that truth. In some other Scriptures we learn that we are heavenly. None of this is in Matthew and loading the word “Church,” i.e., “assembly,” with such things is not valid exposition but rather pushing a Covenantist agenda to bring everything under the concept of Covenant so that there can be no such thing as the distinctive blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus outside of covenant blessings. This agenda necessarily must lower what is heavenly to what is earthly. Let us now look at the points in the above quotation that are followed by the superscript letters.

(a) The true assembly (which is Christ’s body) is really an organism (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 1:22-23; etc.), not an organization. It is true that in the ruin of the assembly on earth as viewed in responsible testimony, the divided church generally appears as organizations.

(b) The assembly is not built upon faith in Christ’s Messiahship. It is built on Himself, His Person (1 Cor. 3:11; Matt. 16:18 with 1 Cor. 10:4). His portion as foundation of the assembly follows from the place He has taken as risen from the dead and from being at the right hand of God (Acts 2:32-33); hence Paul uses “Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11) when pointing to that place, His personal name preceding His title as Messiah. Paul, who brings before us the doctrines of the assembly, especially of the body of Christ, immediately after his salvation markedly presented Christ as He is designated in Matt. 16:18:

78. *Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, pp. 81-82 (1945).

And straightway in the synagogue he preached Jesus that *he* is the Son of God (Acts 9:20).

Obviously, the others confessed Him to be that as did Peter in Matt. 16. However, in the ways of God that confession did not characterize the early preaching in the Acts before the stoning of Stephen, a turning point in the history given in Acts.

(c) In the O.T., there is nothing like the NT assembly founded on Christ as the Son of the living God. The Son had not come in incarnation then, nor had done the work on the cross, nor been seated thereafter at God’s right hand. The N.T. assembly is definitely not connected with the Old Testament economy.

(d) No, Christ did not begin the church through Peter and Paul. The church was added to through preaching, but the assembly was begun without any man’s preaching -- by Christ Himself. Christ is the baptizer with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11) and when He was in the glory He received from the Father the Spirit and then shed forth the Spirit on those waiting below (Acts 2:32, 33), thus He baptized them in the power of one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). This shows how Christ built the church, not Peter. The notion that the church is built on Peter is Popish.

The baptism in the power of the Spirit having taken place in Acts 2:1-4, the church was thus already in existence when Peter began to preach (Acts 2). The Spirit thus *came in a special sense* (though ever omnipresent), in a special capacity, to form and to maintain the church, the body of Christ, united to the Head in heaven. The preaching followed just after this formation of the church. Therefore in regard to the preaching we read:

Those then who had accepted his word were baptized; and there were added in that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41; see also v. 47).

These 3000 did not *begin* the assembly; they were *added* to that which had just previously been formed by Christ Himself in the baptism, in the power of one Spirit, into one body. The preaching did not form the assembly, it added to the already formed assembly -- a profound difference.

❖ Now one word as to the kingdom of heaven. It is in one point *connected with* the church, because it is the administration of the power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, though it is invisible or in mystery now. It is not the reign of Satan or of the four beasts, but the reign of heaven. It is the reign of righteousness and judgment, and the thought of its being the church will not do, as I do not find *grace* characterizing it. When the kingdom of heaven was preached by John, he said, “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor.” {Moreover,} “He will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.” Now this is judgment, and though the church will be associated with Christ in it as reigning with Him, yet the kingdom of heaven has not the same character as the church of the living God. Again, “Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” This has nothing to do with the church of God or the gospel. Still the church has a testimony to the kingdom of heaven, that it is to be set up. Again in Psa. 68:23, “That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.” Now this is vengeance, and not the characteristic work of the power of redemption. This greatly facilitates the understanding of the psalms, for in them we constantly find the Spirit of

Christ crying for judgment on His enemies. The dreadful expressions of vengeance in the psalms apply to the judgment of enemies on the setting up of the kingdom. In Psa. 21:8 we find that in consequence of the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God there will be judgment upon His enemies, as it is said, "Thy right hand shall find out all thine enemies"; it speaks of Him as King. But in Psa. 22 there is not a word about enemies. When He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was suffering for sin in the way of atonement. When it was that kind of suffering, His soul entered into it, as *He*, and *He alone*, could know it. Then I find nothing about *enemies*, but "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." The principle is, that He takes His place among happy people. The church is altogether above and beyond the kingdom; the church is a happy people associated *with Christ in the love God has for Him*. The church will reign with Christ over the kingdom, and she now owns Christ as King by right. <sup>79</sup> ❖

Note that to think that Peter was given the keys of the church is compatible with his view that the church was begun by Peter's preaching. The church is not built with keys.

❖ The keys are the insignia of the administration of the kingdom. These were in a special manner entrusted to Peter individually; but the passage gives him nothing to do with building the Church at all, nor does he pretend to it when he refers to this passage in his epistle {1 Pet. 2:4}. He partakes in a remarkable manner of that on which the Church is founded. He is a stone, has part in the nature of the living stone, the Son of the living God, the truth on which the Church rests; but that is all. Of the kingdom of heaven he had the administration specially entrusted to him. The kingdom is not the Church, and never will be. <sup>80</sup> ❖

*Ques.* Does the sphere of the kingdom of the heavens now go beyond the professing church in its present state?

When you compare things, you must have something to compare with;

what is there to compare between a kingdom and a house? <sup>81</sup>

(e) It is completely erroneous to say that the church was built on Peter in any sense whatsoever.

(f) Here again we find it claimed that the church came into being through Peter's preaching. A blinding system of theology must be at work, not only defiant against the NT teaching that silence was kept in the OT regarding the mystery, but here insisting the church came into existence through preaching, directly contradicting the Scriptures cited under (d) above. He does not really know what the body of Christ is.

### ***On the Truth that It Is Christ Who Builds the Church***

79. *Collected Writings*, 32:403-404.

80. *Collected Writings*, 14:104.

81. *Notes and Jottings*, 1:14.

The truth concerning so much of these matters was expounded many years ago. Let us hear JND on this.

❖ I now turn to the building. Christ declares (in Matt. 16) that He will build the Church and that the gates of hell (hades) -- Satan's power, as having the power of death -- shall not prevail against it. The title given to Satan's power clearly shows what the rock was. Christ was the Son of the living God. The power of death (which Satan holds) could not prevail against that. The resurrection was the proof of it: then He was declared Son of God with power. Peter's confession of the truth revealed to him by the Father put him, by Christ's gift, in the first place in connection with this truth. The reader may remark that keys have nothing to do with the Church: people do not, as I have heretofore remarked, build with keys. Besides, the keys, those of the kingdom, were given to Peter. He had nothing to do with building: Christ was to do that. "I will build," says Christ. The Father had revealed Christ's character. On that rock Christ would build; Peter might be the first stone in importance, but no builder. Besides that, Christ has Himself ("also" refers to this: "I also," that is, besides what the Father has done) an administration to confer on Peter, that of the kingdom whose keys are given to him. But beyond all controversy, the kingdom of heaven is not the Church, though they may run parallel at the present time. Accordingly, when Peter refers to this, he does not speak of himself as building in any way. It was Christ's personal secret work in the soul carried on by Him, a real spiritual work, applicable individually and only to those who were spiritual, and, though by grace in their hearts, their own coming to Christ.

To whom coming, a living stone disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and precious, ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore, also, it is contained in the scripture. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. To you, therefore, that believe he is precious {1 Pet. 2:4-7};

otherwise {He is} a stone of stumbling. Now here there are no ordinances, but faith; living stones coming to a living stone. All is spiritual, personal, real. Christ is precious to faith. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious: otherwise it is not true, Peter does not build, nor any other instrument. They come by faith and are built up. Against this, most assuredly, the gates of hades will not prevail; but man's building has nothing to say to it. The body or membership of the body forms no part of Peter's revelation. Nor does he speak of the Church or assembly at all. <sup>82</sup> ❖

The truth of the constitution of the assembly as one body was not given to Peter to bring before the saints. Paul was the chosen vessel for this.

82. *Collected Writings*, 14:96-97.

## *The Covenantist Reading of the Mystery of Christ and the Church Into Matt. 16*

That God would have an assembly -- called-out ones -- is not the mystery of Christ and the church brought out by Paul. That it was later revealed that these same called-out ones were the body of Christ, part of the mystery, does not give us *here* any revelation of the one body of Christ. To say, or imply, that Matthew's showing that there were to be called-out ones is speaking of the mystery strikes me as perverse -- such speaking being to maintain an agenda imposed on Scripture. You cannot get that out of what is given in Matthew. If you did not have Paul's writings, you would not know that these called-out ones were one body in Christ. But wanting their system, they will attempt to so link the two just as if it had been stated in Matthew, for that is how they are treating the matter -- as Dr. Allis, in effect, treats the matter, the result of which is to earthly-ize the church, as does the Covenantist system. No doubt Dr. Allis thought he portrayed the foolishness of dispensational truth when he wrote:

Yet according to Darby, this Church was a mystery, unknown to prophecy, a mystery to be revealed not to Peter but to Paul, a mystery which did not have any proper place in a discourse addressed to "Jewish" disciples and recorded in a "Jewish" gospel. On dispensational principles, the mention of the Church in this passage is very difficult to explain.<sup>83</sup>

No, not "according to Darby" was the mystery "unknown to prophecy" but according to Scripture. Implicit in his remark is the assertion that the mystery spoken of in Rom. 16:25-26; Col. 1:26; and Eph. 3, was spoken of in the OT. The Covenantist scheme would collapse if it acknowledged what Rom. 16:26 states: "as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages" concerning the mystery; and that the covenants belong to Paul's kinsmen *according to flesh* (Rom. 9:3-5). Instead of bowing to the plain, explicit statement of Scripture, Covenantists manufacture false difficulties for those who do so bow to it, as Dr. Allis did here. The scheme Jewish-izes the church, making it the "spiritual Israel," the "Israel of God," etc. -- Jewish-izes the mystery, and then finds it quite consistent to find the mystery of Christ and the church "in a 'Jewish' gospel." So what we learn from his comments is that his view of the mystery concerning which silence was not actually kept in the times of the ages would naturally be spoken of "in a 'Jewish' gospel," but the mystery as Darby understood it (as not spoken of in the OT) should not, in his opinion, be found "in a 'Jewish' gospel."

Let me repeat: the Covenantist view of the mystery of Christ and the church is quite compatible, according to O. T. Allis, with being found "in a 'Jewish' gospel," while he also claims that Darby's 'dispensational' understanding of the mystery

83. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 88.

being found "in a 'Jewish' gospel" shows Darby is inconsistent as well as wrong.

Note another point: he indicates his thought that the mystery was here revealed to Peter. Couple this with what he said that was quoted above, that the church was formed by Peter's preaching. As well as Jewish-izing the mystery, not surprisingly, we find it being Peter-ized also. Here we have the mystery of Christ and the church (which involves Christ the head in heaven (resurrected), and the Holy Spirit sent down consequently, Acts 2:32-33) being revealed to Peter, when it had not yet been revealed at Pentecost!

What it all shows is that Covenantists do not really understand the mystery. The *mystery of Christ and the assembly* is not found in Matthew and Darby never said, or hinted, that he found it there. The alleged inconsistency of Darby is the result of the falseness of Covenantism. Moreover, it is reading into the word "assembly" a revelation of that mystery, which is absurd, though Covenantism seems to require so reading the word here in Matthew.

## *The Church is Not the Kingdom, Nor is the Church Built with Keys*

Dr. Allis seems to have a facility for finding insurmountable objections to dispensational truth which actually turn out to be evidence of how he really does not understand what the church is. No doubt he virtually equates the kingdom and the church. This follows from Covenant Theology. First, let us patiently hear all the flaws he finds about this in dispensational truth.

In line with their interpretation of Matt. 13, Dispensationalists tell us that the keys of the kingdom of heaven which were given to Peter were the keys of the professing church: "not the keys of the church, but of the kingdom of heaven in the sense of Matt. 13, i.e., the sphere of Christian profession." This can only mean that the same special and peculiar meaning which is given to Matt. 13 by which the kingdom of heaven is identified with the professing church must be applied to the office of Peter.<sup>(a)</sup> Instead of his use of the keys being postponed to the future, in view of the postponement of the kingdom of heaven, he is given the keys of the professing church of the present dispensation, a church which is characterized by formalism and hypocrisy, a church which is a counterfeit of the true Church, a church which was corrupted from the very beginning, is to become irremediably corrupt and is destined for destruction.<sup>(b)</sup> Dispensationalists admit that the true Church was founded at Pentecost, that Peter "opened the door of Christian opportunity to Israel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-42), and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-46)." They can hardly avoid admitting that within the sphere of Christian profession, which included Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), there was the true Church to which Barnabas belonged (Acts 4:36, 11:24). Yet the whole trend of their interpretation and of their argument in its

support is to make Peter the founder of a professing church, a church in which there are only tares and bad fish, a church which is to be completely leavened by false doctrine and become completely apostate;<sup>84</sup> and to make Paul the sole apostle of the true Church, the mystery parenthesis Church, which was founded by Peter some five years before Paul's conversion, a church in which there are neither tares nor bad fish nor any corrupting leaven. This brings us to the question whether there is any warrant for drawing such a sharp antithesis between the functions of these two men who were both so signally honored by their Lord, a distinction which is dishonoring to Peter to exactly the degree that it is honoring to his "beloved brother Paul."<sup>84</sup>

I think that one of the misunderstandings underpinning these remarks is not rightly distinguishing between the church as Christ builds it, which cannot fail, and the church viewed from the standpoint of responsible testimony in the world, in the hands of man, which is certainly in ruins -- a truth and distinction JND vigorously taught. The apostle Paul clearly addressed this ruin-state in 2 Timothy.

(a) "This can only mean" expresses more about the effect of the false system of Covenant Theology on the beholder than on the thing he thinks he sees. He quoted C. I. Scofield, who correctly said that the keys given to Peter were "not the keys of the church," but Dr. Allis imposes on this the meaning that Peter was given the "keys of the professing church." One who makes words mean whatever he says they mean is, truly, difficult to deal with. Theology seems to be the practice of confounding confusion. First, here is a brief statement of the truth of the matter:

❖ *Ques.* How is it {the kingdom} different from the church?

The church is God's assembly, and, viewed in its heavenly place of association with Christ, it is the body of the Head.<sup>85</sup> The kingdom is the sphere of government. The church is very distinct as God's house, the Spirit of God makes it His habitation; but it is the body of Christ, united to Him, the Head, in heaven; a wholly different thing. Government is the great thought in the kingdom; but grace is the thought in the church; that which God calls, that which He elects.

*Ques.* The kingdom of heaven and the great house {2 Tim. 2:20}, are they co-extensive now? Could they be applied to the same sphere?

They are distinct thoughts. The great house is a comparison drawn from the ruin of that which professes to be the church of God; all kinds of corruption and wickedness have been brought in where God's Spirit is, where God dwells.

*Ques.* Does the sphere of the kingdom of the heavens now go beyond the professing church in its present state?

84. *Prophecy and the Church*, pp. 88, 89.

85. {That is not the aspect of the assembly as presented in Matthew, however. In Matthew the assembly is viewed as replacing the set-aside Israel as the place of the administration of God's order. Subsequent revelation tells us more, but Matthew clearly shows a distinction between the kingdom in mystery and the church.}

When you compare things, you must have something to compare with; what is there to compare between a kingdom and a house?

The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God when the King is in heaven; it is, too, the kingdom of God even in His absence. Kingdom of God is the universal form, but it may be in different states and shapes, because the King is in heaven, but it is all the kingdom of God.<sup>86</sup> ❖

❖ What is the kingdom? It is very simple, if we take the word as it is. It is the sphere of the reign, or where the King reigns. If I take the word church as "assembly," which it really means, I can never confound "church" and "kingdom." Compare the word "reign" with "assembly," and the difference is easily seen.<sup>87</sup> ❖

(b) Warp and woof of all Dr. Allis' remarks is that Peter was founder of the church. But now, in his essentially confounding of the kingdom of the heavens in mystery with the church viewed as the professing church, he wants to attribute to dispensationalism the utterly absurd notion that Peter is the "founder of a professing church, a church in which there are only tares and bad fish." I thought that in the two parables of Matt. 13 here referred to, there were also wheat and good fish. Where does the wheat appear in Dr. Allis' false representation? However, he only said that it was "the whole trend of their interpretation and of their argument . . .," and did not say he actually read such utter nonsense of which he speaks. Still, that is what he thinks he sees.

(c) The arguments presented do not really take account of the difference of the church as Christ builds, which cannot be ruined, and the church viewed in Scripture as in the hands of man in responsible testimony, which has been ruined -- as all that is in man's responsibility experiences ruin. 1 Cor. 3 warned against what man builds and in 2 Tim. we read the sad result.

The following quotation from JND gives more attention to the same topic:

❖ In the Gospel of Matthew (which especially speaks of Christ as Emmanuel, Messiah), the narrative, which develops great principles more than facts in historical order, is arrived, in the chapter I refer to, at the point where the Jews had practically rejected the Savior; so that (12:20) He charges the disciples that they should no longer tell that He was the Christ, and proceeds to show His disciples that He must suffer; and the substitution of the Church and the kingdom of heaven for the Jewish system (in Matt. 16), and the coming glory of the Son of man in His kingdom (in Matt. 17) are brought before us by the Spirit of God. The Church and the kingdom of heaven form, consequently, the weighty revelation of the Lord in Matt. 16. On

86. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 14, 15. See also: *Collected Writings*, 30:254-255; 24:160.

87. *Collected Writings*, 30:94.

this let us dwell for a moment. All is founded on the revelation of the Person of the Son of God. Various opinions were formed by men as to Him, but the Father Himself had revealed to Simon Bar-jonas that Jesus was the Son of the living God. On this rock Christ would build His Church. The true force of v. 18 is, "and I also say." That is, The Father had told Simon what Christ was, Christ tells him what he, Simon, is. He is Peter, or a stone. But on the doctrine of His person as Son of the living God Christ would build His Church. It was on a risen Christ; for this was the public witness that He was Son of the living God, and all the power of Satan, who has the power of death, should not prevail against what Christ thus built. The important thing here to note is, that Christ and Christ only is the builder. No man has anything to do with it, nor is that which Christ builds yet finished. It is a building which continues till the whole temple is complete according to the mind of God. So, when Peter speaks in his epistle (1 Pet. 2:4, 5), he says, Unto whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house. We have no human builder. So in Eph. 2, Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In all this we have no builder save Christ, and the building is only growing up to a temple in the Lord. I have spoken elsewhere of the contrast of this with 1 Cor. 3, where we have the agency and responsibility of man. Paul is a wise masterbuilder; some might build with wood, hay, and stubble, but be themselves saved; others corrupt the temple of the Lord and be themselves destroyed. Into this I do not enter farther here. But they are looked at here as the temple of the Lord already, and God's building, not merely growing to it.

What we learn from Matt. 16 is that in the building against which the gates of hell do not prevail man takes no part -- it is Christ who builds; while in that in which man's responsibility is engaged, wood and hay and stubble may be built in and the work destroyed by fire {1 Cor. 3}. To confound these two things (a confusion on which the whole pretensions of popery and Puseyism are built up) is most mischievous, and makes God answerable for man's evil work, and bound to maintain and sanction it. It is a very wicked doctrine.

Further, there are no keys to the Church. It and its building have nothing to do with the keys. Christ builds and does not build with keys. The keys are the insignia of the administration of the kingdom. These were in a special manner entrusted to Peter individually; but the passage gives him nothing to do with building the Church at all, nor does he pretend to it when he refers to this passage in his epistle. He partakes in a remarkable manner of that on which the Church is founded. He is a stone, has part in the nature of the living stone, the Son of the living God, the truth on which the Church rests; but that is all. Of the kingdom of heaven he had the administration specially entrusted to him. The kingdom is not the Church, and never will be. In a general way, we may say, those who compose it have a part in the

kingdom, and will hereafter reign in it as they now suffer for it. It is the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ now; hereafter the kingdom and glory. Christ, as John the baptist, had preached the kingdom of heaven as at hand, as did the twelve (Matt. 10:7). When at length it was set up, though in no outward power, Peter had in an especial manner the administration of it, as we see in the Acts. The Lord added to the Church daily (then openly) such as should be saved {Acts 2:47}. This was His own work; but we see Peter, whether in testimony to Jews or Gentiles, or ordering the choice of deacons, or dealing with Ananias and Sapphira, having the administrative lead in the work. And what he preaches is the Lordship of the ascended Man as a present thing (in Acts 2), and His return in power to accomplish the prophecies (in Acts 3). The assembly was there, and the Lord added to it; but the testimony was to the Lordship of Christ, made Lord, and returning in power. In the case of Cornelius the Church does not come in question. Peter never preaches once that Jesus is the Son of God. He is exalted, made Lord and Christ. In this administration of the kingdom, Heaven put its seal on his acts. Whatever he bound or loosed was bound or loosed with an authority which Heaven sanctioned. I will speak of forgiveness in a moment; but in general what was established by Peter's apostolic authority in the administration of the kingdom had Heaven's seal put upon it. But in Matt. 16 the keys have no connection with the Church, and Peter has nothing to do with building that Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Scripture never confounds the kingdom and the Church.

Further, binding and loosing is not confined to forgiveness, even if, in a collateral way, it may include it, and it is only in such a way that it does. Whatever Peter establishes by the authority committed to him was sanctioned in heaven, as was also whatever two or three did as really met in Christ's name. That too was sanctioned in heaven as much as Peter's administrative acts; but only what was within the competency or left to the service of the place he was put in, or of the two or three gathered in Christ's name. Heaven's sanction on what they did does not mean that they could determine all that heaven could. The sanction of all that an inferior authority does is not saying that that inferior authority can do all that its superior is entitled to do or has to do. Many things may not be left to it. It is a question of what is rightly left. Thus, "What you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" does not include binding anything in heaven. Whatever in Christianity belonged to heaven itself, whatever was done there, Peter and the Church had no power whatever. He bound things on earth and only there; his commission did not go farther; what he did in these, that Heaven sanctioned; but he had nothing to say to what was bound or loosed in heaven itself. And this is of all importance when we come to certain points. He, Simon Bar-jonas, had the administration of the kingdom confined to him, backed by Heaven's authority: a most important and solemn charge, but that was all.

The same, in its own sphere, is committed to any Christian assembly -- two or three gathered together in {unto} Christ's name, for such is the assembly spoken of in Matt. 18: but no one dreams that such an assembly can bind beyond its own sphere of action, and determine things in heaven. What it does according to Christ's institution Heaven holds for good, but that does not confer a power of binding beyond the reach of its commission. Heaven's sanction of what is within is not the same thing as giving a power beyond its limits. I come now to the case of forgiveness . . . <sup>88</sup> ❖

But, of course, the kingdom and the church can be confounded, as we see in the Covenantist idea that Christ is King of the Church <sup>89</sup> -- indicating neither the kingdom nor the church is understood.

### *Matt. 18:15ff*

Dr. Allis is short with this passage:

This passage simply makes more difficult the problem dealt with in Matt. 16:16f. If the Church is a mystery in the sense that Dispensationalists hold it to be, it becomes still more remarkable that such a subject as the matter of discipline in this mystery Church should have been dealt with by our Lord and the record of it given to us in this Gospel which is declared to be "dispensational" and "Jewish," to be particularly concerned with the "kingdom" and to have nothing to do with the Church. <sup>90</sup>

Observe that when he sees the word "Church" he sees "mystery Church" in the sense of having something said about the church in its mystery aspect. This is erroneous. In Scripture, the church is viewed in various aspects. Concerning the mystery, Christ in us, and we in Christ, is not the aspect here. The assembly as

88. *Collected Writings* 14:103-106.

89. Besides, it is not true that the church is itself the spiritual kingdom; not one of the passages quoted by Mr. Olivier says so. The saints obey, it is true, but Christ is never called the King of the church. We come to God's throne of grace. There is a single passage in the Revelation which might be quoted: "King of saints," Rev. 15:4. But this passage is so doubtful that one can found nothing upon it. We find nothing in the word to bear out the thought that Christ exercises royal authority over the church, and the teaching of Matt. 13 renders this distinction important. Mr. Olivier does not pretend to apply here the passages from the Old Testament, such as King in Zion. In the New Testament he finds none. But then his theory of a spiritual kingdom and an outward kingdom, as two different spheres, falls to the ground. We have simply "the kingdom of heaven," which is not the church at all. The church has no relation nor any contact with the kingdom, save that it exists down here in the field, over which the authority of the kingdom is exercised. Later on, the church will reign with the Lord over that same field (*Collected Writings*, 1:286).

90. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 89.

replacing Israel in testimony in the world is the point. The passage does not speak of the mystery. Is that really so difficult to understand?

The assembly has replaced Israel as the place when the administration of God's order is to be carried out. This is a matter in keeping with the character of truth presented in Matthew's gospel -- which especially deals with the changes consequent on Israel's rejection of the King.

There is a change in relationship with God that has a two-fold character: first, there is a changed basis of relationship with God, and secondly, the assembly replaces Israel in testimony to the world.

### *Difference Between Matt. 16:19 and Matt. 18:18?*

♦ A. L. O. C. What is the difference between Matt. 16:19 and 18:18? Does the first refer to salvation in connection with the bringing in of the members to be added to the Church; and the second to the discipline of the Assembly? Or, do they both refer anticipatively to discipline?

A: The first refers to the administration committed personally to Peter, with reference to the "*Kingdom of the heavens*." The second to disciples -- "Two or three" gathered together in {unto} Christ's name, and connected with the "*Assembly*"; and valid at any time for two or three thus gathered.

In both cases it is "*whatsoever*" -- thus not referring solely to persons; though slightly differing in form of expression.

To Peter was given -- and to him alone of the Twelve -- the administration of the kingdom of the heavens, brought in its "mysteries" (Matt. 13), and commencing at the ascension of the Lord. This power he used, as the first great division of Acts testifies (Acts 1-12). He directed the choice of Matthias, Acts 1; he opened the door to the Jews, Acts 2; he bound Ananias' and Sapphira's sin on them, Acts 5; was chief in directing the choice of deacons, Acts 6; discerned Simon the sorcerer's state; and with John communicated the Holy Ghost, in Acts 8. He opened the door to the Gentiles, Acts 10; he was one of the chiefest speakers in the conference about the law, in Acts 15, &c. *Whatsoever* he did under heaven's authority, heaven ratified. Though Peter did not do all heaven did, for all that! This authority and commission was given to none of the apostles but him, and it ended there. This administration was *continued* to none.

The passage in Matt. 18:18 is authority to the "assembly," and applicable to any "assembly" which scripture authorizes, though consisting of only two or three. It is *continued* to such. There is no individual authority in it at all. For making requests, and acting under heaven's authority, the Lord was in the midst, and gave validity to what they did; though, like Peter, heaven might do, and did, a great deal more than the assembly.

It is of much importance to distinguish between the “Kingdom of the heavens,” of which the “keys” were committed to Peter; and the “Church” which Christ builds. It has been remarked that “men do not build with keys,” and the Church is built.<sup>91</sup>




---

91. *Words of Truth* 5:97-99, also in F. G. Patterson, *Scripture Notes and Queries*: Blackrock, May, 1871. Concerning the tense in these texts see *The Bible Treasury*, 6:304.

## Chapter 8

### *The Transfiguration of Christ Dispensationally, Prophetically, and Morally Considered*

The title of this chapter is meant to point to the three respective ways in which the transfiguration of the Lord is presented in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The differences in the account are in keeping with the different way our Lord is presented in each Gospel and with the special lines of truth that characterize the Gospels. We are, then, to consider a particular glory that belongs to Christ in connection with the several human offices and stations portrayed in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) as presenting to us our Beloved. The transfiguration is conspicuously absent in John which emphasizes especially the divine side of the God-man as the Word and Son, the reveler of the Father. Thus, in view of that order of glory, which necessarily eclipses the kingdom glory seen in the transfiguration, the transfiguration is omitted in John’s Gospel.

“Every Scripture is perfect in its place.”

Yes, for “Every word of God is pure.”<sup>92</sup>

Here are some headings under which we will consider the passages in the Gospels that bring the transfiguration before us:

1. What is the Occasion of the Transfiguration?
2. What is the Significance of the Transfiguration?
3. What did the Lord say that Some Would See?
4. When did Some See It?
5. What did Some See?
6. What Did Some Hear?
7. Peter’s Inspired Comments on the Transfiguration.

#### *1. What Is the Occasion of the Transfiguration?*

Christ was rejected, as we see in Matt. 11-12, and subsequently He spoke of Himself using His title, Son of Man (Matt. 16:13), which connotes that rejection. Then we

---

92. The reader might want to read on Matt. 17:1-8, W. Kelly’s “The Dealings of God with Peter,” *The Bible Treasury*, NS 8:230, 246. There are comments on the transfiguration in the valued expositions of the Gospels, as well as J. G. Bellett’s paper on the Transfiguration, which first appeared in the *Christian Witness*, vol. 2. It is also found in *The Bible Treasury*, 17:97, etc. Besides this there is a paper by W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury*, NS 3:53.



have Peter's confession of Him as Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16). Following that, the Lord showed that the church will be built upon Himself as thus designated and confessed (Matt. 16:18). Then He enjoined the disciples not to proclaim Him as Christ (Matt. 16:20). Next He affirmed that He must die and rise the third day (Matt. 16:21)(which Peter resisted, and was rebuked) and He speaks of following Him. Then (Matt. 16:27)<sup>93</sup> He assures them of His coming in glory, and rendering to every man according to his doings. It all means following a rejected Christ. As we read in Mark 8:30:

And he charged them straitly, in order that they should tell no man about him.  
And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things . . .  
. . . and be killed . . .

So, the transfiguration took place about the time of the Lord's final going to Jerusalem. Surely it was to strengthen them in thus following Him that this foreview of the coming kingdom was given to them. Why, even Moses and Elijah spoke with our Lord concerning the "departure he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). The Spirit would so use the Transfiguration when our Lord had risen from among the dead. See 2 Pet. 2. The disciples believed, as did the Jews (other than Sadducees), in the resurrection *of* the dead; but, resurrection *from among* the dead was a puzzle to them (Mark 9:9, 10). It was all unfolded to them after our Lord's resurrection.

## 2. What Is the Significance of the Transfiguration?

In Matt. 16:21 we see that the time had arrived for our Lord to tell His disciples of His impending death and resurrection. This Peter resisted and was rebuked by the Lord. He was one of three selected to see the glory of the Transfiguration. The order is: the sufferings and the glory after these (Luke 24:26). Peter was told of the sufferings and on the mount he saw a foreview of the glory of Christ Who is the center of glory.

The transfiguration is both a foreview and a pledge of the coming kingdom of Christ, confirmatory of the prophets of Israel, and it happened just prior to the Lord's going to Jerusalem to accomplish His departure. Room is left between the Lord's departure and His return in glory for the unfolding of the great secret, Christ

93. "For the Son of man is about to come in the glory of his Father . . ." His coming is always presented as impending. Grounds in Scripture for "a delay of the parousia" are not given. Readiness and expecting are always inculcated. Take Luke 12:34-48 as an example. The parables are constructed to expect Him during one night, or in one crop season, or in the same life-time. The NT saints were set in the waiting posture, as were the Thessalonians (1:9, 10). The evil servant says *in his heart*, my Lord delays his coming. He liked that idea and it affected his behavior. Now, I certainly make a difference when there is mistake in doctrine regarding the Lord's coming where there is not the same contentment as was in that servant who was thinking that Christ should delay. Still, let us be warned.

and the church.

Moreover:

The transfiguration may be received as a verifying or an assuming of the fact of a resurrection of the saints; and not only so, but as a pledge also of such a resurrection being glorious. It was a little sample or foreshadowing of the day anticipated in 1 Cor. 15. For that day will be the day, as I may call it, of the general transfiguration, when "they that are Christ's" shall be raised in bodies of glory, as Moses then appeared in the sight of Peter, James, and John. Jesus, on the holy mount, was transfigured, and Moses and Elias appeared in glory with Him.<sup>94</sup>

Three of His disciples were given a preview of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 2:16).<sup>95</sup> You can understand why in Acts 1:6 they asked if the time had come for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Our Lord never told anyone there was not going to be a literal kingdom concerning which the prophets of Israel repeatedly prophesied. The disciples were in error concerning the timing, not the fact of the kingdom's coming in power, which coming, as connected with His Person, was confirmed on the mount of transfiguration.

His present rejection and His building the church meanwhile do not set aside the ancient promises to Israel. The promises are, in a manner of speaking, divinely scheduled for fulfilment at a future date.

E. Dennett has called attention to another bearing of the transfiguration:

The word translated "transfigured" in the scene on the mount is only found four times in the New Testament Scriptures -- Matt. 17:2, Mark 9:2, Rom. 12:2, 2 Cor. 3:18. The first two of these passages refer to the same thing; and hence, we may say, it is used of an office respecting our blessed Lord, and twice concerning believers. There is, no doubt, a significant connection between these applications . . . Christ, as He was in His transfiguration, is the presentation of what believers will be when they are glorified with Him. Hence, indeed, Moses and Elias, since they appeared in glory when they talked with Him (Luke 9:30, 31), typify saints in this condition; and herein lies the significant connection in the use of the word on which we are commenting. Christ on the mount shows us what His people will be when He comes to receive them unto Himself; but then this mighty

94. *The Girdle of Truth*, 4:203.

95. The subject in Peter is the government of God. In 1 Peter the government of God is in favor of His people. In 2 Peter, the government of God is against the world. No doubt that is why Christ's coming and kingdom are noted in 2 Peter, for it will be judgment upon this world. However, we Christians look for Christ coming for us as the *Morning Star*, and He will remove us out of this world which is under judgment before the *Sun of Righteousness* shines.

change is morally commenced in them while here. Thus, in Rom. 12:2, the apostle says,

Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed (*transfigured*) by the renewing of your mind, &c.

This Scripture shows that our transfiguration must commence from within; for the apostle enjoins nonconformity to the world, and transfiguration by the renewing of our mind. Confining our attention to this single point, the question may well be put, But how is this to be accomplished? Passing now to 2 Cor. 3:18, the answer is found. There we see Christ, not on the mount, but glorified at the right hand of God. All the glory of God shines forth from His face, and His face, unlike that of Moses when he talked with the children of Israel, is unveiled. Moreover, all believers are brought into that place where they can gaze on that glory.

We all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord.

Then we learn the further thing, that it is by beholding we are changed (*transfigured*) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

This is the moral effect of having Christ in glory before our souls. He is the standard or model; and we, while beholding, are through the power of the Spirit gradually transfigured on towards the likeness of Him on whom we gaze. We say “on towards,” because while here in the body we can never be completely conformed to the glorified Christ. It is therefore a gradual moral transfiguration; every ray of His glory that falls upon our souls being made, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, to have this effect.

But, as we learn from other scriptures, when the Lord comes we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2);

for then even our bodies will be changed into the likeness of the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21). Then, according to the purpose of our God, we shall be

conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29).

A passing glimpse of the glory of the One to whom we are to be conformed has been vouchsafed even in this scene. And while we wait for the full accomplishment of this wondrous thought of the heart of God, the blessed responsibility rests upon us of being “transfigured” daily by the renewing of our mind; and we learn that this responsibility can only be met by the blessed occupation of gazing continually upon the glory of the Lord. Thus engaged, we are “transfigured” into the

same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; and while so employed, we wait every moment in the expectation of the time when we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, when our transfiguration will be finished, when we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.<sup>96</sup>

### 3. What Did the Lord Say That Some Would See?

Thus, “some,” namely Peter, James, and John, were to see:

1. “the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matt. 16:17);
2. “the kingdom of God come in power” (Mark 8:39); and,
3. “. . . the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:27).

The wording is suitable in each case to the character of the gospel in which it is found -- as is the absence of the transfiguration in John. The differences in the Synoptists are divinely inspired as is the omission of the Transfiguration in John.

Regarding the transfiguration in Matthew, note that the title (Son of man) that the Lord took was indicative of His rejection. While it is found in all the gospels, it has a special, dispensational/governmental bearing in Matthew -- in Matthew His rejection is so marked (Matt. 11-12), with the consequent introduction of the subject of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13). The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom by John (Matt. 3), the Lord (Matt. 4), and the disciples (Matt. 10) was rejected as included in His person being rejected (Matt. 11-12). The mystery aspect of the kingdom (Matt. 13) is brought in meanwhile during which the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom is in suspension, but yet the rejected Son of man must necessarily come in His kingdom (Matt. 16:27).

Mark presents the Lord Jesus as the perfect Servant-Prophet. What answers to His character and service is that the kingdom of God will come in power, though His ministry in perfect service was rejected while here.

Luke very much brings out the moral side, and connections, of matters. In keeping with this we have the simplest statement -- that some would see the kingdom of God. It was God’s kingdom.

John, who was the only writer of a canonical Gospel who was present at the Transfiguration, omits it in His gospel. He leaves out the transfiguration altogether; because his proper work was to dwell, not upon Christ’s outward manifestation to the world as Son of man in His kingdom, but on His eternal glory as the only-begotten Son of God; or, as he says himself, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of

---

96. *The Christian Friend*, 1880, pp. 174-176.

the only-begotten of the Father.”<sup>97</sup>

#### 4. When Did Some See This?

There are two things that strike one on reading these scriptures:

- (a) it appears from Matthew as if the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom was proximately close; and,
- (b) the second thing is that our Lord said that some would not die until they had seen the kingdom come in power.

The two points noted are deliberately separated because, in fact, they do not, and did not, occur at the same time. The first has not yet occurred while the second occurred about eight days after the Lord spoke about this matter.<sup>98</sup>

The fulfilment of what our Lord said to the disciples concerning “some” seeing the kingdom before they died is determined by two facts:

1. The two time references, “After these words, about eight days” (Lk. 9:28) and, “After six days” (Matt. 17:1, Mk. 9:2), present no chronological difficulty. They saw about eight days after the Lord spoke of it, while “about eight” comes after “after six” days. It is a matter of enquiry why the two different ways of indicating the time were used.<sup>99</sup>

97. *The Bible Treasury*, 4:161.

98. A false view of this is found in the Preterist notion that these things occurred in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Preterists note that “some . . . who would not taste of death” were still living in AD 70 when that destruction took place. That Christ came in AD 70 is nonsense involving tortuous explanations unworthy of Christians subject to God’s Word. See *Thy Precepts* July/Aug. 1999 (20:4) and following, for some examination of Preterism, especially the fundamental evil of “Full Preterism.”

99. Six days was the appointed time of labor (Ex. 20:9), fashioned upon the fact that on the seventh day in Gen. 1, God rested. It is Matthew and Mark who speak of “after six days.”

In Matthew, the King, yet the rejected Son of man, had finished His testimony and went up the mount after the appointed time of testimony. He descended and overthrew the power of the enemy (Matt. 17:14-21), a preview of the power of the kingdom in His hands. He then spoke of His decease He would shortly accomplish at Jerusalem (Matt. 17:22-23), for the divine order is: the sufferings and the glory to follow (Luke 24:26).

In Mark we see the perfection of Christ’s service as the great Servant of God. “After six days” points to the completion of that work. Descending from the mountain, He spoke to them of His rising from the dead (Mark 9:9-10). The time of service had been completed, though by grace He might serve on the way to Jerusalem.

Then we come to Luke who speaks of “about eight days.” Including the day on which the Lord spoke, as well as the day of the Lord’s Transfiguration (inclusive reckoning, as so often in Scripture), allows the Spirit of God to connect the numeral eight with the Transfiguration in order to point to something new, a new beginning. (We might note that the actual day was the seventh.) It certainly is ‘new’ that in Luke we learn what the subject of conversation was:

(continued...)

2. Then there is the Apostle Peter’s inspired testimony that on the mount they saw “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 2:16-18). We should observe that the notion that Matt. 16:27 shows that Christ would actually return, in some way or other, in the first century AD is erroneous. Really, is it so difficult to continue reading from the last verse of Matt. 16 to the first verse of Matt. 17 to find the fulfilment; or to learn what the fulfilment was from 2 Pet. 2?

#### 5. What Did Some See?

In the Gospels the kingdom was presented as entailed with the acceptance of Himself -- embodied in Him, so to speak, so that to reject Him included rejecting the kingdom for a chimera of their own. Thus, in the Transfiguration, the kingdom is bound up in His Person: 2 Pet. 2:16 says they were eyewitnesses of His majesty, the power and coming of the Lord. Observe how it is His Person that is before us in all this.

Moreover, as the Lord said to the Sadducees, God is the God of the living, as our Lord showed by quoting about the burning bush (Mk. 12:26, Lk. 20:37). God remained the God of existent fathers of Israel. But giving God’s word to a Sadducee will not change his mind. Moses and Elijah also existed. Nor were either of them experiencing soul-sleep in heaven. The dead are conscious. And is it really necessary to point out that the three disciples were not experiencing a vision; or, a joint-vision?

#### The Change in our Lord -- Appearing in Glory

Both the body and the garments of our Lord were changed.

Matt. 17:2: “And his face shone as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.”

Mark 9:2-3: “And he was transfigured<sup>100</sup> before them: and his garments became shining, exceeding white [as snow], such as fuller on earth could not whiten [them].”

Luke 9:29: “And as he prayed the fashion of his countenance became

99. (...continued)

. . . his departure which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31).

His “departure” would include His resurrection, after which He departed from this world. Eight is a resurrection number. It embraces the day of His resurrection, the first day of the week.

100. {Concerning the meaning of “transfiguration,” the reader will find W. E. Vine’s comments in his *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, *in loco*, helpful:

METAMORPHOŌ (μεταμορφόω), to change into another form (*meta*, implying change, and *morphē*, form: . . . is used in the Passive Voice (*a*) of Christ’s transfiguration, Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke (in 9:2) avoids this term, which might have suggested to Gentile readers the metamorphoses of heathen gods, and uses the phrase *egeneto heteron*, “was altered,” lit., ‘became (*ginomai*) different (*heteros*)’; . . .

different and his raiment white [and] effulgent.”

Regarding a point in JND’s footnote to Matt. 17:5, observe that Luke, who emphasizes the Lord Jesus as perfect, dependent man, alone speaks of Him praying -- expressive of dependence. It is this Man, glorified, Who had become different in countenance.

Moreover, as seen, for one example, in the sun, moon, and stars, connected with the sun-clad woman of Rev.12 (Israel arrayed according to the purpose of God concerning her), we think of the sun as representative of supreme authority, the moon next in glory, as derivative authority (reflecting the sun directly), and the stars, dimmer, as lesser authorities. The coming King will be the supreme authority; therefore in Matthew 17:2 his face shone as the *sun*.

Mark simply states He was transfigured. In this gospel of His service He is transfigured for the kingdom. He will still be Servant,<sup>101</sup> but transfigured. Indeed, He will reign in righteousness (Isa 32:1) and be the only one who did not need to have the kingdom *taken away* from Him. After serving in this perfect discharge, He will *deliver up* the kingdom “to him [who is] God and Father, etc. (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

### ***The Persons of Moses and Elijah.***

Moses represents the law and Elijah the prophets, but especially as calling apostate Israel (so to speak) back to the law. The law and the prophets had testified to Christ’s kingdom and glory and here in this preview of it before the Lord’s departure via the cross, these two men (as well as the three disciples) are with the Lord and behold His transfiguration.

We are not told their physical condition. Moses’ body was buried by Jehovah and Elijah was brought up into heaven. We do well to avoid such speculations as that Moses must have been resurrected. Scripture does not say so, so we do not say so. As to his body, we leave it where Scripture leaves it -- buried. Yet Moses could communicate freely, as did Elijah. We read of no introductions, nor of how the disciples knew it was they.

### ***They, Too, Appear in Glory.***

And lo, two men talked with him, who were Moses and Elias, who, appearing in glory, spoke of his departure which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem (Luke 9:30-31).

That they appeared in glory is only stated in Luke. We may consider two matters on which this fact bears. First, this observation by J. N. Darby:

---

101. Our blessed Lord, who is God, over all, blessed forever (Rom. 9:5) will wear the Servant’s form forever -- and forever will we see the marks of the cross on Him Who loves us and has washed us from our sins.

We are told that they were with Him, and then that they appeared in glory. They share in the same glory as that in which He was manifested. And so as to us.

When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory {Col. 3:4}.

The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me {John 17:22-23}.<sup>102</sup>

What a blessed subject, fit for His saints now here and fit for His saints in glory! Think of that amazing scene in Rev. 5 and the new song in Rev. 5:10. One alone is worthy.

We have also on the mount of transfiguration a glorified Christ present on earth, along with glorified heavenly saints on earth, and in the presence of saints on earth not in glorified bodies. These are conditions suitable for Christ’s glory in manifestation on earth in the kingdom, I do not mean continuously, just as here it was not a continuous thing. The complaints against this mixture by those that oppose just such a future kingdom is met by this foreview of the kingdom glory.

### ***Peter’s Suggestion and its Implication***

They certainly saw with their eyes our Lord transfigured, eclipsing the representative of the law and the representative of the prophets -- the prophet particularly having called Israel from apostasy back to the law.<sup>103</sup> In the presence of the undeniable evidence of Christ’s

---

102. *Collected Writings*, 16:280.

103. There is no basis to speculate that the two witnesses of Rev. 11 will be Moses and Elijah. Elijah is already in a body suited to heaven and Moses will be resurrected at the time of the rapture and have his new body in heaven during the time the two witnesses testify. What? Moses and Elijah come to earth *in order to die*? and be raised again 3 1/2 days later? -- Moses to be resurrected twice? -- Elijah taken to heaven, already bodily fit for heaven, and then to die here? Nor will Enoch, who has been translated and made fit to dwell in heaven all these years while we are down here, not having died, be one of the two. Elijah’s future role in view of Christ’s coming is not developed in Scripture.

The two witnesses will be two prophets raised up and given power for a short time, staying in Jerusalem, the remnant having fled, as the Lord said in Matt. 24, and then on the 1260<sup>th</sup> day be killed and then ascend to heaven 3 1/2 days later.

The two witnesses have a Moses-like and an Elijah-like testimony regarding apostate Israel, because of the trampling on the law and because of the apostasy, but that is not proof they are Moses and Elijah.

Finally, the two sons of oil in Zech. 4 are the two millennial offices of Christ as Priest and King, when upon his throne (Zech. 6:13). He Himself is the great millennial light depicted by the candelabra fed continuously with oil. The oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit by Whom Christ always

(continued...)

glory, Peter suggested equalizing them, though he gave his Lord precedence:

Matt. 17:4: "Lord, it is good we should be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: for thee one, and for Moses one, and one for Elias."

Mark 9:5: "Rabbi, it is good that we should be here; and let us make three tabernacles, for thee one, and for Moses one, and for Elias one."

Luke 9:33: "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

Why did Peter speak this way?

Mark 9:6: "For he knew not what he should say, for they were filled with fear."

Luke 9:33: "not knowing what he was saying."

The thought of being there on the Mount was much more comfortable for Peter than the Lord speaking of His death and going to Jerusalem. However, matters are not as we wish, but according to His appointment.

Fear was not a spiritual reason for talking. Peter, who had confessed Him as the Son of the Living God, as revealed to Him by the Father (Matt 16), yet not only did not know what he should say -- saying nothing would have been quite in order -- he did not understand that he was equalizing the three in the very face of the Lord's eclipsing the other two in glory and majesty. However great the other two, and they were very great, the other two were but servants while He, though a Servant, was the Servant-Son, the Son of the living God.

W. Kelly remarked quite pointedly on depreciating the Lord.

Now it was not merely that the Father was thus maintaining the glory of the Lord Jesus at the very time when one who ought, most of all, to be exalting Him was really depreciating Him -- most unintentionally, because there is no putting of the Lord with any other that would give Him His just place. The very thought of placing any, however excellent, on a level with the Lord Jesus is reprehensible. Certainly Moses and Elijah were most incomparable among (I will not say the sons of men, but) the children of God. Elijah that had gone up to heaven in a chariot of fire! Moses whom Jehovah had buried, about whose body even the archangel had fought with the devil! Certainly, the man that had been with God without food for forty days and nights, and the man that had closed his career on earth thus to be in heaven, these were men to speak of, if of any. But this very thing brings out the supreme glory of the Son; and this I will say, beloved friends, that a more instructive principle there cannot be. You will find, if you search, that almost all failure, both in doctrine and in conduct, is attributable to this -- low thoughts of Christ. I do not mean now thoughts that are evil, thoughts that are

103. (...continued)

did all things. This has nothing to do with the two witnesses.

Speculation is a bane of the exposition of Scripture. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, not by speculation.

untrue, but I mean that the power of faith is always the taking in and subjecting our souls to the glory of the Son of God. This is the faith that overcomes the world. It is not merely that He is the Christ, that He is the King of the coming kingdom. Perfectly true; but He is the Son, and if the kingdom brings in the heirs of the kingdom, and those that enjoy the kingdom, the Son brings in God, and God as He, the Son, knows Him, and as the Father knows the Son; and there is none that comprehends the Son but the Father. And it is remarkable He does not say, "To whomsoever the *Father* will reveal," but, "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal." The Father does not reveal all He sees in the Son. And I am persuaded that the reason is this -- that there is a depth in the very fact of the Son of God having taken manhood that transcends all possible knowledge, except of God the Father; that there is therefore a depth in it, and a secret, too, that He will not have broken. And there is where the prying mind of man loses itself. He desires to know that secret, and, consequently, unable to loose the knot, he cuts it in some violent method of his own mind -- the source of all heresy. But I was not speaking of it merely in reference to heresy, but also as to the appreciation of Him day by day; for what a strength it is where His glory is before our eyes, and where each question that arises just exercises our hearts in answer to the Lord -- Himself the answer to all difficulties -- the Son of God!

Well now, that was where Peter failed. He thought to exalt and enhance the glory of Christ, but he was altogether beneath God's thoughts. "This is my beloved Son"; and how did He show it? He says, "in whom I am well pleased." It is not merely He. Peter was thinking of his being so pleased with the Son that he would like Him to be with such wondrous men as Moses and Elias. It is, "In whom I am well pleased"; and why so? Why so? Just because He is His beloved Son; that is, it has not any connection with Peter at all, but with God Himself in this relationship out of all time, that is infinite as God Himself is. "Hear ye him." <sup>104</sup>

### *The Shekinah*

Peter having thus wrongly spoken, the cloud of Jehovah's glory, the Shekinah, appeared:

Matt. 17:5: "a bright cloud overshadowed them."

Mark 9:7: "a cloud overshadowing them."

Luke 9:34: "a cloud and overshadowed them."

2 Pet. 1:17: "such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory."

JND has a footnote in his translation to Matt. 17:5:

The cloud covered, without darkening them; it was bright -- the excellent glory: 2 Pet. 1:17. The word was used in the LXX for the cloud which took possession of the tabernacle and filled it with glory, Ex. 40:34-35: see Mark

104. The Bible Treasury, NS 8:231, 232.

9:7.

No doubt it was the Shekinah, the cloud that first appeared in Ex. 14 and stood between Israel and the pursuing Egyptians. Next it came upon, and into, the tabernacle to the mercy seat upon the Ark of the testimony, where Jehovah, the God of Israel vouchsafed His presence in their midst. Then upon the day of atonement Aaron took hot coals from the altar of burnt-offering, in a pan, and went into the holy of holies, where he placed the special incense that points to the Person of Christ. A cloud went up from the incense on the hot coals and came before the Shekinah between the cherubim on the mercy-seat. I believe the cloud of incense enveloped the mercy-seat. As J. T. Armet said, whereas righteousness can meet the claims of righteousness, it requires a cloud to meet a cloud. Only glory can meet glory!

The Shekinah came upon Solomon's temple but the time for its departure came with Judah's continued disobedience. The cloud that in vision Ezekiel saw depart from Jerusalem was not there during "the times of the Gentiles." It will return -- just as surely as it appeared on the mount of transfiguration. I suggest we not think of it returning at the instant when the Lord Jesus appears in glory (Rev. 19). There is a short time following when the enemies are struck down, sequentially, Israel is regathered, then Gog destroyed, and the kingdom set up on the 1335<sup>th</sup> day (Dan. 12) from the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Dan. 9. Then, the millennial temple must be rebuilt (Ezek. 40-48) and then the time will come for the Shekinah to return by the East gate of that temple (Ezek. 43).

Concerning who the cloud overshadowed, it was the Lord, Moses, and Elijah. The words, "they entered," likely refer to Moses and Elijah.

The "*they* entered" refers to Moses and Elias, but it is a difficult matter of interpretation.<sup>105</sup>

Concerning the Father's words, see section (6) below.

### ***(6) What Did Some Hear?***

#### ***Our Lord's Conversation with Moses and Elijah***

And lo, two men talked with him, who were Moses and Elias, who, appearing in glory, spoke of his departure which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem (Luke 9:30-31).

The subject of conversation is only given in Luke, the gospel of the Lord's perfection as man, with holy humanity (Luke 1:35). It is very human for these three persons to have a distinct subject to their conversation.

It was not about the kingdom glory He will take, even though Moses and Elijah beheld this preview of His glory; no, but rather the path through which that glory

will be reached. The path is the sufferings first and the glory to follow, as our Lord told the two on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:26; see 1 Pet. 1:11); the cross first, then the crown. *This is the path to which the Christian is called.*

Mary of Bethany was ahead of the disciples. Without being privy to this conversation, she understood His words about His death, said elsewhere, and anointed Him ahead of time. How precious this was to Him! May we listen attentively to what He says for the purpose of acting on it for His pleasure!

Yet He rode into Jerusalem as Zech. {9:9} predicted. The heart of fickle man was used of God to accomplish the cross. Yes, the first man is fickle; the second man is steadfast. Regarding His disciples, in Luke 19:11 we learn that they thought that the kingdom was about to be manifested. Their minds were fixated on the coming kingdom. His was fixed on accomplishing the Father's holy will. Oh, how we should love that holy will!

Note again that in this gospel He is seen praying (Luke 9:28). This is an additional conversation. It was communion with the Father. Is there nothing for us to learn in that?

There is one further thing to note in this matter of the subject of conversation appearing in Luke. Luke contains numerous pointers to the sovereignty of God. This is seen here in the words "his departure which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem." This was a divine certainty, a sovereignly brought about event. Oh, to understand better the divine design in the gospels!

### ***What the Father Said***

As a consequence of what Peter said, and while he was yet speaking, the Father interrupted Peter. This voice terrified them and they fell on their faces. They did not yet have the Spirit of Sonship whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

More was involved than the kingdom glory; it is the dignity and position of our Lord's Person. W. Kelly remarked on the far-reaching significance of "Hear him":

And there comes in another point, beloved brethren, that I wish to trace, and that is that this is really what was about to be unfolded in the New Testament. What is the New Testament? The New Testament is the evolution -- if I may say so -- of this little word, "Hear ye him." It is God unfolding the glory of the Son to us. All that He was, as revealed in the Gospels, the Epistles, or whatever part of the New Testament it may be, is precisely this very thing that was summed up in these few words, "Hear ye him." That is, whatever might be the blessedness of Moses and Elias, of the law and the prophets, they have their place, but their best place was to bear witness of Him. And now it was not merely a *witness* of Him. It was Himself; He was *come*. And one, therefore, who had an adequate sense of the glory of the Son of God would not care to be listening to the servants about Him, now that he had an opportunity of hearing Himself. "Hear ye *him*." Accordingly,

105. *Additional Writings of J. N. Darby*, 1:122. But see *Collected Writings*, 16:280.

when the disciples heard it they fell on their faces and were sore afraid; and Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes they saw no man, save Jesus only.

There it is, that the Father leaves, as it were, the disciples in the presence of Jesus only; and the greatest possible honor, and also the proof of the value of Moses and Elias was this, that they bring out the superior glory of the Son of God; they make way for it. They are finger-posts to direct to Him, but then there is no greater mistake than to be occupied with what merely directed to Him; it is Himself. The New Testament, then, is the revelation of that which the Father has to tell us of the Son -- not all that He knows, but all that which is for His own glory in making known His Son to us.<sup>106</sup>

It is remarkable that Luke, who presents the perfect manhood of the Lord, gives here another quite human touch.

Luke 9:36: And as the voice was [heard] Jesus was found alone: and *they* kept silence, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen. How human to talk about one's experiences, yet the disciples did not do so in those days (apparently before the cross).

### 7. *Peter's Inspired Comments on the Transfiguration*

For we have not made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, following cleverly imagined fables, but having been eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God [the] Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight; and this voice we heard uttered from heaven, being with him on the holy mountain (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

In *The Bible Treasury*, NS 5 there is a series of articles on 2 Peter by W. Kelly, giving a detailed verse by verse exposition. Here we will look at what JND wrote in the Synopsis, 5:310-313:

❖ The apostle is speaking, as his words plainly show, of the transfiguration. I notice it here, in order to mark more evidently that in his thoughts of the Lord's coming he does not go beyond His appearing in glory. For the moment He was hidden from those who trusted in Him: this was a great trial of their faith, for the Jews were accustomed, as we know, to look for a visible and glorious Messiah. To believe without seeing was the lesson they had to learn; and it was a magnificent support to their faith, this fact, that the apostle, who taught them, had, with his two companions, seen, with their own eyes, the glory of Christ manifested -- had seen it displayed before them, together with that of former saints who share His kingdom.

106. *The Bible Treasury*, NS 8:232.

At that time Jesus received, in testimony from God the Father, honor and glory; a voice addressing Him from the excellent glory -- from the cloud, which was to a Jew the well-known dwelling-place of Jehovah the Most High God -- owning Him as His well-beloved Son; a voice which the three apostles also heard (even as they saw His glory), when they were with Him on the holy mount.<sup>107</sup>

We see that it is here the glory of the kingdom, and not the dwelling in the Father's house for ever with the Lord, which occupies the apostle. It is a manifestation to men living on the earth; it is the power of the Lord, the glory which He receives from God the Father as the Messiah, acknowledged to be His Son, and crowned with glory and honor before the eyes of the world. It is into the everlasting kingdom that the apostle wishes them to have an enlarged entrance. It is the power and glory that Christ received from God, which the apostle saw, and to which he bears testimony. We shall indeed have this glory, but it is not our portion, properly so called: for this is within the house, to be the bride of the Lamb, and it does not display itself to the world. With regard however to the assembly the two things cannot be separated; if we are the bride, we shall assuredly participate in the glory of the kingdom.<sup>108</sup> To the Jew, who was accustomed to look for this glory (whatever might be his idea respecting it), the fact of the apostle's having seen it was of inestimable importance. It was the heavenly glory of the kingdom, as it shall be manifested to the world; a glory that shall be seen when the Lord returns in power (compare Mark 9:1). It is a communicated glory which comes from the excellent glory. Moreover the testimony of the prophets relates to the manifested glory; they spoke of the kingdom and glory, and the brightness of the transfiguration was a splendid confirmation of their words. We have, says the apostle, the words of the prophets confirmed. Those words proclaimed indeed the glory of the kingdom which was to come, and the judgment of the world, which was to make way for its establishment on earth. This announcement was a light in the darkness of our world, truly a dark place, that had no other light than the testimony which God had given, through the prophets, of that which shall happen to it, and of the future kingdom whose light shall finally dispel the darkness of separation from God in which the world lies. Prophecy was a light that shone during the darkness of the night; but there was another light for those that watched.

For the remnant of the Jews, the Sun of righteousness should rise with healing in His wings; the wicked should be trodden as ashes under the feet of the righteous.

107. In Luke 9 the higher part of the blessing is brought before us. They feared when *they* entered into the cloud. God had talked with Moses from the cloud face to face, but here they enter into it. The heavenly and eternal character, what is perpetual as moral, is much more brought out in Luke.

108. Compare Luke 12, where the joy within the house is connected with watching; the inheritance with service.

The Christian, instructed in his own privileges, knows the Lord in a different way from this, although he believes in those solemn truths. He watches during the night, which is already far spent. He sees in his heart, by faith,<sup>109</sup> the dawn of day, and the rising of the bright star of the morning. He knows the Lord as they know Him who believe in Him before He is manifested, as coming for the pure heavenly joy of His own before the brightness of the day shines forth. They who watch see the dawn of day; they see the morning star. Thus we have our portion in Christ not only in the day, and as the prophets spoke of Him, which all relates to the earth, although the blessing comes from on high; we have the secret of Christ and of our union with Him, and of His coming to receive us to Himself as the morning star, before the day comes. We are His during the night; we shall be with Him in the truth of that heavenly bond which unites us to Him, as set apart for Himself while the world does not see Him. We shall be gathered to Him, before the world sees Him, that we may enjoy Himself, and in order that the world may see us with Him when He appears.

The joy of our portion is, that we shall be with Himself, “for ever with the Lord.” Prophecy enlightens the Christian, and separates him from the world, by testimony to its judgment, and the glory of the coming kingdom. The testimony of the Spirit to the assembly does this, by the attraction of Christ Himself, the bright morning star—our portion while the world is still buried in sleep.

The bright morning star is Christ Himself, when (before the day, which will be produced by His appearing) He is ready to receive the assembly, that she may enter into His own peculiar joy. Thus it is said, “I am the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16). This is what He is for the assembly, as He is the root and offspring of David for Israel. Consequently, as soon as He says “the morning star,” the Spirit, who dwells in the assembly and inspires her thoughts, and the bride, the assembly itself which waits for her Lord, say, “Come!” Thus, in Rev. 2:28, the faithful in Thyatira are promised by the Lord that He will give them the morning star; that is to say, joy

with Himself in heaven. The kingdom and the power had been already promised them according to Christ’s own rights (v. 26, 27); but the assembly’s proper portion is Christ Himself. In addition to the declaration of the prophets, with regard to the kingdom, it is thus that the assembly expects Him.

The apostle goes on to warn the faithful, that the prophecies of scripture were not like the utterances of human will, and were not to be interpreted as though each had a separate solution though every prophecy were sufficient to itself for the explanation of its full meaning. They were all parts of one whole, having one and the same object, even the kingdom of God; and each event was a preliminary step towards this object, and a link in the chain of God’s government which led to it, impossible to be explained, unless the aim of the whole were apprehended -- the revealed aim of the counsels of God in the glory of His Christ. For holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost, pronounced these oracles, one and the same Spirit directing and co-ordinating the whole for the development of the ways of God to the eye of faith, ways which would terminate in the establishment of that kingdom, the glory of which had appeared at the transfiguration. ❖

109. This is the construction of the sentence: “We have also the prophetic word confirmed, in giving heed to which ye do well (as to a light shining in a dark place), until the day shall dawn, and the morning star arise, in your hearts.”

To this the following by W. Kelly is added:

In 2 Peter 1 we read of *τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον*, the prophetic word, the known body of predictive truth, confirmed by the vision of God’s kingdom beheld on the holy mount of transfiguration. And the fact that both *προφητεία* and *γραφὴ ἡς* are anarthrous is strictly necessary in order to exclude every part of prophecy in God’s word from being its own solution. The article {“the”} with either would have been anomalous. Peter was guided perfectly, even in this, by the Holy Spirit. Every part of that word forms part of the great scheme for revealing Christ’s future glory, which the Holy Spirit carries out in men speaking from God as He alone was able to make good (The Bible Treasury, NS4:128).



## Chapter 9

### *The Various Commissions in the Gospels and the Acts*

#### *The Commission in Matthew 10*

The commission to the Twelve given in Matt. 10 preceded the moral rejection of the Lord which came out so forcibly in Matt. 12 where we see that the Lord was charged with using the power of Beelzebub. This was the sin against the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness.<sup>110</sup> As a consequence, in Matt. 13, the kingdom in mystery form began to be taught by our Lord.

A very helpful sketch of God's ways leading to the mission of the Twelve in Matt. 10 was given by J. N. Darby:

❖ Prophetically, it was declared that many of Israel should be turned to the Lord their God, through him who came in the spirit and power of Elias: he was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.<sup>111</sup> Note the last expression, for it gives the divine intention as to any Elias service, and what the essential character of the remnant is. It is not sovereign grace visiting a sinner of the Gentiles in his sins, but a people prepared for the Lord before He comes. To Mary it is announced that the child born of her on the earth should be called the Son of the Highest, and that the throne of His father David should be given Him. He was Jesus, i.e., Jehovah the Savior. Help to His servant Israel is the final subject of praise with Mary in the touching and beautiful interview between her and Elizabeth {Luke 1}. And the song of Zacharias (Luke 1:67-79) is wholly composed of the divinely-given celebration of God's having visited and redeemed His people, and raised up a horn of salvation for them in the house of His servant David -- a temporal salvation afforded -- promises to Abraham in favor of his earthly seed to be fulfilled. The whole is too clear and definite to need any comment: a remnant already waiting, a people prepared for Jehovah, full earthly deliverance from Him. These are the topics divinely given by inspiration on the occasion of the birth of Christ. That they were interrupted, for the accomplishment of brighter and more blessed purposes, by His rejection, is quite true {i.e., for the present heavenly work}; but to suppose that He was to invalidate them would be to subvert divine testimonies and destroy divine

110. For those who say Christ paid for every sin of everyone -- how about this one?

111. {Elijah will yet come; but John came in the spirit of Elijah, and faith could receive that in connection with Christ come as presented to the first man in responsibility.}

faithfulness. That it is only a remnant is clearly shown. He was for the fall, as well as for the rising up, of many in Israel {Lk. 2:34}. Further, all that passes, Mary's purification and the whole scene, places us on Jewish ground.

Matthew's whole gospel reveals to us the presentation of Christ to the Jews, and the substitution of the new divine order for the Jewish {order} on His rejection. Hence it becomes particularly important to see how far it assures us that, notwithstanding this new divine order, the old<sup>112</sup> is still according to the mind of God to be accomplished in its time. We shall find that the yet future testimony of the servant of God in Israel is expressly linked up with the service of Christ's disciples in His lifetime, passing over, as the prophets are wont to do, the whole intervening church period unnoticed. This evangelist, from the outset, introduces Christ as the accomplishment of prophecy and promise. The very genealogy itself, and Matt. 1:22, and Matt. 2:5, 15, suffice to point out this -- the last showing that Israel's history is taken up afresh in Christ, the true Vine, according to the principle of Isa. 49:5.

In the sermon on the mount the remnant are morally distinguished; the qualities of those who should have part in the kingdom, are clearly and fully stated in contrast with the current self-righteousness of the Jews. Two great principles characterize this teaching of the Lord -- the spiritual character of the law,<sup>113</sup> and the revelation of the Father's name. It is to be remarked that persecution is supposed, and reward in heaven presented as the fruit of it. Thus we have the Lord's teaching in Israel clearly and fully brought before us. Obedience to His teaching was like a man building his house on the rock; while Israel was warned he was in the way with God, and if he did not come to agreement with Him, he would be cast into prison till all was paid. Compare Isa. 40:2. It will be remarked, that all this is divine government, not divine salvation.

I pass by a multitude of indications of the same relationship of God with Israel, accompanied with warnings of the introduction of the new order of things, to draw my reader's attention to a chapter which brings the point which occupies us out into the fullest light. In chapter 10 Christ sends out the twelve. They were not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor to enter into a city of the Samaritans; but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and declare the kingdom of heaven at hand; to enquire who was worthy (i.e., seek the righteous remnant, not poor sinners), and repel with fullest condemnation, shaking off the dust of their feet, those who did not receive them. Though in Israel they were "as sheep in the midst of wolves": it was an

112. When I say the old, it is not, of course, under the old covenant. It was God's wisdom to accomplish all promised and predicted, but on the pure ground of grace. (See the close of Rom. 11.)

113. {Subsequently, JND repudiated the idea that the Sermon on the Mount is a spiritualizing of the law, as we saw when considering Matt. 5 - 7.}

ungodly nation. They were to seek the worthy ones in it, speaking peace everywhere, but that peace resting only on the sons of peace. But in Matt. 10:18 this goes on to circumstances out of the Lord's lifetime {i.e., to the time of the end}. They were to be brought before Gentiles, and the Spirit of their Father to speak in them; not only so, but they would be hated of all men for Christ's name sake, and when persecuted in one city, go to another; for they would not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man was come.

Now here we have a mission exclusively to Israel, carried on during the Lord's lifetime, carried on by the Spirit afterwards, in which they were to endure to the end -- a ministry which would not be closed nor completed, and still confined to the cities of Israel, till the Son of man came. How often do we see the prophets passing on from some notable circumstances in their day to "that day"! Here we find the Lord establishing a ministry exclusively to Israel, drawing out the remnant; carried on after Him by the Spirit, and carried on with the same objects still unfinished even when He comes as Son of man {i.e., the appearing in glory}. They have only to do with Gentiles as enemies, along with the wicked and hostile nation of the Jews. Nothing can be plainer in all its parts. They were, according to Jewish hopes and prospects, to gather out a remnant and prepare a people for the kingdom which was at hand. Such is the direct teaching of the Lord.<sup>114</sup>

### *An Outline of the Mission in Matthew 10*

#### **Matt. 9:35-10: Mission of the King's Messengers**

- (1) **Matt. 9:35-36: The King Does Works of the Power He Will Give to His Messengers**
- (2) **Matt. 9:37-38: The Need Pointed out**
- (3) **Matt. 10:1-4: Authority Given to the Twelve**
- (4) **Matt. 10:5-15: The Mission of the Twelve to Israel**
- (5) **Matt. 10:16-22: The Present and Future Testimonies**
  - (A) Matt. 10:16-20: The Circumstances of the Present Testimony
  - (B) Matt. 10:21-22: The Circumstances of the Future Testimony That Follows
- (6) **Matt. 10:23-33: Instruction Regarding Evil to Be Endured**
  - (A) Matt. 10: 23-27: Persecution on Their Mission to Israel
  - (B) Matt. 10:28-33: Confession Before Men in View of Persecution
- (7) **Matt. 10:34-42: Guidance for the Perfect Disciple and Christ's Recompense for the Evil Endured**

When we consider the commission in Matt. 28:18-20, we will deal with the false idea that Matt. 10:16-20 refers to the Christian epoch and will not deal with that here.

It is too bad that Matt. 10 did not start at Matt. 9:35, which really begins another

section from there to the end of ch. 10. We may view the passage in seven sub-sections. The first four (Matt. 9:35 - 10:15) have to do with the mission in view of the Lord's presence in Israel, before His rejection. The last three have to do with taking up the mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel after the Lord's rejection and after the epoch of the kingdom of the heavens in its mystery form -- which places the revival of this mission in the time of the end. Following this outline of Matt. 9:35 - ch. 10, some matters will be examined at more length.

1. Matt. 9:35-36. The Lord preached that the kingdom of the heavens was at hand, and healed every disease and bodily weakness. These were "works of power of the age to come" (Heb. 6:5), i.e., the age when He would reign over Israel -- the millennium. The blessed, compassionate One saw that the crowds were harassed and cast away as sheep having no shepherd.

2. Matt. 9:37-38. He spoke to His disciples that the harvest (in Israel) is great but that there were few workman; supplicate the Lord of the harvest, therefore, that He send forth workmen unto His harvest to testify. We may, of course learn from the principle in this without forcing the text in any false meaning.

3. Matt. 10:1-4. He communicates power, i.e., authority to exercise the powers of the age to come that He Himself had been doing. This power was given to the Twelve, here named, and was manifested in them in their mission. Judas -- who was a Judas from the beginning -- is included. Matt. 7:21-23 should be read here in connection with Judas.

4. Matt. 10:5-15. The mission is given to find the "worthy," i.e., the remnant, of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Proclaim the kingdom and show the works of power of the coming kingdom. The dust of their shoes was to be shaken of against the unworthy house or city. This part of the mission was carried out while Christ was here, and before the Lord began teaching the kingdom in the mystery form it was to take (Matt. 13) consequent upon the sin against the Holy Spirit, involving His rejection (Matt. 12).

5. Matt. 10:16-22. Verses 16-20 refer to the present time, and what they will endure after Christ's rejection. Note that the nations are noted in Matt. 10:18, but the mission itself on which the Lord had sent them excluded the nations (Matt. 10:5). The Spirit of their Father shall speak in them. God is with them in these trials concerning their testimony after the Lord's rejection. Following the present epoch there will be a future mission introductory to the millennial salvation (Matt. 24:14). The future mission is connected with the mission they just received. It tells the proclaimers of the coming kingdom what they shall endure. Some shall be martyred (cp. Rev. 6:10) but he that has "endured to the end" of the tribulation period will be saved from death to enter the kingdom.

6. Matt. 10:23-33. These verses return to the end of v. 15 and instruct them and strengthen them for the evil that must be endured, although they shall not have

114. *Collected Writings*, 11:143-144.

completed the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes (v. 23) -- this shows the connection of the mission on which they had just been sent by the Lord with the epoch just preceding Christ's manifestation in glory to set up the kingdom.

7. Matt. 10:34-42. Guidance for the perfect disciple -- who is not above his teacher (v. 24) but should become as his teacher and Lord. There are various truths in this passage that we do well to apply to ourselves.

Following is a survey of the passage by J. N. Darby. This will be augmented by comments from other places in his writings where he has written about this passage.

❖ In chapter 10 He calls His twelve disciples and sends out laborers, giving them power, a new proof of the divine person with whom they had to do. It is not merely that He works miracles, a testimony to divine clemency come into the world, but He can give power to others to work them -- power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease.

I have remarked that Matthew gives an order in his recital which is the mind of the Spirit as to the bearing of the facts (that is, after the birth {of Christ} and before the last scene at Jerusalem). The whole history, as such, between these epochs we have seen given in one verse at the end of Matt. 4. We have here first the whole number of apostles chosen, as we see in Luke, after prayer, before the sermon on the Mount. One finds at the outset of their commission how the testimony as a present service is, in this Gospel, confined to Israel as enjoying Emmanuel's presence, though it could not end there, closing at the same time by Israel's rejection of that Emmanuel. God's presence on earth could but be only for Jews, if He was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. The twelve are forbidden to go elsewhere. The way of the Gentiles they were not to tread, and no city of the Samaritans was to receive their visit. The lost sheep of the house of Israel were to be the objects of their care. They were to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. All evil was to be subject to them -- death itself, the power of the enemy, and the sorrows and human ills brought in by sin -- leprosy and all. And as they received gratuitously -- Jehovah's power to use in their hands in grace -- they were to use it in the same grace; and they were to trust His power and care equally and take no provision for the way. It was Jehovah who sent. They did His service, and the laborer was worthy of his hire. Jehovah's care was there, and they, as we read afterwards in Luke, lack nothing. Further, they were to seek out the godly remnant, inquire who was worthy in the city, and abide there, and the sons of peace were to receive a blessing. Those that refused this all but last testimony, and here treated as practically the last (there was only partially the seventy on His way to Jerusalem afterwards), were judged and rejected as worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. This verse closes the direct present commission. What follows from v. 16 continues indeed their service on the same mission, that is, exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but goes on beyond the Lord's rejection and on to His coming again

(v. 22).<sup>115</sup>

The full character of their mission as thus left to serve is gone into -- persecution, death -- but the Spirit<sup>116</sup> of their Father speaking in them, and a care over them which counted the hairs of their head. But this part of the chapter shows how deeply the Lord felt His rejection in Israel, noticed as we have seen all through. The full power needed would be given no doubt every moment, but the testimony would draw out the passions of men in a way that would break through every natural tie. Relations of nature divinely formed would not resist the hatred of the human heart against the testimony of God, and they would be hated of all men for Christ's name sake; strange feeling, which only the hatred of man's heart against God can explain! They would be brought before kings and governors, for so the Lord would bring this testimony before the great and before the Gentiles: the hatred of the Jews would do it, a plain testimony that we are here still in Israel. But the hatred would be universal: they were to endure to the end. They were to go, when persecuted in one city, to another; nor would have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of

---

115. The distinction at vv. 15, 16, is plainer than ever to me. To the end of v. 15, it is the presence of Emmanuel upon earth, disposing of everything on earth for those He sends out; compare Luke 22:35-37. From v. 16 the Lord is away, and they are left to the effects of the Cross themselves. In the first fifteen verses we have a divine Person dealing in grace with the Remnant in Israel -- seeking them; afterwards, the Spirit with sheep among wolves -- hostile, Gentile rulers -- three against two, and two against three in one house -- hated of all men, and enduring to the end, but cared for, and that by their Father, and not to fear. In the first part, Emmanuel gives power, seeking the remnant in Israel; the second, the Son of man is coming. The difference is striking and clear (*Notes and Comments*, 5:127).

116. {The Spirit of their Father speaking in them is not more than would take place then. The Father's name was revealed by Christ to them, and the Spirit would be here, not the seal but the Spirit of prophecy (*Notes and Comments*, 4:291).

They were on the ground of the Matthew testimony -- the Father's name revealed to them, sent forth from Jesus announcing the Kingdom of heaven's being at hand. Only when brought before kings and rulers of the Gentiles, there is the additional fact of the Spirit of their Father helping them, and the ministry is carried on in the presence of a hostile people. They are *Maschilim* (the instructed). It is not redemption, or what we call the Gospel, but the proximity of the Kingdom -- not Christ's personal ministry, nor is the Holy Ghost presented as the Comforter sent down, though when sent down, He might act in this way. The disciples are placed in the revelation of the Father's name as Christ revealed it when on earth, and their Father's Spirit speaks in them. It is the kind of testimony, or position of rendering it, which is consequent on Psa. 1 and 2. They have to endure to the end. They will not have accomplished their service till the Son of man be come -- that brings us to Psa. 8. It is not laid upon the basis of a Son of man suffering, though most of the testimony went on after the fact, and led to all their trials, but they are a Remnant suffering from a hostile and wicked nation, and from perverse and rebellious Gentiles. They are in view of a coming Son of man whom God has made strong for Himself. As to the spirit of the nation -- "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." They are for the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Jerusalem is not definitely part of the scene (*Notes and Comments*, 5:77).}

man came. It was Christ's portion. They had called the Master of the house Beelzebub: He looked at it fully; they must face it, if they were in the place of testimony; enough for them to be as He. But they were not to fear, all would come out and they were to be out in open daylight in service; death might be there on the road, they were not to fear but Him, who could judge and deal with body and soul both. But it is remarkable how the Lord, as to Himself and them, takes the power of evil for granted, though God was with full care of His own above all; yet till judgment came as to the present manifestations of power, evil reigned (compare Rev. 2:10); for He, the power of God, was about to be rejected, and all this power of evil pressed upon His spirit in sending them out. Now indeed as Emmanuel present He guarded them, but in this second part the presence of the Spirit marks Him gone, and already treated as Beelzebub. Such warning is not found (though the fire was already kindled) in the first fifteen verses: but He knew His portion, and warned them of theirs. But they were of value to God, and not to fear. He is to be confessed before men at all cost. But nature and the flesh, which, as to power, He could have restored, were over in His rejection. What man broke through in hatred to God they must give up in devotedness to Christ.

The closing of the old creation is not here doctrinally taught, but the deep feelings of the Lord, as to the practical effect of the coming in of what was divine into the scene of man proved apostate by its effect, are wonderfully portrayed. It is not only the warning to the disciples (vv. 21, 22), when the enmity is spoken of, but the general effect of His coming (vv. 34-36). Peace on earth was not the word now, but enmity in the closest relations. Owning the Lord is intolerable to man. The closer the relationship, the greater the hostility. But Christ came a test of everything, and as His presence and the true confession of Him awakened hostility, so the heart of His servant must take Him, the new divine thing, instead of everything. The world had proved the incompatibility of the old and the new nature as it was and grace, and the servant and minister of grace must give up all (v. 37). Christ tests the heart as well as the world. He was the rejected One. His servant must take up the cross and follow Him. Natural life was of course the track of nature, and that must be given up too in nature to find it new with God. But then they were thus associated with Christ, and he that received them received Him. The recognition of the testimony come into the world was the reception of Him of whom it spake, and the reception of Him was the reception of Him who sent Him, and whose Witness in the world He was. This was the turning-point, the owning Him, His name and word, if a cup of cold water only was given. The difference of verses 1-15, though the principle of

testimony was the same, with verses 16 to the end is very marked; <sup>117</sup> the power of the then final testimony with judgment on him that did not receive it, while He was there present as Emmanuel, and the moral mark in the world of a rejected Savior. His grace continued in patience, but the fact that He was called Beelzebub had borne its witness in His soul. The present was a final testimony in Israel; the rest, the witness of a rejected Savior; but all in Israel, save as it brought them as guilty before Gentiles.

This rejection and the entire change of dispensation and ground of relationship with God are fully brought out in the chapters which follow. When I say relationship, none could really be but on the new ground of grace; but I speak of God's ways. The Lord as yet continued His testimony in the midst of Israel. And thus the chapter (11) gives us a full view of the true position of the witnesses God had sent, and the real place Christ held; His place as founded on His person and personal grace contrasted with His coming after John in His service. <sup>118</sup>

### *The Commission in Matthew 28:18-20*

It is quite clear in the Word of God that the 12 apostles did not carry out the commission given in Matt. 28. This commission is to the nations, not to the Jews. In Gal. 2 we see that Peter is designated the apostle to the circumcision -- not to the uncircumcision -- and Paul to the nations.

Matt. 28 does not give "the marching orders for the Church." In 1 Cor. 1:16 Paul wrote:

For Christ has not sent me to baptise . . . ,

---

117. {Now here we have a mission exclusively to Israel, carried on during the Lord's lifetime, carried on by the Spirit afterwards, in which they were to endure to the end -- a ministry which would not be closed nor completed, and still confined to the cities of Israel, till the Son of man came. How often do we see the prophets passing on from some notable circumstances in their day to "that day"! Here we find the Lord establishing a ministry exclusively to Israel, drawing out the remnant; carried on after Him by the Spirit, and carried on with the same objects still unfinished even when He comes as Son of man. They have only to do with Gentiles as enemies, along with the wicked and hostile nation of the Jews. Nothing can be plainer in all its parts. They were, according to Jewish hopes and prospects, to gather out a remnant and prepare a people for the kingdom which was at hand. Such is the direct teaching of the Lord (*Collected Writings*, 11:145).}

118. *Collected Writings*, 24:140-143; see also pp. 101ff. See *Synopsis in loco*; *Synopsis*, 2:350; See *Collected Writings*, 24:4; *Notes and Comments*, 5:166-168; *Notes and Comments*, 4:290-291; See "Comparison of Luke and Matthew," *Notes and Comments*, 6:364-374.

There will be further comments on Matt. 10 when we consider the commission in Matt. 28.

In addition to his expositions of Matthew, for comments on certain verses see the following references. For Matt. 10:32, 33, see *Collected Writings* 11:337; for Matt. 10:23 see *Collected Writings* 24:277; 25:312, 347; for Matt. 10:28 see *Collected Writings* 7:17; for Matt. 10:29 see *Collected Writings* 10:345; for Matt. 10:24 see *Notes and Comments* 2:230.

though, of course, he baptized. But he had no commission from Matt. 28 to do so. His commission did not fall in with that in Matt. 28:18-20 -- strange, if Matt. 28:18-20 is "the marching orders for the church." In the commission in Mark there is baptism also. But Paul's commission is its own thing.

Peter's going to Cornelius (a Gentile) is a special case, and preceded by the lesson of the sheet let down with the unclean creatures in it {Acts 10:11}. This was connected with his having the keys of the kingdom {Matt. 16:19}. However, as to his special place, it was to the circumcision (Gal. 2:7), not to the Gentiles. And while I have no doubt Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, he does not do so as if he was apostle to the Hebrews. Peter was.

Another matter to be cleared in our thoughts is that neither the cross nor the formation of the church intercalated into the Mosaic age an "intercalated church age," and then the resumption of the Mosaic age after the end of that church age so that "the end of the age" would be the end of the church age. It is the end of the Mosaic age, an age which has not yet stopped. There was no such intercalation.<sup>119</sup> The church is above and outside the course of earthly ages, not being earthly. The cross ended the testing of the first man and it ended the Mosaic system spiritually. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 ended the external system by the governmental hand of God, another governmental thing specially noticed in Matthew (Matt. 22:7).

The Mosaic age continued on; and during its continued course God is doing a heavenly work, though the church is here in connection with responsible testimony -- in which it has failed most miserably. But the Mosaic age rolls on.

After the true saints forming the Church, the Assembly, are removed, God will form a godly Jewish remnant. Those composing this remnant are born again souls -- quickened -- but not standing in a relationship of known redemption for themselves. There is a problem with the expression that 'they will be *converted* at the sight of the Lord.' What does that mean? that they are not saints, nor quickened, until that point? It would be false to say so as well as a considerable misunderstanding of their standing before God. Yes, the due time of assured acceptance will arrive for them, but those composing the remnant will have been quickened souls all the time of their testimony during the time of the end. They will be brought under the blessings of the New Covenant, but that does not mean that before then they were not quickened. It behooves us to be careful with these matters and beware of being simplistic. Perhaps if we better understood our own place before our Father, and what the divine operations in our souls, by the Spirit, were, and are, we would be clearer regarding

119. The Mosaic age continued on but during the epoch while God leaves Israel scattered and peeled {Isa. 18:2,7}, He has, instead of dealing with Israel, interposed another work, the formation of a heavenly people. See *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vols. 1 and 2, available from the publisher.

saints of a former time and of the future time.

As far as the record in Scripture shows, the commission to the nations in Matt. 28 was not, in fact, carried out, as such, by the 12 apostles. The commissions in the other three gospels were carried out, and Paul had his own special commission as seeing Christ in glory. You may have noticed that the Twelve did not see the Lord in the glory, for the cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1).

The revelation of the three Persons of the Godhead having come out, that truth will not be lost after the present saints are removed. Of course, the relationship we Christians have to the three divine Persons is unique among all saints that were before us or will be after us. But that does not preclude knowledge of the fact that the Godhead has been revealed as a trinity of Persons. That fact does not preclude the Spirit of their Father speaking in them (Matt. 10:20). It seems to me that the Gospel of Matthew will be of special use to the future godly remnant of Israel. The close of Matthew has the commission they will carry out as regards the nations (i.e., the Gentiles). Matt. 24:14 refers to them carrying out the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom "in the whole habitable earth," while Matt. 25:31-46 shows the results. J. N. Darby wrote:

❖The Lord addresses them {the disciples} on the ground of the place which now belonged to Him, which He will fully take in power hereafter, which belonged to the risen Lord, being His in right of the new place into which He had entered as man.

All power is given to me in heaven and in earth {Matt. 28:18}.

All is not accomplished, all things not yet put under His feet, but it is His place as the risen Man who has glorified God and accomplished the work given Him to do. Hence He sends them forth beyond the limits of the King of Israel in Zion, that had been set forth fully in Matt. 10, then and on to the future. Here connected with the remnant of the Jews, associating them as brethren with Himself, having accomplished redemption, they were to disciple the nations, baptizing them (not to Jehovah, not to Messiah or the Son of David, but) to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that in which the one God of Israel was fully and completely revealed; teaching them to observe that which they had learned from Him on the earth; and He would be with them to the end of the age {"until the completion of the age"}.<sup>120</sup> It is thus before

120. {As to the expression "*this age*," we are accustomed to apply it to the church; but it is not here a question of the church, but of the introduction of the kingdom of heaven, Messiah being rejected by the Jews. What was the age in which the Lord was found with His disciples? Was it the church, or the dispensation of the church? By no means.

It was a certain age of this world, which was to end by reception of the Messiah, and the re-establishment of the law as a rule by the government of this Messiah. The people of Israel having rejected Him, this age becomes purely and simply *this present evil world (age)*, from which Christ delivers us, in the course of which God has set up His kingdom, in the way we have just spoken of (continued...)

the millennium, not the mystery of the church, nor the future gathering of all things. The former was revealed and confided to Paul, the latter to come in when the age was finished. Not the mission from Bethany (which the Acts follow throughout), not starting from Jerusalem nor beginning it as that did; but accepting the poor of the flock as brethren to Christ; they were to bring in, disciple all the nations on the footing of their relationship with Him as thus risen. It is well to notice what has been alluded to: -- the ministry in the Acts is not the accomplishment of this but of the mission in Luke, the book itself being, as is known, the continuation of his Gospel; nor was the ministry of Paul, who took up by a separate divine mission the evangelization of the nations {cp. Gal. 2}, the carrying out of this. His was more fully even yet a mission from an ascended and glorified Savior {Acts 9}, to which was added the ministry of the church. It connects itself even much more in its first elements with Luke. The ministry here established stands alone. The disciples {in Matt. 28:18-20} are not sent to Jews, as in Luke coming from an ascended Savior they were to begin at Jerusalem. Jerusalem is rejected, and the remnant attached to Christ (His brethren, and owned in this character) are sent to Gentiles. This, as far as scripture teaches us, has never been fulfilled . . . a new mission to the Gentiles is sent forth in the person of Paul and that connected with the establishment of the church on earth. The accomplishment of this mission in Matt. 28 has been interrupted, but there is the promise to be with those who went forth in it to the end

120. (...continued)  
(*Collected Writings*, 24:12).

Christianity is not the age, nor an age at all (*Collected Writings*, 10:267).

In the same way the end of this world (in Matt. 13 and other places) is not of this globe when it is consumed, but of this age or dispensation; a perfectly well-known phrase among the Jews who spoke of the *olam-hazeh*, this world or age, and the *olam-havo*, the age to come, the latter being the time of Messiah's reign (*Collected Writings*, 10:360).

Really this is not a dispensation. The Jews had a "this world" and "a world to come," "this age" and an "age to come." Messiah was to bring in the "age to come" {i.e., the millennial age}. The age of the law went on and Messiah did come, but they would not have Him, and the whole thing stopped {i.e., stopped as to the Mosaic system, but the age itself continued on}; then comes the church between that and His second coming; and this is why I said this is not strictly a dispensation, but when Messiah comes again, it will close this time, and then will be the last day of this age (*Collected Writings*, 25:243, 244).

See also *Collected Writings*, 13:15; 30:287; 8:14, 339; *Notes and Comments*, 5:25.

Not only Covenantism, but the Scofieldian system has also gotten in the way of apprehending the fact that we are presently in the Mosaic age. The testing of man closed with the cross (though the Mosaic age rolls on), for

they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24).

It is an (unintentional) insult to Them both to say that there is further testing of man after man's rejecting what is obviously the highest of all. May God graciously give His own light on these things.}

of the age {"Until the completion of the age"}. Nor do I doubt it will be so. This testimony will go forth to the nations before the Lord comes. "The brethren" {cp. Matt 25:40} will carry it to warn the Gentiles. The commission was given then, but we find no accomplishment of it. It connects the testimony with the Jewish remnant owned by a risen Lord of all, with the earth and His earthly directions, and for the present it has in fact given place to a heavenly commission, and the church of God.  
<sup>121</sup> ❖

❖ This mission {Matt. 28:18-20}, up to the present time, has never been accomplished. The mission to the Gentiles was formally transferred to Paul by those who were pillars among the apostles (Gal. 2), with divine authority from Jesus glorified, and by the direct mission of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4; 26:16-18).

It is possible the other apostles may have gone later; but the history which is given us in the word does not speak of it, unless it be in a very general and even vague verse at the end of Mark.<sup>122</sup> The apostles remained at Jerusalem at the time of the persecution which took place after the death of Stephen; then the gospel was carried to the nations by those scattered abroad, and later on committed to Paul. John is found in Patmos, left last of all to watch over the church in its decline. The last verses of Mark say that they went everywhere, and that the Lord wrought with them to confirm the preached word by the signs which it was granted them to perform. However it may be here in Matthew, the commission is given them. They were also to teach the baptized nations to observe all that Jesus had commanded the disciples, and He Himself would be with them to the end of the age. It is not the christian mission properly so called; this is found rather in John 20, Luke 24, and Mark 16.\*

\* Down to v. 6 of Mark 16 the same history as that of Matthew is found; in the last verses, that which we read at the end of Luke, and that which is found in John 20. The discourses of chapters 13 and 26 of Acts are connected, as those of Peter, with the mission mentioned in Luke. In the Gospel of Matthew it is not said they were to go and make disciples of the Jews, because the remnant is looked at as already separated from the nation, and associated with Christ. It is a kind of extension of ch. 10 of the same Gospel, where they are forbidden -- at least as to their mission at the moment then present -- to go to the Gentiles, indeed even to the Samaritans, but are told to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Here a wider mission is given them: they are to go and make disciples of the nations. This supposes that the work in the

121. *Collected Writings* 24:217, 218. See also 24:69, 72, 68-80; 25:312; 30:314-315; 18:59. Regarding the different commissions in the Gospels see *Collected Writings* 25:311-313; *Notes and Comments* 5:170-172, 175; 4:302-303; *Synopsis* 2:368n; 3:5; *Letters* 2:48. My impression is that JND contradicts the extract from him that is quoted above, in his paper, "The Closing Commissions in the Gospels," *Collected Writings*, 32:376-378.

122. {Heb. 2:3, 4 refers to the end of Mark. The epoch of these signs and wonders was closing. But the actual history given in the Word as to what was carried out, shows that it was the commissions in Mark, Luke, and John that were carried on, not that in Matt. 28}.

midst of the Jews is other than that of Matt. 10, and, in some respects, Matt. 24 only explains why the mission which is in question here applies exclusively to the Gentiles. The mission from heaven for the salvation of souls is naturally addressed to the Jews as to the Gentiles. This last is what we find accomplished in Acts: only the part which includes the Gentiles was transferred to Paul, as we have seen. <sup>123</sup> ❖

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Collected Writings*, 24:68-80 contains much help on Matt. 28.

F. W. Grant objected thus:

All nations shows the whole world to be the sphere in which the Kingdom is to be proclaimed, and cannot be the Gentiles only: Israel cannot be left out of such a commission. Certainly, they have not received the Kingdom, nor the King: they cannot be looked upon as an inner circle from which His messengers are to be sent out; and in Luke “repentance and remission of sins” are to be “preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (24:47). This is in fact the course that was pursued. By and by Paul is raised up of God to lead in the special Gentile work, and the other apostles, owning what God has done, give it up as apostles to Paul and Barnabas; but this is no failure on their part, nor change in the original plan. Paul still preaches “to the Jew first”; and if of the other apostles we have little scriptural notice, tradition scatters them variously among the Gentiles. Moreover, the commission given here in Matthew to baptize and teach is not one that we can limit in any way to the apostles, but must have wide enough application to embrace all who, in fact and according to Scripture, baptize and teach. <sup>124</sup>

1. The word “nations” appears in Matt. 4:15; 6:7, 32; 10:5; 10:18; 12:18, 21; 18:17; 20:19, 25; 24:9, 14; 25:32; and 28:19. These texts refer to the nations (Gentiles), not Israel. Matt. 21:43 is a special case, the word “nation” there referring to the New Israel under the New Covenant. So, “all nations” in Matt. 28 shows no such thing as that Israel is included, but rather shows the opposite, quite in accordance with Matthew’s usage of “nations,” and in accordance with the Jewish character of the book itself.

2. The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed for a witness to all nations (Matt. 24:14) by “an inner circle from which His messengers are to be sent out.” Just whom does the writer think will be sent out to preach the gospel of the kingdom if not just persons from that “inner circle”? The results of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom by the future godly remnant of Israel will be reviewed when the King separates the sheep from the goats when He shall have gathered the nations before Him, differentiating them from His brethren (Matt. 25:31-46), the Jews. Who are these, the King’s brethren, if not from that “inner circle”? The distinction of Israel, or the remnant, from “all nations” is both *implicit and explicit everywhere in Matthew*. The fact is that the commission of Matt. 28:18-20 does contemplate an

“inner circle from which His messengers are sent out.” The great company in Rev. 7:9-17 depicts the fruit of this preaching (outside the immediate dominion of the Beast). It is an earthly company though figurative language is used of God’s care for these Gentiles. <sup>125</sup>

3. The commission that included Jerusalem is found in Luke 24:47, not in Matthew. It does not follow from the fact that the commissions of Mark, Luke, and John were carried out, that therefore the commission in Matthew was carried out. Moreover, in Luke, “preached in his name to all the nations” means the Gentiles, but to begin at Jerusalem -- not to begin with Israel.

4. The only other point to notice is his use of baptizing and teaching not being limited to the Apostles. Agreed, but the commission not being limited to the Apostles certainly does not prove this commission is not to be fulfilled in the future. Indeed, the Apostles will not be part of the future, godly Jewish remnant from whom the preachers of the gospel of the kingdom will come.

Another objection to this being a commission in abeyance, but waiting to be carried out in the future, is the statement about the Father, Son, and Spirit connecting this commission with Christians. That seems a much more weighty consideration than the above objections. Indeed, an answer to a question in *The Bible Treasury*, NS 4:240 describes the “baptism to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” as “the special revelation of God proper to Christianity” and denies that the future mission to all the nations can “coalesce with Matt. 28:19”. However, the naming of the names of the divine Persons does not show that this commission must be restricted to Christianity. Even before the cross, the Son had declared the Father’s name. He had manifested the Father’s name to the men that the Father had given Him out of the world (John 17:6). They knew that the Father sent the Son (John 17:8 -- cp. Matt. 16:16-17; and the Sermon on the Mount). In John 17:26 He said:

And I have made known to them thy name, and will make [it] known; that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.

In sum, these objections to JND’s understanding of this commission not only violate the scope and character of Matthew’s gospel, they are seen to have no real merit.

The *entire* mission of Matt. 10 is towards Jews. It was begun by the Twelve, interrupted, and will be taken up again in the future by the godly Jewish remnant.

There are two distinct parts to, and objects of, the future preaching of the gospel of the kingdom by the godly Jewish remnant: (1) in Israel, in the future (Matt. 10); and (2) a mission to the Gentiles as in Matt. 28:18-20. The future mission to the Jews and the future mission to the Gentiles do not coalesce into one big mission.

123. *Collected Writings*, 30:315.

124. *Numerical Bible*, *in loco*.

125. A disbelieving posttribulationist may ask how such a remnant can do what the church has not accomplished in over 1900 years. That is God’s business, not ours to take care of.

Likely, the mission to the Jews will cease by the middle of the week when the godly have to flee (see Matt. 24; Rev. 12).

There is another reason why Matt. 10:21-22 ought not to be placed in the Christian epoch. Look at Matt. 10:22:

and ye shall be hated of all on account of my name. But he that has endured to [the] end, *he* shall be saved.

We may compare this with Matt. 24:10-13:

and ye will be hated of all nations for my name's sake . . . but he that has endured to the end, *he* shall be saved.

In Matt. 24, the hatred is seen to extend beyond Israel compared to the case in Matt. 10. It is, however, during the same epoch, not the present, but the future. The difference is quite in keeping, respectively, with the two missions.

As is the case in Matt. 10 concerning the names Father and Spirit, the name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Matt. 28:18-20 are mistakenly taken to indicate a Christian mission. I understand Christians thinking that is so in the case of Matt. 28. But it is no more valid than thinking that Matt. 10:20:

For ye are not the speakers, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you, means the Christian epoch. Note that it says "speaks in you," not "dwells in you," any more than the OT prophets speaking by the Spirit were indwelt by the Spirit as we Christians are. Here we have the Spirit and the Father spoken of, and in Matt. 16:16-17 we observe that the Father had revealed to Peter that Christ was the Son. Before we come to Matt. 28 we have Father, Son, and Spirit spoken of. I suggest that the baptism to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit in Matt. 28:19 does not warrant the conclusion that Matt. 28:19 must therefore necessarily mean a Christian mission. The future, godly Jewish remnant will be reading Matthew for their help, receive instruction from it (as Matt. 24 shows), and carry on both missions as energized by the "the Spirit of your Father."

Concerning the use of the names of divine Persons in these passages the following remarks by J. N. Darby are helpful.

❖ There was, in this, a revelation evidently much clearer, and relations different from those which the Jews enjoyed, as the people of Jehovah. These terms were not entirely unknown to the Jews; but they were always employed by the *prophets* in the prospect of times when there would be this clearer revelation to call the Gentiles, and when blessing would be manifested for the Jews in a new measure. "Kiss the Son" is a summons to the kings of the earth in Psalm 2, and the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit, whether upon the Jews and their posterity or upon all flesh, is sufficiently known. See, amongst others, in Joel {2}; in Isa. 44:3; see also Isa. 48:16. Before the accomplishment of these things, or at least before they are fully accomplished to the letter, the revelation has been made of what is their foundation in God, and this name of Father, of Son, and of Holy Spirit has proclaimed amongst the Gentiles. I do not think that it is here unity of the Son with the Father, and of the

church with Jesus by the Holy Spirit (that is taught elsewhere); but the revelation of the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the submission of the Gentiles by faith, in anticipation of that day when the Son will be manifested in power, and the Holy Spirit fully shed abroad. But this is very precious for us, because it shows us these things in God, and makes us see that there are not only certain acts of manifestation which will take place hereafter, but the truth of God, of which one can speak before these manifestations take place. For the knowledge which the Jews and the earth will have of the Son, for example in His reign according to Psa. 2 is very inferior, it seems to me, to the knowledge which we have of Him, as being in the Father and the Father in Him, one with the Father, hidden in God. It is the same person, undoubtedly, but we have a much deeper knowledge of what He is. Further, we learn, in thus comparing Psa. 2, that the preaching of the name of the Son does not necessarily suppose the blessings of the church: *now* it does, because God gathers the church in Him; but the call made to the kings to submit to the royalty of Christ in the last times is made in the name of the Son, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." We have acknowledged Him before {that coming time} through grace, and we know Him as one with the Father. In this Psalm it is spoken of Him as presented to the world in time, "Today I have begotten thee." <sup>126</sup> ❖

There remains the matter of the Lord's words:

And behold, *I* am with you all the days, until the completion of the age (Matt. 28:20).

J. N. Darby remarked:

. . . that there will be an accomplishment of this mission before the end of the age, and that the message of the gospel {of the kingdom}, here entrusted to the remnant, to the disciples, will be carried from Christ, of whom it remains always true (whatever be the state of things) that all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth. From Christ, I say, acting in this character, the message of this same gospel will be carried to all the nations, and Christ will be with the messengers even to the end of the age. <sup>127</sup>

Christ's "all power is given to me in heaven and earth" will enable and sustain the messengers to the end of the age, <sup>128</sup> through the operations of "the Spirit of your

126. *Collected Writings*, 24:74, 75 note.

127. *Collected Writings*, 24:77.

128. For the promise, the presence and succor of the Lord, is not only bound with the idea of the age, but it extends to its end, and we always remember that here, as in chapters 13 and 24, "age" in no way applies to Christianity as an epoch. Though Christianity might happen, and did happen, before the end of the age, the age already existed at that moment, and was a great measure run out; it was a period of the world's history in the Jewish point of view, which the presence of the Messiah was to terminate.



Father.”

“The completion of the age” is what the disciples had asked the Lord about: Tell us, when shall these things be, and what is the sign of thy coming and [the] completion of the age? (Matt. 24:3).

In Matt. 24:14 the Lord said:

And these glad tidings of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth, for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come.

“Then shall the end come.” The end of what? the end of the age, the end of the Mosaic age, the age the disciples were in, and which continues on presently, to be displaced by “the age to come,” i.e., the millennial age.<sup>129</sup>

The being with His disciples to the end of the age has nothing to do with Church matters. It is discipling the Gentiles. It is from a risen Christ in Galilee, not, as in Luke, ascending. It has the world for its field, but to disciple the nations, the Jews not being in question.<sup>130</sup>

“Not, as in Luke, ascending,” means that the commission in Luke has the ascension of Christ in view as giving it its character. This is the case at the end of Mark also. In John the ascension is also in view (John 16:25-29). The commission in Matthew does not have ascension in view. Respect the silences of the Spirit in inspiring the Word and seek the reason why. The commission is from the risen Christ, not with

128. (...continued)

Perhaps, employed in all the force of the term according to the circumstances in which the Lord spoke, this expression supposes Jerusalem existing but rejected, and, though rejected, the object of the thoughts of God, but of His thoughts in judgment, God going to put an end to all that, and after tribulations, to restore the city in blessing by the coming of the Messiah in glory. The gospel, sent to the Gentiles, might run independently of all that, for Jesus entrusts it to disciples outside Jerusalem, and as having abandoned it. Nevertheless, till it was judged and restored by the coming of the Messiah, and after the repentance of its inhabitants, the age could not end; so that when we have well considered the passages, we have here a gospel or mission of the disciples, independent of Jerusalem, from Messiah rejected here below, but having received all power in heaven and on earth; a gospel addressed to the Gentiles, Jerusalem being abandoned, to make of these nations disciples of Christ in the name, not of Jehovah, but of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; a mission, nevertheless, which (though independent of Jerusalem and coming from Christ, who had quitted it until it repent) is identified with the course of an age below, which supposes, before its end, Jerusalem the object of God’s thoughts and judgments (that is, Jerusalem under the Jewish point of view), and the center of all His thoughts, in judgment or in blessing, whilst this same gospel is propagated among the nations. For before the end of the age (supposed here by the Lord to be still in existence) Jerusalem will be all that anew (as it was so at the time the Lord was speaking), and yet more. It is a gospel, then, which may subsist among the nations at the same time that Jerusalem is the object of God’s thoughts, and anew the center of all His ways (*Collected Writings*, 24:78-79).

129. I am aware that “the end of the age” is an expression that may be used for a small epoch at the closing time of the Mosaic age as well as the terminal point of the age. I do not take the Lord’s use of the expression here to mean “I am with you up to the commencement of the end of the age or epoch.” Rather, He is with them to the terminal point of the Mosaic age, and then “the age to come” (Heb. 6:5) will be established by Christ’s power.

130. *Notes and Comments*, 5:56

ascension in view as forming that commission.

### ***Touch Me Not, For I Have Not Yet Ascended***

Seeing that this commission applies to the Jewish preachers in a coming period explains an interesting matter. In John 20:17 our Lord says to Mary,

Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

John views our Lord as come from the Father to accomplish the work that He was given to do and ascend to the Father. Meanwhile there would be the assembly, concerning which we get a picture typically in John 20:19-29. Mary would lay hold of Him as the risen Messiah in connection with Israel. No, says the Lord, I must ascend. But Matthew, as inspired by the Spirit, presents Christ especially as King and especially in His relation to Israel. In Matt. 28: 9 the women are seen holding Him by the feet and no hindrance is made. The lesson is that they lay hold of Him as the risen Messiah in connection with Israel. All power is given to Him and He is seen commissioning the remnant of Israel.

### ***Application of Matt. 28:19 to Christian Baptism***

J. N. Darby advocated that baptizing now be unto the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, nor is there the slightest hindrance to “baptizing and teaching” now. Just as certain things in the Sermon of the mount, given to the past remnant, can be applied now, and certain things in the mission in Matt. 10 may be applied now, so is it the case regarding some things in this commission for the future remnant. In the following note on baptism, also observe that F. G. Patterson brings to bear the position of the Lord that is in view when He gave the various commissions.

F. D. -- How was it that neither Jews nor Gentiles were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- the formulary in Matt. 28:19? Compare Acts 2:38; 10:48; and 19:5, &c.

A. -- When the commission of Matt. 28 was given, the Lord Jesus Christ was *present on* earth. (He is not seen as ascended in Matthew). And the commission to baptize is founded on resurrection only, not ascension; which brings in the body of Christ, formed by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven.

In Acts He was *absent in heaven*; and some, in finding the formulary of Matt. 28 not given in Acts, have supposed that the formulary was then changed to the name of Jesus. This I believe to be a mistake. First, because Acts being, generally speaking, historical, and not doctrinal scripture (though equally inspired), doctrines could not be {characteristically} founded on it; while at the same time it confirms doctrines given elsewhere. Next, the formulary once given is not changed, nor intended to be changed, and is to the name of the

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- the Trinity of the Persons in the Godhead, as we know the one true God in Christianity. For Christianity is the revelation of not only the unity of the Godhead, as in the Old Testament, but also the Trinity of the Persons -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The point in Acts is the recognition of Jesus as Lord when *absent*; and hence this reference to His name where the cases are recorded -- the persons baptized owning Him, being presented to Him thus.

It is striking, however, to notice how that in nearly every case recorded, the Holy Ghost has seen fit to change the words, and even the prepositions -- I have no doubt to prevent (with other reasons) its being taken up as a formulary. In Acts 2:38, it is, "In (*ἐν*) the name of Jesus Christ." In Acts 8:16, it is, "In (*ἐν*) the name of the Lord Jesus." In Acts 10:48, it is, "In (*ἐν*) the name of the Lord." In Acts 19:5, it is, "In (*ἐν*) the name of the Lord Jesus."

I believe the formulary of Matt. 27:19 to be the correct and only true one which should be used; and when used, I should in addition recognize the Lordship of Christ, presenting the person to Him as such.<sup>131</sup>

### *In Conclusion*

... the commission given in Matt. 28:19, 20, is certainly not towards the Jews. The terms of it exclude such a thought. "Go and make disciples of all the nations," said the rejected Messiah. Now "the nations" are always in contrast with Israel, and the Gentile nations only are meant. Of these they were to make disciples -- teaching them, not the law, but the precepts of the Lord Jesus; and baptizing them, not to the name of Jehovah, but to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The commission given in Luke 24:46, 47, is the one acted on throughout Acts. This was to begin at Jerusalem, of which city there is no mention in {the commission in the 28<sup>th</sup> chapter of} Matthew; and the order of the gospel in Acts was always to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. After the Church is complete, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4), the commission in Matthew will be fully carried out by the Brethren of the King, who will be with them to the end of the age, and the living nations will be judged according to the way these messengers and their message shall have been received (Matt. 25:31, 46).<sup>132</sup>

### *"Another Word as to the Commissions" in the Gospels*

❖ I add yet another word as to the commissions. Matthew links on, it is evident, to the Lord's power and service shown in Galilee; specially compare Isa. 9:1, where clearly in the desolation and judgment of Israel, and the separation of the disciples,

131. *Words of Truth* 7:60-61. See also *Words of Truth*, New Series 2:180. More about such things is found in A. C. Brown, *Baptism*, Present Truth Publishers.

132. *Simple Testimony*, 1:251-252 (1884).

and the Law and the testimony being sealed amongst them, its utter desolation, the light, as distinguishing it from other desolations, is shown to spring up, to have a Remnant just because it was utter desolation. This is applied (Matt. 4:15), to the Lord's sojourn in Galilee. The Kingdom of heaven is declared at hand, and repentance called for then, according to the prophecy. On the smiting of the Shepherd and the scattering of the sheep as so held together by Him, He tells them that when risen He will go before them into Galilee. Jerusalem having rejected Him, He returns into His own prophetic title in which blessing is to flow from Him. He is to be the Center and Source, whatever blessing may hereafter be conferred on Jerusalem; hence according to Isaiah, and His service in Matthew, Galilee was the place for this; so Matt. 28:10. But when there it was no longer a Messiah in the flesh presenting Himself {but} the Gospel of the Kingdom to the nation according to the Prophets, and to Jerusalem. All power was now given Him in heaven and in earth, and they were to make disciples to Him all the Gentiles. It was the extension of what was His Messianic power, connected with the title of power over heaven and earth He held as risen, to the whole world. It was not establishing His reign over Israel; He had been rejected there. The Remnant had the testimony sealed to them, Jehovah hid His face from the house of Israel (though to be waited for), and the testimony of Galilee, so rejected, was now identified with all power in heaven and earth, and sent to bring all nations into discipleship. It was power and authority, but of this character, but with the further revelation of what now, Jesus being risen, was necessarily brought out -- the common name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- common yet distinct, and Christ's injunctions were to be the rule of the Gentiles so disciplined. With this is connected the promise to be with them "to the end of the age," so that this connects itself with the age and the service rendered till it closes. And we get the important principle that the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is continued "to the end of the age" or at any rate the service which declares it is supposed in duty to continue.

Next, Mark, we have the Gospel carried on. Christ had served in the Gospel. Mark's account is the beginning of the Gospel of the Son of God. Here this Gospel of the Son of God, now risen, is carried on, and he who believes and confesses it, in being received into the Church {i.e., the expression of the church in practice} by baptism, will be saved, and he that believes not would be lost. The fate of every creature is attached on hearing it to the preached Gospel. It is a general principle and commission as a matter of life -- eternal life and salvation attached to the Gospel of the Son of God, thus sent out by His messengers, and to which the Lord gave testimony by signs. In John it is another thing, as in all the latter part of that Gospel; the Lord puts them in His own place, deriving it from Him only, as He from the Father, "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you" {John 20:21}. It is intrinsically connected with their position, and that as united to Him. It is derivative identification

with Him, not authoritative mission merely here which constituted the commission. Hence, He first pronounces peace, then sends them from Himself, as the Father had sent Him (also He is in the midst of the gathered saints). Hence He breathes on {into} them, and communicates to them the Holy Ghost {John 20:22}, not now merely natural life breathed of God into their nostrils, but the Holy Ghost in living power from Him, giving them spiritual competency to take and as taking His place, and thus to effectuate in His name that remission of sins which the Holy Ghost can administer down here in the name of Jesus, as He did as Son of man in His place. There was real administrative forgiveness, as Paul and the Church of Corinth with the incestuous man. It is a living spiritual Church commission, putting them, by receiving one Spirit with and from Him, in the place of service according to what He had accomplished, in His place, only with what He had done and was as risen as its source, but to do it for Him in His place and name looked at as in the Church and the Spring and Source of union, and the Giver of spiritual power; not as sending down in power, externally declaring what He was, Son of man, but spiritual competency from and by Himself who breathed the Spirit, His breath upon them, that they might act by it.

In Luke it is different. There is not properly a commission. The Lord first presents to them His real resurrection in flesh and bones, eating before them; then shows how, according to His words, all things which Moses, etc., had written concerning Him were to be fulfilled. Next, He opens their understanding to understand the Scriptures, and how, according to the mind of God there revealed, these things should have been, and the Gospel preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. Here then we get thus far the counsels of God as to this matter revealed, and their minds brought to rest on and draw from these counsels as so revealed, and which they now understood; so Paul uses Isa. 49. It was then intelligence of the mind of God in the Scriptures opened to them by Christ, and His words confirmed, and they acting on this intelligence, and this being their intelligent service. The source from which they acted -- "It behoved" (compare Matt. 24:25, *et seq.*, where the Lord expounds, here He opens their understanding). There was a further thing before they acted publicly by this knowledge, namely, power; they were to tarry at Jerusalem (they could not go out of this circle, as it were) till they were endued with power from on high. It is not then properly a commission, but the opening the understanding to understand the Scriptures, and connecting them by Christ's teaching with "the Christ," and then power enabling them to act upon it -- this by the Holy Ghost coming down as the promise of the Father.

The same general truth specially as to power, and, further, the return of Jesus, is found in Acts 10. This power we need. The commission in v. 8, or rather what the Lord says is to happen in them so endued with power, has the same character as to order. It recognizes the administration first -- Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends

of the earth. This is what we find in the blessed Paul's ministry. The Jews first and also to the Gentiles, and the knowledge of the mind of God. From this he both speaks and acts. We have the mind of Christ. He speaks from Christ's glory, and this is what we are led to as the terminus in Luke 24 (knowledge and power) and the power of the Spirit is Paul's whole spring and power (and so for others); only this that while it substantially remains the same in these two points, the beginning at Jerusalem has no place -- this had been done. He receives his commission from Christ on high and nowhere short of it, nor does he return there nor go up, but he goes on from the point of starting, Christ's heavenly glory. It is the Just One that is the link with the Jews, the Righteous Jew is maintained, but he is a witness of what he has seen directly from the Lord. It has no other root or connection as such for him; only he receives the Holy Ghost in the Church, because He was there now, and thus the link with the previously existing Church, and its recognition. Hence we have two points in Paul's ministry -- the glory of Christ and so universality, and then the one that is in Christ; see Col. 1.

The glory (i.e., the glorification) ended Peter's; it begins Paul's, and the unity of the Church is a fresh revelation.<sup>133</sup> ❖

## *The Commissions in the Acts*

### *The Mission of the Twelve in the Acts*

We learn about this in Acts 1:15-22. Verse 22 shows that the twelve<sup>134</sup> had to be those who were with the Lord Jesus from the baptism of John until His ascension so that they could be a witness of the resurrection, with the qualification of having known Him intimately before the resurrection. See also John 15:26, 27. The fact that they were with Him from the beginning was the reason for their appointment to their mission.

In {John}chapter 17 Christ's present fulness and desires for His own are detailed to them while He was with them here on earth. Now all this was embraced in their mission; hence they were to be witnesses to Him, both in Jerusalem and . . . This mission was, . . . to comprehend Christ's course and sufferings on earth, until He was received up into glory; but besides this they were empowered to testify and unfold Him ascended, and how He would be known to them, and how they would be for Him here on earth by the Holy

133. *Notes and Comments*, 5: 175-178.

134. It should be clear from Acts 2:14 that Paul did not replace Judas, for he wasn't saved yet and it speaks of Peter plus eleven, If Paul replaced Judas, then Acts 2:14 would have to read 'Peter plus ten.' Matthias was chosen to replace Judas in Acts 1:26, ". . . and he (Matthias) was numbered with the eleven apostles." See also Acts 6:2 and also Paul's own declaration about it in 1 Cor. 15:5,8, as well as Matthias' qualifications in Acts 1:21,22.

Ghost during His absence.<sup>135</sup>

In connection with the following quotation read Acts 1:6; 3:19-22.

The Gospel that they had received (cf. Acts 1:4) was that Jesus was risen, and that He was appointed of God both Lord and Christ. And now in the power of the Holy Ghost they were in unity, but still as yet their hope was not apart from earth, nor did they regard themselves as apart from relation thereto; though they held that relation in view of their risen Lord, whose return to it they announced.<sup>136</sup>

To this we list the following Scriptures which show the nature of the gospel preaching of the twelve, or really, mainly Peter.

Acts 2:32; 3:15, 26; 4:2, 10, 33; 5:30-32; 10:39, 41 show their great faithfulness to that which the Lord had committed to them (cf. John 15:27 and Acts 1:8, 21, 22).

The titles by which they refer to the Lord in Acts 2:36, 4:26 and 8:5, 12 are titles connected with the kingdom. The words "Son Jesus" in Acts 3:26 and "child" in Acts 4:27, are really "servant." See the translation by JND or a good concordance. Acts 8:37 is to be omitted. See note in JND's translation. This is mentioned because it is Paul (Acts 9:20) who preaches Jesus as Son of God. While Peter so *acknowledged* Him, of course (Matt. 16:16), it is reserved<sup>137</sup> for Paul so especially to *preach* Him first because it is Christ in this character that gives foundation to the church (Matt. 16:18). How beautiful is the harmony of the Word of God!

We have already noted that repentance was part of the message preached in the gospel of the kingdom. Subsequent to the exaltation of Christ, repentance is still preached, but "remission of sins," i.e. "forgiveness of sins," which was not part of the message of the gospel of the kingdom, is also brought into prominence. Repentance and remission of sins are words that characterize the first preaching after the exaltation of Christ, on the day of Pentecost; Acts 2:38; 3:19, 26; 5:31; 8:22; 10:43; 11:18; 13:38.

Not only did the character of the preaching change from before Pentecost, but the consequences to those who believed changed. This change is discernable by the fact that after Pentecost believers were sealed with the Spirit, a thing unknown before that. (Compare Eph. 1:13,14 with Acts 19:1-9, and note that the disciples whom Paul met at Ephesus, probably Jewish proselytes, believed what John the Baptist preached but they were not sealed with the Spirit as a result. Paul then preached to them the gospel of their salvation (Eph. 1:13,14) and they were sealed with the Spirit.)

A somewhat similar situation existed with Cornelius (Acts 10) except, being a Gentile, laying on of hands was omitted. But he was a child of God; he was "pious, fearing God with all his house, . . . supplicating God continually." His prayers rose

as a memorial before God (Acts 10:3, 4); he was indeed a child of God; he was born again, yet he needed to receive that Word whereby he would be "saved" (Acts 11:14). It is plain that Cornelius knew of the "preaching peace by Jesus Christ . . . which had spread through the whole of Judea," etc. (Acts 10:34-39). But he needed to hear something else: he needed to hear that the application of the work of Christ is for *whosoever* believes. He believed the gospel of his salvation and received, as a consequence, the sealing with the Spirit (Eph. 1:12, 13). He had been born again, but now he was "saved." He had been *safe* from the judgment of the great white throne when he was born again, as all children of God have been and will be, but now he rested on the Person and finished work of Christ for the forgiveness of sins for himself. He now had this knowledge from an open declaration by God and hence he could appropriate all the grand results of the work of Christ and could openly take the place of a child of God (John 1:12). All of this, at least, is included in the use of the word *saved* in Acts 11:14.

So in considering the preaching of the twelve it is important to see the tremendous change consequent upon the exaltation of the Man of God's purpose. There never was the body of Christ, the assembly, until there was that Man exalted in heaven to be the Head (Col. 1:18). No such Head existed before Christ's exaltation. It is only as the glorified One that He is Head of the body and that body was formed at Pentecost in Jerusalem (John 7:37-39; 14:17, 26; 16:7; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4, 32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13). When the twelve preached after Pentecost, persons received the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17), i.e. they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Luke 24:49; Eph. 1:13, 14), that Spirit which had been promised before Pentecost. (We today receive the same Holy Spirit of promise, thus linking us to what He did at Pentecost -- but no fresh baptism in the Spirit, which was a corporate thing. Thus they were joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17) and so connected to a body formed once for all at Pentecost in Jerusalem. The gift of the Spirit did not follow the preaching of John the Baptist, or of the Lord, or of the seventy, or of the twelve before Pentecost. Only after the exaltation of Christ was the Spirit poured out (Acts 2:32, 33). Thus there was a change both in message and result after Pentecost.

I do not mean to say that the truth that "there is one body" (Eph. 4:4) was understood before it was revealed to Paul. It was not (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:1-12; Col. 1:24-29). However, consequent upon the exaltation of Christ and the coming of the Spirit, there was a change in testimony.

This period during which the twelve so mightily witnessed to the nation of Israel, as such, is noted in a parable found in Luke 13:6-9. The man in this parable is the Lord: the dresser of the vineyard represents the Holy Spirit. But the Lord found no fruit and said that the tree (Israel) should be cut down. The dresser said that He desired to apply what was necessary for fruitfulness for one more year; and if

135. *Voice to the Faithful*, 3:166.

136. *The Present Testimony*, 1:65.

137. As to Acts 13:33, Peter quotes this from the Old Testament. That Jesus is the Son of God does not characterize his preaching; repentance does.

results were not obtained, then cut it down. This refers to a year after the Lord's three years of ministry; i.e. it refers to a year after He went to the Father. Now let us refer to Luke 19:12-27. The nobleman represents the Lord and the far country is the place where He is now. Before He left, He delivered responsibilities to His servants (whether they were possessors or false professors). Then He left to receive a kingdom. He is now at the right hand of God waiting until His enemies are made the footstool of His feet (Psa. 110:1). But after He left, His citizens, who hated Him, "sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not that this [man] should reign over us." What is that? When did that happen? It happened about one year after the Lord's three years of ministry. There was about one year, according to these Scriptures, between the time that He went to the far country and the time when His citizens (the Jews) sent an embassy after Him. Stephen was that embassy, and the prototype Christian martyr.

The Jews heard the words of Stephen until he said that he saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. What was their reaction? In effect they sent Stephen up to the Lord with the message, "We will not that this man should reign over us." Thus we see the application of these two parables. But what happened during that year when the vinedresser applied that which is necessary for fruitfulness, i.e. during the year after the man who sought fruit in the vineyard was gone? The twelve, mainly Peter, were used by the Spirit to bring the Word of God to Israel. The Spirit still sought to produce fruit even though the Jews had crucified the Messiah. It confirmed their state, manifesting its incorrigibility by their refusal of the Son of man in the glory of God. The outcome was certain, for the flesh never changes. They would not have Christ here in humiliation nor there in the glory. Nationally, Israel would not hear and no fruit was produced. In fact, they murdered Stephen.

Consequent upon the rejection of the testimony of Stephen there resulted a change in the ways of God. Up to this point the twelve had powerfully given witness concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel, nationally speaking, rejected this testimony. They sent the embassy (Stephen – Acts 7) with the message of rejection. And so, in the next chapter (Acts 8) we find the gospel moving out to embrace an enlarged sphere. In Acts 9 we find the conversion of the apostle to the nations.

### ***Paul's Conversion and Commission***

It is not without significance that God saved Paul as he journeyed away from Jerusalem. Not only was he not at Jerusalem when the Lord saved him; he was moving away. Why? I believe the reason is this:

1. Paul was not brought into blessing in the locality where the twelve were, in order that there would be no reason to suppose that he was subordinate to

them.

2. His mission was different from theirs and there was to be no confusing the two distinct missions.

And so we find Saul moving away from Jerusalem when he saw Christ in glory. The final year of patience with Israel (Luke 13:6-9) was over. The last testimony to the nation, as such, was rendered by Stephen, who traced the people's opposition to the Holy Spirit and charged the nation with the same sin (Acts 7:51-53). He had said that the "God of glory" appeared to Abraham and though those in the council gnashed their teeth against him, he

being full of the Holy Spirit, having fixed his eyes on heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:54, 55).

There was a young man who watched the clothes of those who murdered Stephen (Acts 7:58). In the unfolding of the purpose of the ages (Eph. 3:11), the clothes-watcher of those who stoned the man who saw the Son of Man in the glory of God was struck down by

a light above the brightness of the sun (Acts 26:13).

In the ways of God, the stoning of Stephen marked the end of the testimony to the nation of Israel, as such.

This elect vessel, Paul (Acts 9:15), was now brought forward. He received a new mission, distinct from the mission of the twelve (Acts 9:15, 16; 26:14-19; Gal. 1:11-24; Eph. 3:1-13; Col. 1:24-29). He did not preach anything that contradicted what the twelve preached. 1 Cor. 15:10, 11 proves this, but does not prove that he had an identical mission with the twelve. 1 Cor. 15:10, 11 refers to 1 Cor. 15:3-5. Paul taught the same truth concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as did the others.

Whether, therefore, I or they, thus we preach, and thus ye had believed (1 Cor. 15:11).

However, the texts listed above show that, while they preached this in common, he received much beyond that and indeed his mission was distinct.

One cannot over-emphasize the importance of allowing our souls to be distinctly and emphatically impressed by the distinctive character of Paul's mission. It comes as a shock to many to learn that Matt. 28:19, 20 is not "the marching orders of the church"! We have already considered the commission of Matt. 28, but let us re-emphasize one point. A characteristic feature of the commission of Matt. 28:18-20 is "make disciples of all nations." This is done by:

1. Baptizing them.
2. Teaching them.

If this commission were for the church, then it was for Paul. If so, his words in 1 Cor. 1:17 were a serious abrogation of his responsibility derived from that commission, for he said "I was not sent to baptize." Paul knew what his commission

was, but we need to adjust our thoughts to agree with the Word of God, and not vice versa. It is clear from 1 Cor. 1:17 that Paul did not regard the commission of Matt. 28 as his commission.

Let us consider the source of Paul's commission. The twelve received their commission (Matthias indirectly) from the Lord when He was here. We noted that Paul did not meet the qualifications of Acts 1:21, 22, but Matthias did.

The cloud received the Lord Jesus out of the sight of the twelve. Paul's view of the Lord was different; he saw Him on the other side of the cloud, even in the glory. The glorified Christ gave Paul his mission. This is a starting point altogether different from that of the twelve, and the starting point has given its character to all of his ministry. Others writing on this subject have said:

We have seen that salvation through a risen Savior could be and was known, and the saints maintained (through the Holy Ghost here on earth) in one mind and one soul, remembering the death of Christ in the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42-46; 4:32), while they were still linked to earth and to the temple services; (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:12) and their hope entirely connected with the earth, as awaiting their Lord's return, (the order of events was revealed through Paul, cf. 1 Thess. 4). But now that this [earthly] hope could no longer be presented on account of Christ's rejection from the earth, God unfolds through Christ the deep full counsel of His heart; and the scene where all this can be displayed is the glory into which Saul of Tarsus is now introduced; and seeing Jesus in the glory, is the pivot and the center of that gospel which is now entrusted to him.

<sup>138</sup>

We sometimes try to comprehend the manner and ways of His grace, without seeing the simple starting point of the gospel now. Christ, God's Son in glory, is the center for the soul to rest in, and it is as this, the foundation and starting point, is rested in that we are prepared to understand the nature of our position before God as opened out in Paul's epistles . . . Hence, it is of great importance that I should see and present to the soul that Christ is the simple object of faith; and as He, in glory, is the object of my faith, and as He Who is there controls my heart, I learn that every thing I have to do with, must be consistent, and in keeping with Him Who is the foundation of all blessing to me. <sup>139</sup>

Every development must necessarily bear, not only traces of its origin, but be a fuller unfolding of the nature of that origin, which gives it its character and value. Now, every point of truth presented or taught by Paul unequivocally bears this stamp. <sup>140</sup>

And just allow me to state another word or two in connection with the gospel of St. Paul. He is the only one who characterizes his gospel as the glorious gospel. And one may be interested to know that when the apostle used that phrase, he does not say 'glorious' merely as we use it; he means the gospel of

the glory. And the true force of that expression is this: It is the gospel of Christ glorified at the right hand of God. It is the glad tidings that we have a Savior who is risen and glorified. We are called to all the effects of His glory as well as of His death upon the cross. Other apostles never wrote of the subject of the Church being made one with Christ; Paul alone did. Possibly, then, Paul was the only one that was in a position to say, 'If one add anything to my gospel, let such an one be accursed.' Although Paul added something to their gospel, they could add nothing to his. The apostles announced Christ as the Messiah and made known remission of sins through His name; but they did not bring out the heavenly glory of Christ as Paul did. He brought out all these truths, and more which they never touched on. That is the reason why he so constantly speaks of 'my gospel.' Because while, of course, as to the grand truths of the gospel there could be no difference between what Paul and the other apostles preached, there was a great advance in that which Paul preached beyond them. There is nothing contradictory; but Paul being called after the ascension of our Lord to heaven, he was the one to whom it was peculiarly appropriate to make any addition. Till Paul was called, there was something still needed to make up the sum of revealed truth. In Col. 1:25, he says that he was a minister of Christ to complete the word of God, to fill up a certain space that was not filled up. <sup>141</sup>

### ***Paul's Gospel: The Gospel of the Glory of God***

The gospel of the glory has two aspects and one is the complement of the other. Paul, as we have seen, repeatedly speaks of "my gospel" and in 1 Tim. 1:11 speaks of it as "the glad tidings (gospel) of the glory of the blessed God." The gospel of the glory of God is the good news that God has been fully glorified!!!

When therefore he was gone out Jesus says, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God also shall glorify him in himself, and shall glorify him immediately (John 13:31, 32).

I have glorified thee on the earth, I have completed the work which thou gayest me that I should do it (John 17:4).

Grace is very much more than "unmerited favor;" it is 'God for us in all that He is, and in spite of our natural enmity.' Now, God is light and God is love. He cannot overlook sin. He demands 100% satisfaction, but man is bankrupt. But if God would overlook sin, we cannot count on His justice. Thus He might change His mind later. A god that could merely bypass sin, or some sins, is a god made in man's image. He would be as uncertain and unstable as man. Our hearts could not find rest in the mere overlooking of sin. God is light; and grace is God for us in all that He is, as light just as well as love. His perfect hatred and abhorrence of sin has wrought for our good. God has acted consistently with His own nature as light (which manifests the true character of everything -- John 1). He demands 100% satisfaction for sin.

138. *The Present Testimony*, 1:69.

139. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

140. *Voice to the Faithful*, 3:197.

141. Wm. Kelly, *Lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians*, pp. 28, 29.

Our Lord Jesus has completely satisfied that demand and now God has a righteous basis upon which to forgive the sins of those who appropriate the work of that blessed One Who has rendered that satisfaction to God (Rom. 3:23-26). "God is satisfied with Jesus," well may we sing. This is the ground of eternal security, i.e. that God has acted consistently with *all* that He is. God has maintained His integrity and consistency and we may rest in the finished work. The righteousness of God is the consistency with Himself in all that He is. So the fact that God is light has worked for our good. When we think of the cross we mostly think that God is love. However, in the cross we see both: God is light and God is love.

But we do not wish to be occupied with man's benefit here. Sin is an outrageous affront to the Creator and Moral Governor of the universe. Propitiation, is the rendering of a full satisfaction to God for the outrage of sin against the nature of God Who is light. Think of the awful audacity of the creature to make god of himself by daring to do his own will! Eternal punishment, the outer darkness, the weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, are his just reward for such an act that sullies the majesty of God. We cannot find words strong enough to reprobate the creature's (our) affront to God's majesty. And into the very scene where this goes on every day, a place where "the ploughing of the wicked is sin" (Prov.21:4), has entered the One Who always did those things that pleased the Father.

Think of the qualifications of this blessed One! In Lev. 16 we find two clouds. One is the shekinah, the glory cloud of the presence of the God of Israel, that sits between the cherubim; demanding, in accordance with what He is in Himself, that death be brought before Him. Who can meet the glory-cloud? There is a cloud of incense, rising up from the censer with the hot coals from the altar, brought into the holy of holies. It denotes God's Christ in all the perfections and excellencies and glory of His own Person that forms the cloud of acceptable incense. The cloud rising up from the incense on the hot coals *fills* the holy of holies and envelopes the Shekinah. One cloud has met the claims of the other cloud. Well did J. T. Armet say, that righteousness can meet the claims of righteousness, but only a cloud can meet a cloud! And so the only One Who was qualified went to the cross, and endured the fire of the burnt offering judgment, and all that rose up to God was what brought glory to God. The fire brought out from the Person of Christ only what met the glory of God.

What a mighty atonement was wrought! What glory to God as He brought infinite satisfaction for the outrage of sin against the majesty, nature, and glory of God! His precious blood was shed (John 19:34; 1 John 5:6; Lev.16) and God was SATISFIED and raised Him from among the dead. Even if no sinner was ever saved, yet God was glorified (John 17:4). His glorification stands independently of man's blessing, although man's blessing is directly dependent on the fact that full satisfaction was made to God and He was glorified. God being thus so immeasurably and fully glorified, He must raise Him Who has done it from the dead

and give Him glory (1 Pet. 1:21) -- give our Lord Jesus a place worthy of, and commensurate with, the depths to which He had gone into death. Think of the Holy One becoming the sin-bearer, the bearer of that vile, foul and loathsome rebellion against God!

"Oh, come, my soul, and gaze

On that great grief, that crown of thorn,

See there in deep amaze

Thy sentence borne."

There was a moral obligation on the part of God to give Christ glory. God must be true to Himself. His unalterable moral truth that transcends all dispensation is that he who humbles himself shall be exalted. Who has humbled himself as has our Lord Jesus? The place given must be commensurate with the place taken in His humiliation and degradation. The platform upon which Solomon ascended and led the praises of Israel, someone said, is equal in height to the brazen altar. Even in this world "He must reign" (1 Cor. 15:25). It is a moral necessity that where He took the lowest place, He shall have the highest. But there is even more than this.

Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4).

Wm. Kelly remarked,

It is a poor interpretation to take the Father's glory as equivalent to His almightiness or power. Every motive which animates Him morally, every way and end whereby He is set forth in His perfections, all that goes forth in excellence and delight, not toward the creature only but His Son, was exercised in raising up the Lord Jesus.<sup>142</sup>

And so He has ascended far above all heavens that He might fill all things (Eph. 4:10). Oh how He fills the heart of God with delight and satisfaction! God finds all His rest in Christ. He fills the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21) without wrong. But does He fill your and my heart?

There is good news: God has been immeasurably and everlastingly glorified. Who is preaching the good news of the glory of God (1 Tim. 1:11)?

### ***Paul's Gospel: The Gospel of the Glory of Christ***

There is good news: Christ has been glorified (2 Cor. 4:4)! God has glorified Christ in a way that answers to, and is commensurate with, the glory that He brought to God. How will the value of the work on the cross be measured? What measuring tape shall be used? None. There is only one thing capable of declaring and measuring the infinite value of that work to God. God answers with glory! He has glorified the Lord Jesus and placed Him in the highest place.

---

142. *Notes on Romans*, in loco.

But if also our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those that are lost; in whom the god of this world has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so that the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is [the] image of God, should not shine forth [for them]. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord, and ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:3-5).

The light that Paul saw conveyed to him the glory of Christ. That light came from the glory. And with what did it cause Paul to be occupied? He did not know himself to be a sinner nor was there a sense of sin, because he lived *just* concerning the law of God. But what he saw occupied him with Another. That's what the gospel of the glory does. It conveys to us the Blessor, occupying us with Himself instead of just the benefits received. It declares the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is very much more than relief from our miseries; it gives to us a new place for our sight. It conveys to us the glory of God resting upon the Christ of God, the exalted Man. It conveys to us a Man in God's glory. What a stupendous thought! G. V. Wigram said that he would be ashamed to be a man except that the Son of God became a man. He also said, Think of it, a Man in the glory of God! Christ has carried humanity right up to the very throne of the Father (Rev. 3:21) and wears our nature (sin apart) there, in His body of glory, as these lines are read. As we meditate upon this wondrous fact more and more, it staggers our minds and calls forth the worship of His purged worshipers. When He had by Himself made purification for sins, He set Himself down at the right hand of the Greatness on high (Heb. 1). The grace now flows from this place. Another has said,

The grace comes from the glory, not from the cross. The cross is the basis of it all, but, the light shines down from the finish, and the nearer you get to the glory the more you know your welcome; the more assured you are that it is your place according to God; and the effect on you is; that Christ personally absorbs your heart. This is the gospel of the glory. I am not only clear of all that was against me, but I have appropriated His death, and as I follow Him to where He is, I am transformed into the same image.<sup>143</sup>

The gospel of the glory is that He has not only cleared us of everything that was against us, but that we have boldness through His blood, to share with Him in His own blessedness in the presence of God -- we share in the blessedness of what Christ is to God. Every one who has seen His glory inside the veil will be so transformed in taste into moral correspondence to Him, that he could not be found here in any place, but going forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach . . . No one rises higher than his altar; that is, he cannot be for Christ here where all is adverse to Him, if he does not know Him where all the glory of God rests on Him. This is the gospel of the glory. When you know Him thus, you will be inside the veil with Him, and outside the camp, bearing

His reproach.<sup>144</sup>

Another wrote,

What a joy it is, that when man was proved irretrievably lost, God in the gospel reveals His righteousness justifying the believer in the most glorious way! For it is not only in what the blood of Christ effects that his sins should be cleansed away atoningly, but that the believer himself should enter the new and heavenly place, yea in Christ as He is in glory before God. Thus if no one saw the heavenly vision as the apostle did, every Christian is entitled to say that he has the substance of the blessing which was made known to Saul and through him to all who believe His word. The grace of God gratuitously met him in his sins when he bowed to Christ; it has also made him to become God's righteousness in Him, not as He was but as He is in heavenly glory.

No wonder then that the apostle could speak of the gospel of God's glory. For if love brought down the Son to us as the only but perfectly efficacious propitiation for our sins, He so glorified Him in Himself, and gives us to become His righteousness in that glory, whence the light of Christ in glory reached our dark hearts, and we are henceforth identified with Him there. The light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ was not for Saul of Tarsus only, but through his inspired testimony that the Corinthian saints of old and that we now who believe might know ourselves blessed after the same rich pattern. What wondrous grace to be a Christian in the simple, unadulterated, and full faith of Christ according to the gospel of His glory! How unutterably wretched to be anything less! Between the two there is no middle ground of standing sanctioned by God. Christendom is utterly short of the truth, and hastening full sail into the abyss of the apostasy.<sup>145</sup>

The glory of the Lord is a formative power in our lives if we are beholding it.

But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by [the] Lord the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18).

Does God want us to look on the Lord, to behold the Lord? How could anyone say no? But the verse does not say 'looking on the Lord.' It includes that, no doubt, but we all should be looking on the glory of the Lord. We ought to have our hearts occupied with the place given to the Worthy One. There is no place too high for Him in heaven.

"Join all the glorious names

Of wisdom, love, and power,

That mortals ever knew,

That angels ever bore;

All are too mean to speak His worth,

Too mean to set the Savior forth."

The glory of the Lord is the expression and measure of the satisfaction and glory brought to the One Who put Christ there! To look upon Him there means to meditate upon and enjoy

143. *Scope of the Gospel*, pp. 154, 155.

144. *Ibid.*, pp. 182, 183.

145. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 5:363.



in the soul what we have been considering in these pages about how He has propitiated God, glorifying Him, and how God has responded to this by placing Christ in the glory. And according to 2 Cor. 3:18 this beholding the glory of the Lord will have a transforming effect upon us.

The male child Who is going to shepherd the nations with a rod of iron was *caught up* to God and to His throne (Rev. 12). The apostle Paul was *caught up* to that very scene of glory and HEARD things which in our present condition cannot be communicated. And, oh, how blessed to think of it, that One Who is crowned with glory and honor will Himself (John 14:3) descend into the air and we too shall be *caught up* (1 Thes. 4:17), right into that scene where the glory of God rests upon Him. Then in a fuller way, face to face (1 Cor. 13:12), we shall behold the glory of the Lord (John 17:24). But that scene is meant to form us now. A man is formed by his object, be it money, power, fame, pleasure, etc. Is Christ in glory our object? If so, there will be a transformation (imperceptible to ourselves, no doubt) to moral correspondence to Himself and to what is suitable to that scene of glory into which we shall shortly be introduced.

### ***Paul's Gospel: The Gospel of the Grace of God***

Grace is much, much more than unmerited favor. Surely it includes that; but grace is God for us in ALL that He is. God is light (1 John 1:5) and God is love (1 John 4:8) – and never forget that order! Light exposes the true character of everything (Eph. 5:13). And God causes us to be where He is: in the light. All Christians walk in the light (1 John 1:7), although we may not always walk according to the light. We would not be happy with a god who is not light. Such are the capricious gods of the Gentiles. God is always true to Himself, always consistent, always righteous. He has demanded the exaction of the sentence and Christ has rendered the satisfaction. God is light and is satisfied and glorified, as light, in the work upon the cross. And now His love is free to go out to the sinner because He is righteous in doing so since He, as light, is satisfied with the work of atonement. He must be just when He justifies the sinner (Rom. 3:26).

The eternal satisfaction thus rendered manifests God for us as light. He has demanded and He has paid! God, as light, thus wrought for us: wondrous thought! So God is for us as light and as love. This is what we mean by saying that grace is God for us in all that He is and in spite of our natural enmity. Is that not much more grand than only seeing unmerited favor in the word 'grace'?

Paul testified the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). God having been propitiated and glorified, and Christ having been glorified commensurate with the humbling that brought God such glory, grace pours forth from the glorified Christ to Gentiles who were without God and without hope in the world (Eph. 2:13). Oh, look to the pit from whence we have been digged! Look to the gloom of darkness (Jude 13), away from God FOREVER. Without God, without hope! Lost, lost, LOST!!! Gentile dogs, strangers to the covenants of promise.

The iron-willed persecutor of the Way (Acts 22:4) is suddenly struck down by the glory of a brightness above the noonday sun. The very One he was unwittingly persecuting suddenly appears to him in the blaze of His glory and he discovers that he is persecuting Christ Himself, since he was persecuting Christ's own (Acts 9:5). It is the first hint of the truth of the one body and the union of the members with Christ (Acts 9:4; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12, 13, etc.).

Straightway he goes into the synagogue and preaches Christ as the Son of God (Acts

9:20). All believers knew Christ as such, of course, but Paul especially emphasized this. It is Christ as Son of God that is the foundation of the church (Matt. 16:16-18). The Lord subsequently appeared to Paul in other revelations (Acts 26:16) and to him was committed those lines of truth which unfold the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:11) and which fill up the Word of God (Col. 1:25).

Paul serves as a delineation of those God would save (1 Tim. 1:16). Think of the grace of God that saved this man! We think of grace for what are called down-and-outers. Paul was an up-and-outer (Phil. 3:4-7), speaking in a merely human way, and withal the first (i.e. as worst) of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).

But when we think of the scope of the glory brought by Christ to God, and how God answered and measured this by the corresponding glorification of Christ, no wonder that such mighty grace could pour forth from Christ in glory to the first of sinners! No wonder that he was that elect vessel (Acts 9:15), and one fitted by God to be the bearer of the gospel of the glory and the gospel of the grace of God. A special administration of the grace of God was committed to him (Eph. 3:2) and he proclaimed the blessed truths that Jew and Gentile were joint-heirs and joint-body and joint-partakers (Eph. 3:6). These are not mere words, but living realities. We need to meditate on what these words really mean and imply. The greatness of this grace will then correspondingly be magnified in our souls and we shall see the connection between the good news of the grace of God and the good news of the glory. We shall learn that we are justified and made the very righteousness of God. Yea, wonder of wonders, "as He is, so are we in the world" (1 John 4:17).

Our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3), with Christ Who is already in the glory. We are new creation in Him, linked by the Spirit to the glorified Head (2 Cor. 5:17). Thus we will learn to testify the good news of the grace of God. Grace is God for us in ALL that He is, and in grace He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3)

### ***Satan's Attack on the Gospel of the Glory of Christ***

One of Satan's special points of attack is that

the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, Who is the image of God, should not shine forth (2 Cor. 4:4).

Oh, the subtlety of this attack of Satan! Why this special point of attack? It is because clouding this clouds the radiancy. The glory of Christ is the measure of God's glorification and to cloud the radiancy of that glory of Christ is to cloud the other. It correspondingly also clouds the scope of the grace of God as apprehended in the soul and lowers all to merely meeting man's need, blessed as the meeting of that need is in its place. But the gospel goes vastly beyond the meeting of man's need and it is the object of the enemy to hinder the radiancy of the good news of the glory of Christ from shining to the lost. And as we preach these things we are meeting the enemy just where the battle is the heaviest. He very well knows why he especially attacks this truth. Do we know why?

J. A. von Poseck has said,

At all times it has been a well-known stratagem of the enemy, when he cannot prevent the promulgation of divine truth, to advance some portion of it at the expense and to the neglect of much higher and more blessed truths, in order to confine the attention of believers to such as are of secondary import -- however

precious they may be in themselves -- and to keep out of sight, or at least in the background, truths of primary and deepest importance.<sup>146</sup>

J. N. Darby well noted that,

Dwelling exclusively on meeting the sinner's need, though true, and revealing God's love, always sweet to the soul, lays a narrow basis for after-growth.<sup>147</sup>

"Revival preaching" and gospel preaching in general are characterized by just this, "the dwelling exclusively on meeting the sinner's need . . . and revealing God's love . . ." The good news presented is that there is a "fire escape from hell," or a "thrill for your life," or "God loves *you*," etc., rather than that God has been fully glorified. Our beloved and esteemed brethren in the past saw the decline in the character of gospel preaching (particularly in evangelical Christendom) and wrote warnings about it. We do well to note such words as:

I believe the person of the Lord has lost the place -- at least in revival preaching -- it ought to have, and it makes that preaching, though I doubt not often blessed --, seriously defective. Salvation by the love of God to sinners -- surely a blessed truth -- is preached rather than Christ . . . going to heaven -- an unscriptural expression -- has displaced in the evangelical mind the coming of the Lord and resurrection.<sup>148</sup>

Lest any should misunderstand, let me clearly say that we are not advocating an abandonment of preaching about man's need, God's remedy, repentance, etc. Paul's gospel includes all of these but does not stop there. It has been well expressed as follows:

He who knows that he is safe for heaven preaches safety; he who knows God's grace in forgiving his sins preaches forgiveness; he who rejoices in peace preaches peace; and he who has Christ dwelling in his heart by faith -- Christ, as He is, Christ, the hope of glory -- preaches safety, forgiveness, peace, but all colored by his own personal acquaintance with Christ. The less does not include the greater, but the greater does take in the less.<sup>149</sup>

Oh, let us encourage our hearts to learn to appreciate Christ more! Let us ask Him to empower us to set forth His Person, His work, His glory, and God's glorification and grace. Let us do nothing that would in any way hinder "the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ" from shining forth.

### *Expressions Containing the Word 'Gospel'*

#### **GOSPEL OF GOD**

In Rom. 1:1-4 we see the glad tidings of God concerning His Son Who fulfills prophecy and is marked out Son of God in power -- Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus

146. J. A. von Poseck, "The Gospel and the Church," *Bible Treasury* 18:40.

147. *Letters*, 3:445.

148. *The Bible Treasury*, 11:93; also in *Collected Writings*, 29:324.

149. *Food for the Flock*, 2:100-101.

God has given the Son and He is to be owned as Lord. Paul carried out the preaching of the gospel of God as a sacrificial, or priestly, service, because it has in view the offering up of the nations (Rom. 15:16,17). It was preached free of charge and with much earnest striving (2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thess. 2:2, 5, 11). 1 Pet. 4:17 indicates the dire consequences for the disobedient.

#### **GOSPEL OF HIS SON**

This is mentioned in Rom. 1:9 and speaks of God's heart, God's love, in the gift of His Son. Divine affection is told out in the Gospel of His Son.

#### **GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

The term "Christ" sets forth the official place that belongs to the Son of God (cf. Acts 2:36). As such He has claims upon us. The following Scriptures show that the thought of responsibility is attached to the expression "Gospel of Christ"; Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Cor. 2:12, 17; 9:13; 10:14; Gal. 1:7; 1 Thess. 3:2.

#### **GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST**

Not only has the Son of God the title "Christ," or "anointed," but it is as Man that He has this place; it is "Jesus Christ, Son of God." The Gospel of Jesus Christ points to the person Who has the place.

#### **GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST** (2 Thess. 1:8).

This is the full title of the Christ of God and sets forth every aspect of His acquired glories, and in this none shall ultimately resist Him, but all opposers shall feel the might of the strength of His power. Note also that man is not presented with a choice. He should OBEY the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **GOSPEL OF PEACE**

Reference to Rom. 10:15 and Eph. 6:15 shows that feet have a prominent part in connection with this. The thought is bringing glad tidings of peace. What beautiful feet, perhaps very tired and painful feet, sore and swollen from the journey, but pressing on to bear good news of peace. Beautiful feet are they, says the Holy Spirit, if the walk is consistent.

#### **GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD**

The Lord had told Paul that he would be a witness of those things that he had seen and of that in which He would appear to him. And so Paul was a faithful witness (Acts 20:24) of the grace of God that had converted the chief of sinners (there is only one chief; Paul wrote that under inspiration).

#### **GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM** (Matt. 24:13)

This will be preached by the remnant during the tribulation. Matt. 24:1-44 applies to the time of Daniel's seventieth week. No doubt this gospel was preached before the cross also (Matt. 10:7), but the kingdom in manifest form is in abeyance, having presently a "mystery" form (Matt. 13) because of the rejection of the King.

#### **EVERLASTING GOSPEL**

This gospel and the gospel of the kingdom are related. Both will be proclaimed by

the Jewish remnant during the tribulation. The everlasting gospel brings out the thought of the blessing of the creature by God, that all evil will be crushed; and it presents God as the One alone worthy of homage ( Rev. 14:7).

### **GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF THE CHRIST**

This is explained in the main treatment of this chapter and nothing need be added here. See above.

### **GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF THE BLESSED GOD (1 Tim.1:11)**

1 Tim.1:9, 10 shows the application of the law. But is there glory connected with that which curses and smites the sinner? Yes, indeed (2 Cor. 3:7-9), but it is eclipsed by the ministry of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:9, 10). Our sin has been met and righteously put away. God has been glorified in every respect concerning sin, and the gospel of the glory of the blessed God proclaims this. This gospel is opposed to those things which are an outrage to God (concerning which He has been glorified) as was the law, covering even a greater scope than did the law. Indeed it is more opposed to those things than was the law; -- as much more as His glory acquired by the cross (upon which the blessed Son of Man died) eclipses that glory of the law, given by disposition of angels.

### **GOSPEL OF THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF THE CHRIST**

In Eph. 3:8 the point is that the variegated, acquired glories of Christ are unsearchable. See Rom. 9:23; Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:16; Phil. 4:19; Col. 1:27; Rev. 5:12.

### **GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION (Eph.1:13)**

Acts 19:1-6 shows that the disciples that Paul found in Ephesus had not received the Holy Spirit when they had believed. They didn't know that the Holy Spirit had come. The Spirit never came as the Indweller until Christ was exalted (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33). They were baptized to John's baptism, before the exaltation of Christ. John had declared to them a Coming One (Acts 19:5). Paul declares Jesus to them and no doubt they rested then upon His Person and finished work for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins. Paul laid hands on them and they received the Spirit. They believed the gospel of their salvation which is to rest on the Person of Christ and His finished work -- for the forgiveness of sins. The Spirit is given as the seal of this faith. It is the Holy Spirit of promise (Luke 24:49) that all who so believe receive, Who links them with the body of Christ, formed once-for-all in Jerusalem at Pentecost. He is the earnest, the pledge, of our inheritance also.

## ***Summary of Paul's Commission***

Paul speaks of "my gospel" (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim.2:8; cp. Gal. 1:11; 2:2), and says "our gospel" (1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:14) when he couples others with himself. He preached the foundation truths of the gospel, as did the others (1 Cor. 15:1-11), but what he preached he did not learn from others. He received it by direct revelation. In these revelations he received the foundation truths of the gospel, but more besides. Had it been only what those at

Jerusalem were preaching he could not have said,

After a lapse of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with [me]; and I went up according to revelation, and I laid before them the glad tidings which I preach among the nations . . . (Gal.2:1,2; see also Acts 26:16) .

Because of these additional truths of the gospel received by revelation, Paul speaking of the gospel says,

the hope of the glad tidings, which ye have heard, which have been proclaimed in the whole creation which [is] under heaven, of which I Paul became minister (Col. 1:23).

See also Rom. 15:16. He also says of the body of Christ,

. . . his body, which is the assembly; of which I became minister, according to the dispensation of God which [is] given me towards you to complete the word of God, the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you the hope of glory (Col.1:25-28; see also Eph.3:7).

Note well that there are two things of which Paul became minister, not became THE minister. Leave "the" out. He became minister -- in the sense of having this committed to him as a special commission -- of these two lines of truth, distinguished but not disconnected, in a special sense as having special revelations of these truths. The connection of these truths is seen in the expression "mystery of the gospel" (Eph.6:30). It is not the gospel which is called a mystery. The point is that Paul's gospel is the door to the unfolding of the mystery. And so to him was committed the gospel of the glory of God (1 Tim. 1:11) , the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4) , and the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). The administration of the grace of God towards the Gentiles was committed to Paul (Eph.3:2; Gal.2:8). God never gave any man the right to choose to believe the gospel. Paul's gospel and the revelation of the mystery are

made known for obedience of faith to all the nations ( Rom. 16:26).

The Lord Jesus will be revealed

from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who know not God, and those who do not obey the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:8).

Rather than asking man to choose to believe the gospel,

God . . . now enjoins men that they shall everywhere repent (Acts 17:30).

See also 1 Pet.4:17; Rom.1:5; 10:16. Josh.24:15 is not a gospel verse, since used thus it contradicts the above Scriptures. Besides, the choice in Josh. 24:15 is to choose one's gods if it seem evil to serve Jehovah. The choice to serve Jehovah, noted in Josh. 24:22, was mere human choice, human will, and the book of Judges shows how soon human choosing in divine things comes to nothing. God is the One Who takes the initiative (John 1:13; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Eph. 2:9, 10; Rom. 9:22, 23; 8:29, 30; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:10, etc.) in the new birth and salvation. It is all of grace (Eph. 2:8) and God is for us in all that He is.

## Chapter 10

# The Kingdom in the Acts, the Epistles and Revelation

## *The Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel in Acts 1:6-9*

They therefore, being come together, asked him saying, Lord, is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not yours to know times or seasons, which the Father has placed in his own authority; but ye will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. And having said these things he was taken up, they beholding [him], and a cloud received him out of their sight (Acts 1:6-9).

It should be apparent to the readers of this book that, after reading Acts 1:6-9:

1. The Jewish hearers of the OT prophets had to understand the prophecies about the kingdom literally.
2. John the Baptist's preaching the kingdom as at hand meant *that literal* kingdom prophesied by the OT prophets -- else the people would not have regarded him as a prophet.
3. The Lord continued the same preaching (Matt. 4).
4. In Matt. 10, the disciples were sent with the same message -- the very disciples who were here asking the Lord if the time had arrived for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Clearly, the Lord had not sent them announcing a spiritual kingdom as conceived by Covenantists, else they would have known that there was a transmutation of the literal kingdom into a spiritual kingdom for which a timing question would not have been appropriate.
5. Covenantism asks us to believe that there was no announcement of a literal kingdom, or else that if there was, then in Acts it was recast into a spiritual kingdom. One way or another, a future, distinctive place for the nation (including not being a part of the church) is not in their thoughts.
6. The Lord indicated that there was going to be a work of God which was not the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.
7. The Lord did not tell them that there would be no restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but that their timing was wrong.

## *Covenantist Opposition*

The Lord said these words in vv. 6-8 on the occasion of His ascending up out of

their sight. He said these words to the Apostles, as vv. 1, 2 show. The question asked by the Apostles in verse 6 is about the literal <sup>150</sup> kingdom they and the others of the remnant expected, which expectation the Lord had confirmed. We never read that our Lord told His disciples that there would be no such kingdom for Israel; no, not even after "being seen forty days, and speaking of the things which concern the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Nor in this passage did He state that there was not going to be any kingdom restored to Israel. The Apostles wanted to know if the time had now come for the restoration of that kingdom to Israel. The kingdom of Judah had been taken away in 605 BC, through Nebuchadnezzar. It was at that point in time when the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), depicted by the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2), began. The nation, as such, was declared to be Lo-Ammi (not my people; Hos. 1:9). The restoration of the kingdom refers to the transference of power back to Israel, under the reign of Messiah (cp. Acts 3:21).

The death of our Lord was not only for (1) the gathering together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad, but also for (2) the *nation* of Israel (John 11:51, 52). He died for the nation! Moreover, note that He was "a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers . . ." (Rom. 15:8). All Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26) and that nation will be born in a day (Isa. 66:8), all being righteous (Isa. 60:21), the rebels all having been purged (Ezek. 20). To Israel belongs a future, national adoption (Rom. 9:4) and they will then be pronounced Ammi (Hos. 1:10, 11; 2:1; i.e., My people). They will enjoy the new covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8). That coming kingdom will not be unspiritual for Israel, but it will be the supreme nation in the earth with the distinction of Jew and Gentile again in force, though many Gentiles will be saved. In the millennium, saved Jews and Gentiles are not constituted one body with Christ the head. That is a heavenly thing, this is an earthly matter.

Some opposers of the thought of a future, national, distinct kingdom for Israel might suggest that the disciples, in Acts 1:6, did not refer to such a kingdom. One postmillennialist suggests that they were speaking of a present kingdom:

. . . merely asking the Lord, "Is it *now* time for Israel to be converted to you and enter the kingdom, which you have established?" This would fit well within the semantic theological and psychological framework of the episode. <sup>151</sup>

This is absurd and desperate spiritual alchemy. A different use of that technique is

150. I do not imply by the word "literal" that there is nothing of a spiritual character in the kingdom when all Israel shall be saved and the knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

151. G. L. Bahnsen, and K. L. Gentry, Jr., *House Divided, The Break-up of Dispensational Theology*, Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, p. 172 (1989).

given by the amillennialist, Simon Kistemaker, who, astonishingly, says that even if the explanation that the disciples meant a political kingdom was the correct explanation:

. . . if we interpret the text to mean the restoration of spiritual Israel . . . Conclusively, then, . . . it is possible and even probable to give a spiritual interpretation of the Apostles' question.<sup>152</sup>

If that will not do, theology can supply other alternatives. However, the amillennialist, O. T. Allis acknowledges:

That it would be an Israelitish kingdom the disciples apparently still regarded as self-evident.<sup>153</sup>

The fact is that *it is self-evident*, and certainly to us also when Rom. 16:25, 26, Eph. 3:8-11, Col. 1:24-26, as well as the prophets, are believed.

F. F. Bruce (with Open Brethren) implicitly admits the proclamation of a literal kingdom in the gospels:

This hope of an earthly and national kingdom (Mk. 10:35-37; Lk. 1:68-75) was recast after Pentecost as the proclamation of the spiritual kingdom of God . . .<sup>154</sup>

Scripture is merely putty in the hands of such persons. Christians should be outraged at the effrontery of this implicit acknowledging that the gospels had indeed spoken of a literal kingdom, and by spiritual alchemy subsequently, in Acts, the literal kingdom is transmuted. Alleged recasting is a figment of a mind that will make Scripture bow to its own dicta. The preaching after Pentecost reaffirmed the expectation of the future kingdom for Israel, particularly during the period up to the stoning of Stephen; i.e., during the period of God's exposure of the state of Israel after their rejection of the Lord -- until they sent Stephen after the Lord, now gone to the far country, with a message, as it were (Acts 7:55-60; cp. Luke 19:14).<sup>155</sup> If it is admitted that the disciples did indeed refer to a national kingdom for Israel, v. 3 is compelled to mean, for example:

This, of course, could only mean that He was instructing them concerning the work of the Kingdom in which they were to serve Him as soon as they should receive power through the coming of the Holy Spirit . . .<sup>156</sup>

The fact is that one decides what the content of the Lord's instruction concerning the kingdom of God (v. 3) was, based on whether or not he thinks that the church fulfills the Old Testament prophecies of the kingdom -- or works a sudden transmutation at this point as did F. F. Bruce. One thing certain from the question in v. 6 is that if

the Lord had been telling them there would be no such national kingdom for Israel, they did not understand, or else did not believe, Him. There is no reason why He could not have spoken of both the moral aspects of the kingdom and of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and there we leave that point.

At any rate, the Lord did not answer the question of v. 6, by saying 'I have told you that there will be no such kingdom,' nor could He, for the prophets had prophesied of it. O. T. Allis, in his polemic against dispensational truth, admitted this:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>157</sup>

And a Jew *had* to understand the OT prophecies that way. Moreover, those prophecies make a coherent whole, literally understood (with all due allowance for figures of speech and symbols).

### *The Times and the Seasons*

The Lord did not tell them that there would be no such kingdom, but that it was not for them to know "**the times and seasons.**" But in v. 3 He told them that they would be baptized in "the Holy Spirit **after now not many days.**" If we do not have an agenda, the distinction between the two subjects is quite clear. The Lord's directing their thoughts to "after now not many days" regards a different subject than the one meant by "It is not yours to know times or seasons . . ." Verse 3 speaks of Pentecost while times and seasons refers to the events of Daniel's 70th week and what follows.

"Times" (*chronos*) refers to duration or date of occurrence chronologically, while "seasons" (*kairos*) refers to characteristics of the chronological periods. These two words apply to the same events, not to two differing periods. The Covenant Pretribulationist, Darrell Bock, claims that *chronos* refers to the future and *kairos* applies at Pentecost. But that would mean contradicting the Lord's words, "it is not for you to know the *chronos* or the *kairos*"; in his scheme they would, in fact, know the *kairos*. This theological figment is part of, and illustrative of, his agenda to have the present epoch be an aspect of the Davidic kingdom -- which his system substitutes for the heavenly position and character of the church. This retrograde move towards Covenantism is called "Progressive Dispensationalism."<sup>158</sup>

152. *Acts*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 52, (1990).

153. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 312.

154. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 102 (1990, third ed.).

155. See *Elements of Dispensational Truth* where the passages in Acts are all examined.

156. P. Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 108.

157. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

158. Donald K. Campbell and Jeffrey L. Townsend, eds., *A Case for Premillennialism, A New Consensus*, Chicago: Moody, p. 188, note 11 (1992).

The Lord's answer is instructive for us to consider in connection with 1 Thess. 5:1 where we also find reference to times and seasons.<sup>159</sup> In order to help us understand the bearing of this, part of a footnote to 1 Cor. 8:1 in J. N. Darby's translation is quoted:

Two Greek words are used for 'to know' in the New Testament -- *ginosko* and *oida*. The former signifies objective knowledge, what a man has learned or acquired. The English expression 'being acquainted with' perhaps conveys the meaning. *Oida* conveys the thought of what is inward, the inward consciousness of the mind . . . .

Acts 1:7 reads "It is not yours to know (*ginosko*) times or seasons." Now, this cannot contradict 1 Thess. 5:1, 2. The meaning of Acts 1:7 is that times and seasons were not to be their portion to experience. The times and seasons, "the defined periods of which prophecy speaks" (W. Kelly), are not connected with the rapture. Thus we do not know them in the sense of becoming objectively acquainted with them by experiencing them. If the disciples had entered into the times and the seasons, they would surely become objectively acquainted with them. The disciples, in accordance with the expectation of the remnant, had asked, "Is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" The expectation was right, the time was wrong, and, furthermore, times and seasons were not to be any Christian's lot. For example, as Rev. 3:10 shows, the Christian is kept out of the *hour* (i.e., the *time*) of trial. Christianity is not part of the times and seasons.

All of this does not imply necessary ignorance on the part of Christians concerning the subject of times and seasons. "Ye know (*oida*) perfectly well yourselves, that the day of [the] Lord so comes as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2). "This great and solemn truth was part of their inward conscious assurance" (W. Kelly).

While it is true that the disciples, as seen in Acts 1, were still occupied with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and also Matthias was chosen as the twelfth apostle by the Old Testament method of lots, the fact remains that in Acts 1:6-8, the Lord tells them that times and seasons are not their portion to know, in the sense of experiencing them, while He leaves the expectation of a coming restoration of the kingdom to Israel as a valid expectation.

### ***Christ was Rejected as King in Glory at the Stoning of Stephen***

When the Lord Jesus Christ rose again from among the dead, He ascended up into Glory and there He sat upon a throne. The offer of an earthly kingdom to

159. 1 Thess. 5:1 connects directly with 1 Thess. 4:14. 1 Thess. 4:15-18 is parenthetical in explanation of how those now dead in Christ can come with Him when He appears -- by prior rapture.

Israel was then made, by Peter, in Acts 2. But for how long a time was that offer of the kingdom extended? The answer is that the offer was still in force until the stoning of Stephen when {Luke 13:8-9} was fulfilled.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected by Israel as King in glory, at the stoning of Stephen, then all hope for the Jew on natural grounds was at an end. Earth could not be the place for God's people. Hence Stephen, con-current with the rejection (Acts 7:55), is led by the Holy Ghost to look up steadfastly into heaven, "and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Gazing up is not now questioned, as it was in Acts 1:11. The place to which our Lord had been called when rejected in humiliation (see Matt. 22), is now opened out to His people, and the one who seals by his blood the rejection of the Lord of glory, is the first one to inaugurate the new place where Christ is. The mystery is not yet disclosed, but the place where Christ is; and this is necessary for the heart, for the first intuitive inquiry of the heart in realisation of what He had done for us, is "Where dwellest thou?" How could I realise the immense benefit which His death had secured, and not ceaselessly long, and seek to know Him where He is? Stephen has reached this spot; {he is} the leader and pattern for every believer since, and always the preliminary step in learning the mystery. The believer is not only united to Christ, but he is by the Holy Ghost in association with Him where He is. The mystery then unfolds the benefits or gain which are derived from this association. This association is the known portion of the individual saint, I judge, before the full relation of the church to Christ is apprehended, before the wisdom of God in a mystery would be revealed! Hence it was, it was historically subsequent to Stephen that the first intimation of this great secret which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world, was disclosed to Saul of Tarsus, in the words pregnant with so much meaning, "Why persecutest thou ME?" The absent and rejected Christ could speak of Himself as still on the earth. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, *so also is the Christ*" (1 Cor. 12:12). No greater triumph of grace could be, or no more glorious vindication of God's name and power in the earth, than that in the place where His Son had been rejected, both as the greatest Benefactor among men and as the King in glory, there His body, composed of many persons, should be sustained, in His life, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Never Satan more signally defeated than after he had succeeded in urging and aiding man to refuse Christ a place on earth; for this momentary success led to the revelation of God's secret, that there would be thousands here so united together by the Holy Ghost, as to be in purpose and act the display and development of His mind and ways -- "His body"; each member, however remote, acting in concert with one another, and with their common Head in heaven. It is marvelous the greatness and extent of this organization, each individual in concert and association with the Head in heaven; "with all lowliness

and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2, 3). Not only rest of heart, in abounding satisfaction, known to each, in association with our Saviour, where He is, but in a new and powerful bond united to one another on earth, to set forth the name and glory of the rejected Lord in the place of His rejection. All of Adam as to class or nation is entirely set aside; not only is there an entirely new place, "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"; but making in Himself twain (Jew and Gentile) "one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:15, 16). "Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but Christ is all in all" (Col. 3:11).<sup>160</sup>

G. V. Wigram wrote:

... in chapter 7, ... the testimony was, that there was room for the Church in heaven, though they would not have it on earth, and that sympathy from the heart of Christ was flowing down to those who were treated as He had been Himself.<sup>161</sup>

### ***When Did Paul Start Preaching About the One Body?***

The following appeared in *Words of Truth* in 1870:

... the Jews, being his accusers, and king Agrippa being one who knew the prophets and was versed in the Jewish Scriptures, the statements of the verses quoted (Acts 26:22,23) rather show that he was saying nothing contrary to the testimony of God in the Scriptures, which the Jews who accused him professed to accept.

Besides, Paul wrote 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians during the early part of his stay at Ephesus, and sent it by Titus. (Compare Acts 19:22, with 1 Cor. 16:8-10, 2 Cor. 7:6). In it he taught the doctrine of the Church as "one body" (see chap. 12). He also wrote the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth during his ministrations there (see Rom. 16:1), where he commends Phoebe, who served the assembly at Cenchrea, near to Corinth; and in it he speaks of the practical relationship of Christ's members as "one body" in chap 12.

His ministry of the church as "one body" was no new thing when at Rome. He had taught it all through before he became the prisoner of Jesus Christ.<sup>162</sup>

### ***What Is the Character of***

160. *A Voice to the Faithful* 13:292-296.

161. G. V. Wigram. *Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram*, 1:122.

162. *Words of Truth*, 5:219.

### ***Paul's Preaching the Kingdom?***

The first thing to say about this is that Paul preached the kingdom of God, not the gospel of the kingdom as at hand. The **gospel** of the kingdom is in abeyance and will be again proclaimed in the future (Matt. 24:14).

Then we should observe that Paul spoke of the present, moral bearing of the kingdom of God and also spoke of the future kingdom of God in manifestation, i.e., the millennial kingdom. This is quite in keeping with the fact that the kingdom of God in mystery exists now but the manifestation of the kingdom in glory and power is in suspension until Christ appears in glory and judgment.

The present, moral display of the kingdom of God in a Christian is seen in Rom. 14:17 and 1 Cor. 4:20. The description, "the kingdom of the heavens" is dispensational, not moral, and would be quite out of place here.

Concerning Paul's speaking of the future kingdom in manifested power, see 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Heb. 1:8 (see also James 2:5).

He also spoke of what is the heavenly side of the kingdom of God in Acts 14:22:

... establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to abide in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

This does not mean that we are not presently in the kingdom of God (in mystery) but looks forward to the heavenly portion of the saints regarding the kingdom, as does 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 12:28.

Acts 19:8 would embrace the range of truth concerning the kingdom in its varied aspects as does Acts 20:25 and Acts 28:23, 31.

He also spoke of fellow-workers for the kingdom of God (Col. 4:11).

Paul's reference to the appearing of Christ also indicates teaching concerning the coming kingdom in power and glory. 2 Tim. 4:1-2 says:

I testify before God and Christ Jesus, who is about to judge living and dead, and by his appearing and kingdom; proclaim the word . . .

The faithfulness of the Christian will be manifested at the appearing in glory. The rapture is not something that will make distinctions, as partial-rapturists hold. The rapture is all of grace, but manifestation of reward is made at the appearing.

The Apostle's speaking of our reigning with Christ in that coming day also has to do with the kingdom of God.

In Col. 1:13 we read:

who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

It is important to remember that Satan was not accorded the title "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) until the Lord Jesus was cast out. It was consequent upon the cross that

man is declared lost (Romans). And 1 John 5:19 says:

We know we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked [one].

This is helpful in understanding our deliverance from “the authority of darkness.” J. N. Darby wrote:

❖ Here we are naturally in Satan’s kingdom, the ruler of the darkness of this world. A man may not mean wickedness, but the glory of this world -- its grandeur -- has influence on the heart. Well, it is darkness, simple darkness, and all the time that is spent there is loss, for everything that is not Christ is loss -- there is no life in it. The life of Christ in us cannot be looking after wealth, and power, and vanity -- the one thing we have to do in the world is to overcome it. The blinding power of Satan is there, but we are delivered from it. It does not say, “brought into light,” but it gives the experimental consciousness of what the light is -- “the kingdom of the Son of his love.” It is light: I get out of this darkness, which only ministers to my wretched selfishness, to nothing but self, the very opposite of what Christ was. There is one true, holy, blessed place -- the presence of God. I have got into (not merely the light, but) the kingdom of the Son. The One who is the delight of the Father’s heart, the sufficient and adequate object of the Father’s heart, who satisfies and draws out His love -- we are brought into the kingdom of that Son. We have to go through the world, which has risen up because man was turned out of paradise; but I have passed out of it into the kingdom where God’s perfect delight in His Son is. We have to judge ourselves, and watch, that it may be effectually wrought in us; but here the apostle is giving thanks that it is done -- that we are brought, even while here, to know we are loved as Christ is loved. He has given us what is sufficient for His heart and our hearts to delight in, and, in the second place, we are loved as He is loved.<sup>163</sup> ❖

### ***Did Paul’s Preaching the “One Body” Begin When He Became a Prisoner?***

This question was answered in *Words of Truth* many years ago:

“E.W.R.” – Did the ministry of Paul, concerning “one body, the church, commence when he was a prisoner at Rome? Because, at the conclusion of his oral testimony in Acts 26, he says to Agrippa that he was “saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.” Now we know his written testimony goes much beyond this.

Does the Acts at all comprehend the church of “God as united to Christ in heavenly glory? and is the distinction of Jew and Gentile (the absence of which characterizes the church) maintained all through the Acts?

163. *Collected Writings* 31:184.

A – In Paul’s answer before Agrippa you will find many more things stated than those embraced in vv. 22, 23. The union of the saints with Christ on high is owned of the Lord by the words, “Why persecutest thou me?” Paul was to be a minister and a witness of what he had seen, i.e. the appearing of a glorified Christ, and of those things in which He would appear to Paul – embracing fresh revelations of truth communicated to him at the moment of his conversion. But the Jews, being his accusers, and king Agrippa being one who knew the prophets and was versed in the Jewish Scriptures, the statements of the verses quoted (vv. 22,23), rather show that he was saying nothing contrary to the testimony of God in the Scriptures, which the Jews who accused him professed to accept.

Besides, Paul wrote 1st Corinthians during the early part of his stay at Ephesus, and sent it by Titus. (Compare Acts 19:22, with 1 Cor. 7:6). In it he taught the doctrine of the Church as “one body” (see chap. 12). He also wrote the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth during his ministrations there (see Rom. 16:1), where he commends Phoebe, who served the assembly at Cenchrea, near to Corinth; and in it he speaks of the practical relationship of Christ’s members as “one body” in chap. 12.

His ministry of the church as “one body” was no new thing when at Rome. He had taught it all through before he became the prisoner of Jesus Christ.<sup>164</sup>

### ***Is the Body a Visible Community, i.e., a Kingdom?***

❖ The body of Christ is not His kingdom. It is very convenient to assume it, but there is no ground for it whatever. His body is Himself; His kingdom is what He rules over, apart from Himself, He being King over it. King of the church is a thing unknown to scripture.<sup>165</sup> When He takes to Him His power and reigns, it will be over all the world. The field is the world now. The devil’s work [the tares] is in the scene of His kingdom now. They are not members of His body. We are His body, His bride -- of His flesh and of His bones; His kingdom is not that. He does not nourish and cherish His kingdom, He governs not His bride and His body. There is not a more mischievous error on these points than what is assumed here as a thing to be taken for granted. The kingdom may be realized within certain limits, and so far as to limits coincide as Christendom with the professing church; but the field is the whole world, and the form that the kingdom takes in fact is the work of the enemy as much as of the Lord. That is not true of the body, and shows the profound evil of the false doctrine which makes baptism the means of communicating life and introduction by union into the body, for a large part of what is in the kingdom is

164. *Words of Truth*, 5:218-219 (1870).

165. Even “King of saints” is recognized to be a false reading. It should be “King of nations.”



introduced by Satan -- namely, the tares, which are to be burned. Have they had life and union with Christ communicated to them by the sacrament of baptism? And let it not be said here, "Yes; but, being the seed of the wicked one, they have lost it again." In the parable they are introduced by Satan, and the theory of the Anglican catholic is that they are introduced by baptism and union thereby. Can there be a greater or more deplorable confusion?

There are a few general remarks I would make in conclusion to clear up the whole question. It is not the existence of a visible church which is denied by the evangelical world. Everyone knows there is such a thing; that there is a Christendom, which, as a religion in the world, can be contrasted with heathens, Jews, and Mohammedans {Muslims}. But evangelicals do not see the responsibility of the visible church, and that there ought to be, as there was, a maintenance of corporate unity as a testimony<sup>166</sup> for the glory of Christ. They do not see that Christians were bound to maintain unity and godliness. They do, consequently, content themselves with individual salvation, the individuals being members of the invisible body of Christ.<sup>167</sup> ❖

### *The Kingdom of the Son of Man and the Eternal State*

❖ . . . Jesus gives up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). He has taken the kingdom as a man. He who became a man and made Himself of no reputation has been highly exalted. The question is about His humanity, not about His divinity, properly speaking.

Jesus, as a man, intercedes now for us; as a man He shall reign also. This is infinitely precious to us. Jesus is not an unknown God, but a man sitting at the right hand of God. As a man He shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, which as a man He received (1 Cor. 15:22-28). As a man the Son shall be subject to God and shall no more reign, although as God He shall reign eternally. There is no more intercession when all the saints are happy, nor any government when all the wicked have disappeared and God shall be all in all.

Justice shall not reign then; it shall dwell (2 Pet. 3). Perfection will not exist until God has made all things new. There is here no distinction made of a people of God amongst men.

"The tabernacle of God is with men" {Rev. 21:3}. All is peace. God is all in all.

---

166. I say as a testimony, because the unity of the body is of God in itself, and cannot be destroyed. Christ's body is in itself one. Against His building the gates of hell shall not prevail. The responsibility lies in the manifestation of this on earth by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the unity of the members down here.

167. *Collected Writings* 15:352-353.

All those who remain after the judgment are blessed together. But we have to consider whether what is called the church now shall not also be a special blessing, whether it will not be the tabernacle of God amongst men. (See Eph. 3:21.)<sup>168</sup> ❖

❖ I would now turn to the question of Messiah's kingdom. There is a difference between the state of things in which there is a King reigning in righteousness, and "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" {2 Pet. 3:13}. If it dwells there, there is no need for rule. When there is a liability to evil, we want power to secure good. During the millennium there will be the King reigning in righteousness -- not merely dominion in righteousness, but securing righteousness by power. I distinguish between the states of "dwelling" and "reigning." The time when God will be all in all {1 Cor. 15:28} will be analogous to that of paradise in its character; the millennial time, to that of Noah's power, though there will be a great deal of the Adamic power brought in. Noah, if he had been faithful to the power given him, would have had a great deal of the Adam blessing; but he failed entirely, and then failed family discipline. The character of millennial blessing on earth will be the security of righteousness by power. But when "God shall be all in all," the new Adamic character of Christ will be displayed over a new creation, and all evil will be done away: "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God" {Rev. 21:3}. Therefore on the incarnation the heavenly host sounded, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward [or, in] men" {Lk. 2:14}. But when the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the word was, "Peace in heaven" {Lk. 19:38}. If Christ takes His place over earth and heaven, there must be peace between God and, the people on the earth.<sup>169</sup> ❖

---

168. *Collected Writings*, 5:95, 96.

169. *Collected Writings*, 32:272.

## Chapter 11

### *The Millennial Kingdom and The New Covenant*

There is a strange notion afloat in the world that was expressed by P. Mauro in the following words:

The millennium is a subject of fascinating interest. So little, however, is said about it in the Bible that almost boundless room is left to the imagination in respect to the details thereof . . . all that is written on the subject is found in the first ten verses of Revelation, Chapter 20.<sup>170</sup>

The OT is replete with descriptions of Christ's reign and the conditions that will prevail. Rev. 20 tells us the length of this reign. It is absurd to attempt to spiritually alchemize these prophecies into church period blessings. The inevitable result is the clouding of our special position, privileges, responsibility and failure.

As for the NT, the millennium is called by several names:

1. The regeneration
2. The times of refreshing
3. The restitution of all things
4. The dispensation of the fulness of times

These names denote features of the millennium and the all suppose the occurrence of a great change. We fear that those who attribute all their knowledge about the millennium to Rev. 20 are such as believe only what they like and who studiously avoid the facts of the case.

One who changed from postmillennial views to dispensationalism wrote:

In the first place I demur entirely to the statement . . . that the seat of the theory of the personal millennial reign of our Lord upon earth is acknowledged to be in Rev. 20:1-10. That this passage treats of the subject all who hold the doctrine of the personal reign will of course admit; that it supplies the instruction as to the period of that reign from which the distinctive word millennial is drawn is undoubtedly true but to say that "*the seat of the theory*" is acknowledged to be in Rev. 20 is not correct. It represents us as acknowledging what we not only deny but are prepared to disprove; viz., that

it is from this passage *exclusively* or *pre-eminently*, that the knowledge and proof of the doctrine is to be drawn. For myself I can truly say, that except as to the single point of duration, it was not from this Scripture more than others, *or so much as others*, that my own belief of millenarianism was derived; and as to the point of duration, my views underwent no change when the pre-millennial doctrine was received. I believed in a thousand years of blessedness on earth before I saw that it was to be introduced by the personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The attempt to make the whole question turn on the interpretation of Rev. 20 is, in my opinion, much more common than just. Had it pleased God to withhold that chapter, or even the entire book of Revelation, the proof would still, it seems to me, have been complete and decisive, of a long period of universal righteousness and joy introduced by Christ's second coming, and characterized by his reigning along with his risen and glorified saints over Israel and the nations of the earth. You will not suppose from this statement that I undervalue the confirmation afforded by the Apocalypse of doctrines previously revealed, or the precise instruction of ch. 20 as to the 1000 years' continuance of Christ's reign. That against which I protest is, the representation that this passage is *the seat* instead of *a seat* of the doctrine in debate.<sup>171</sup>

William Kelly remarked:

Further, it is a mistake to suppose that the N.T. (save in Rev. 20) is silent about the millennium, if we mean the thing and not the mere word; if only the latter, it is but illusion. . . The O. T. had so fully described the millennium, and shown it to hinge, not only on the Messiah's presence, but on terrific judgments as introducing it, that there was the less need for the N.T. to dwell on what had been revealed already. To hold out the Lord's coming was therefore the exigency of the truth, if the millennium follows, but scarcely comprehensible if it be conceived to precede. For His coming in due time brings in the heavenly glory, as well as the peaceful reign over the earth, when the war-judgments have overwhelmed the wicked. And the Revelation is exactly the place to give particulars; for only in such a prophetic book could we intelligently expect the full, detailed, and relative order of these stupendous events.<sup>172</sup>

### *How Long is the 1000 Years?*

The scriptures that directly refer to, or include, the last half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week are these:

171. W. Trotter, *The Bible Treasury*, 1:113.

172. W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, 17:157.

170. *The Hope of Israel*, p. 241. See also *What, When and Where is the Millennium*, p. 65.

The middle of the week: Dan. 9:27

time, times and a half-time (interpreted as one, two and ½ years): Dan. 17:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14;

42 months: Rev. 11:12; 13:5

1260 days: Rev. 11:3; 12:6

1290 days: Dan. 12:11

1335 days: Dan. 12:12. It seems that the 1335<sup>th</sup> day will fall on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of a month, the first day of the feast of tabernacles, the beginning of Israel's full blessing.

An amillennialist named R. Zorn wrote:

In a book where ten days means a specified period of tribulation, but not that literal period of time (2:10); where the seven spirits of God stand for the fulness of the Holy Spirit and not a plurality of His being (4:5) where time references of twelve hundred and sixty days, forty-two months, and time, times and half a time refer to the entire present dispensation . . . it is exceedingly hazardous, if not untenable, to maintain that this must refer to a literal one thousand year period, whereas it also may quite properly stand for a significant symbolic designation.<sup>173</sup>

Let us see how the understanding of "1000 years" as a symbolic designation works out in understanding the book of Revelation. W. Hendrickson, another amillennialist, says,

Satan is bound and cast into the abyss; his power over the nations is curbed. Instead of the nations conquering the Church, the Church begins to conquer (evangelize) the nations.<sup>174</sup>

This is allegedly the character of the Church's progress. Note also that the 42 months are alleged to depict the present age. In Rev. 11:2 we see Jerusalem trodden upon. Is this the Church? No, he says. This is just the place for this spiritualizing system to say it is literal Jerusalem.<sup>175</sup> But the sanctuary of God, excluded from measurement, is alleged to be the Church. But this attempts to avoid the difficulty of the Church being trodden down when it is asserted that the church conquers for the 42 months. What of Rev. 13:5-7 where the beast overcomes the saints for the 42 months? *He conquers them*. Speaking of Rev. 13, W. Hendrickson says,

This condition will finally result in the complete destruction of the Church as

a mighty and influential organization for the spread of the gospel.<sup>176</sup>

But elsewhere he connects the destruction of the evangelization with the little season when Satan is loosed.<sup>177</sup> This interpretation is internally inconsistent since the beast makes war with the saints and overcomes them (Rev. 20:7). Since the beast practices for 42 months (alleged to be this age) the overcoming must be during the 42 months and not after it. Cp. Dan. 7:25. The idea of the 42 months being the present period when the church boldly contradicts the statement of Rev. 13:5-7. Thus, everything is tortured to fit the system.

W. Hendrickson says,

In the Apocalypse this period of three years and a half refers to the entire gospel age. It is followed by the "three days and a half" during which the beast that comes up out of the abyss – the antichristian world in its final phase – will kill the witnesses and will silence the voice of the gospel (cf. Rev. 11:7ff.).<sup>178</sup>

Why does he say this? Because he thinks the 3½ days coincide with the little season.<sup>179</sup> Does the beast kill the witnesses during the 3½ days as he alleges? Scripture says the witnesses are dead on the street for 3½ days (Rev. 11:9). These amillennialist contradictions of scripture are the result of refracting its light through the amillennial system.

The fact is that the efforts to make these numbers in question mean something other than literal time measurements involves amillennialists in adjusting the plain statements of numerous scriptures to their theological system. Take them as referring to definite periods and one gets light. The 1000 years is a literal period.

We are aware that there are many symbols in the book of Revelation. Pointing this out to us does not prove that the 42 months, or 1260 days, and the 1000 years are symbolic. If the use of symbols *proved* this, it would *prove* that everything is symbolic including the *seven* churches. There are symbolic numbers and literal numbers just as there are other things that are symbolic or literal. At any rate, what is "exceeding hazardous, if not untenable," is the equation of the 42 months and the 1000 years. Amillennialists have not shown that the 1000 years is a symbolic number.

Now note that Rev. 20:5b is an *interpretation* of vv. 4 and 5a. The interpretation says it is a 1000 year reign. Amillennialists interpret the interpretation and interpret it away. They interpret the interpretation as a symbol instead of accepting the interpretation as an explanation.

173. R. Zorn, *Church and Kingdom*, pp. 113,114.

174. W. Hendrickson, *More than Conquerors*, p. 184.

175. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

176. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

177. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

178. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

179. *Ibid.* p. 143.

It is peculiar how many amillennialists define the length of the reign as from Christ's first advent until His return.<sup>180</sup> We have noted elsewhere that some of these think that we may be in the "little season" now. Scripture says, "and when the thousand years have been completed, Satan shall be loosed from his prison" (Rev. 20:7). "... he should not any more deceive the nations until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little time" (Rev. 20:3).

The fact is plainly stated. The "little time" is *not* within the 1000 years. The 1000 years terminates at the beginning of the little time, not at the second coming. The above definition of the 1000 years is false, patently false. Was it so defined because, a difficulty is felt concerning a reign of 1000 years? The saints reign for the 1000 years, and then comes the little season which, being outside the 1000 years, terminates the reign. The saints are not said to reign during the little season. Is this why the definition of the 1000 years falsely states that it goes on to the second coming? No wonder amillennialists think the passage is obscure. Having falsified it systematically, it is *then* obscure.

In fact, we shall reign forever (Rev. 22:5). But there is a special phase to that reign for the 1000 years. We saw it stated in Rev. 20:7 that the little season terminates the 1000 years reign. Is Christ's kingdom then at an end? No. The last enemy, death, is not destroyed yet when the 1000 year reign ends. The "little season" must follow this reign and then at the great white throne, death and hades are cast into the lake of fire. It is consequent upon this that the Son delivers the kingdom to the Father, having perfectly discharged every aspect of it.

It is clear, then, by comparing Rev. 20:7 with 1 Cor. 15:25,26 that the kingdom of the Son of man, i.e., the reign of the Son of man, is a little longer than the 1000 year reign, which is a phase of the kingdom of the Son of man.

We have seen that attempting to equate the 1000 years with the 42 months, and the 3½ days with the little season, results in ignoring the direct statements of scripture and concludes in inconsistency.

### *The Regeneration*

The word "regeneration" is only used twice in scripture (Matt. 19:28, Titus 3:5) and means a passing from one state to another. It supposes a ruin of the first state. It is not the same thing as new birth<sup>181</sup> as Matt. 19:28 clearly proves. We are told by those who oppose the premillennial advent that Christ is on David's throne now. J. N. Darby remarked:

180. As does G. L. Murray, *Millennial Studies*, p. 184, who thinks we may be in the little season now, p. 181.

181. For a full discussion of this and the connection with new birth see *The Bible Treasury*, 6:206.

❖ Remark here how He shews that, in the literal interpretation of the prophecies as to the kingdom, the Jews did not deceive themselves. He is King as to His title now, but He has not taken His kingdom; He is not sitting on His own throne, but on His Father's; and He Himself makes the difference. To him that overcometh will I give to sit down on My throne, as I have overcome, and am set down on My Father's throne {Rev. 3:21}. To Him alone, the Son, it appertains in righteousness to sit on His Father's throne. It would be blasphemy to set us there. He glorified God His Father and is glorified with Him; we with Himself when He takes the kingdom. He is gone to receive the kingdom and to return.

To say the Father's throne is David's throne, is nonsense. God was to raise up one of David's seed to sit on David's throne, and that means, they tell us, the Father's. . . . Cannot a child see the perversity of such an interpretation? The royalty is not, and is never said to be, to save. . . , unless in outward deliverance by power. If it be, let Dr. B. quote the passage. He saves, in giving life as Son of God, in redeeming by His precious blood, in the exercise of His priesthood, from weaknesses. But salvation of souls is not attributed to His royalty, nor is He King over His church. On the contrary, Scripture declares that when He reigns, we shall reign with Him. It is in vain to use large words about it. There are those who must have Scripture testimony for what they believe. Nor does a teaching which makes the Father's throne David's throne, commend itself to those who have received their teaching from Scripture. Neither the apostles nor the Lord seek to overthrow the prophecies of the kingdom. They give something better.<sup>182</sup> ❖

There has not yet been produced a scripture which shows that Christ is now on His throne of glory. To say that He is glorified, no one doubts. That is not the issue here.

On the other hand, we have the plainest scripture testimony to the fact that Christ's throne of glory is future. Reference was made to Rev. 3:21. Another proof is Matt. 25:31. Now, Matt. 19:28 links "the regeneration" with the Son of man sitting upon His throne of glory and with the 12 apostles sitting as judges over the 12 tribes of Israel. Does anyone dream that this is happening now? Or that Israel needs to be judged in the eternal state?<sup>183</sup>

182. *Collected Writings* 11:546.

183. W. Hendricksen translates "regeneration" as "restored universe" – takes it as the eternal state. He takes the judging to probably mean "reigning over." What about the reference to the twelve tribes of Israel? Perhaps they are all the elect Jews from the beginning to the end of world history or maybe they are all the chosen of Jew and Gentile. He does not say why it is necessary to reign over such in the eternal state. *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 730. There is no scripture that says Christ reigns over the church. R. V. G. Tasker says that the 12 will be assessors with Christ when He will, after the old world has passed away, administer justice to the Israel of God (he uses this term for the

(continued...)

Connect this with Matt. 20:21-23. The kingdom about which the mother asked was neither the eternal state nor the amillennialists' spiritual kingdom. The Lord never corrected her, or anyone else's, expectation of a literal kingdom on earth but told her that the places that she requested for her sons were in the Father's disposition. This in effect confirmed her expectation of the kingdom.

James and John referred to this kingdom as "thy glory" (Mark 10:37). Our Lord also referred to the judging of the twelve tribes as occurring "in my kingdom" (Luke 22:30).

It is clear, then, that "the regeneration," "thy glory," and "the kingdom" refer to different aspects of the same thing, the reign of Christ when the twelve tribes are restored. This is the regeneration, a new state of things which Peter called the "times of [the] restoring of all things" (Acts 3:21).

### *The Age to Come*

Scripture considers the ages in several ways. One way in which Scripture speaks is to divide the world's history into two parts called:

(1) This age: Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:17. In Gal. 1:4 we read of "this present evil world" (i.e., age) and in 2 Tim. 4:10 of "Demas . . . having loved this present age". Since Christ was rejected, Satan is recognized as "the god of this world" (i.e., age). This age has a little period at its end called "the completion of the age: Matt. 13:39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20.

(2) The age to come: Matt. 12:32; Mark 10:31 and Luke 18:30; Eph. 1:21; Heb. 6:5. The age to come is called "that world" (really, age) in Luke 20:35.

It is at once evident that such expressions as "gospel age", "age of the Spirit"<sup>183</sup> etc. are not found in Scripture, and neither are the things meant by these expressions found there. Christianity is not an age.

After citing John 3:19; 1 John 2:8; Matt. 4:16 (quoting Isa. 42:7); Luke 1:69,70,78,79; 2:32; John 1:7, P. Mauro concludes:

Forasmuch then as this present age is described in many Scriptures as the day of "Light," because Christ "the True Light" is come, and forasmuch as John was sent expressly "to bear witness of *the Light*, that *all* men through Him might believe," it follows that John was the herald of *this present dispensation*, and not the announcer of a kingdom which

183. (...continued)

Church. *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 189.). We might well wonder what justice the "Israel of God" will need in the eternal state? Or does he think the 12 will be on the *bema* with Christ? Note also the spiritual alchemy. The scripture says "the twelve tribes of Israel." These writers say otherwise.

184. R. Zorn, *Church and Kingdom*, p. 44.

was then thousands of years off.<sup>185</sup>

First, we note that he equates the following three things: "this present age", "the day of 'Light'", and "this present dispensation". This is quietly done without any explanation.

Second, "this present dispensation" is not called "the day of 'Light'" in Scripture. If he could have quoted a scripture for it, he would have done so. Of course, if we prefer scripture for our thoughts, we shall find that the darkness did not apprehend the light (John 1), that the night is far spent (Rom. 13:12) and surely this must mean it is night, but that we are children of light, not of night (1 Thess. 5:5), and for us the darkness is passing (1 John 2:8).

Third, "the present age" is not "the present dispensation". Satan is the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). In effect these notions make him the god of the day of light and the god of the present dispensation.

The purposes of these phrases and notions is to get rid of the true age to come, i.e., the personal millennial reign of Christ.

But there is another view, wherein there are many ages:

1. The mystery of Christ and the church was hidden from the times of the ages (Rom. 16:25), "hidden throughout the ages in God" (Eph. 3:11), and hidden from ages (Col. 1:26). Cp. also 1 Cor. 2:7.
2. I think that 2 Tim. 1:9 refers to this aspect as does Titus 1:2; 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:26.

These expressions denote periods of O.T. history. They contain lessons for us (1 Cor. 10:11). Jude 25 refers to the whole course of time.

Eph. 3:11 refers to the eternal purpose. The following passages refer to eternity: Eph. 3:21; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Peter 4:11; 5:11; Rev. 1:18; 4:9; 5:13,14; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5; also Heb. 1:8; Eph. 2:7; Heb. 13:8; Luke 1:33.

God is "King of the ages" (1 Tim. 1:17).

Our conclusion from examining all of this is that the period from the beginning up until the millennium is the present age, now called the present evil age. It will be followed by another age, the age to come. The present age has had other ages within it, like wheels within wheels!

185. P. Mauro, *The Gospel Promised Afore*, p. 16.

The “works of power of [the] age to come” (Heb. 6:6) refers to the miracles wrought by Christ and that were wrought in apostolic times. The miraculous powers promised in Mark 16:17,18 were realized in the apostolic period and were then accomplished, as Heb. 2:3,4 shows. In John’s gospel, the miracles performed by our Lord are invariably called “signs”. A miracle wrought by Christ, or His apostles, or those to whom they directly communicated the power, were signs. The apostle Paul had apostolic power communicated to him from the ascended Christ. Thus he could write to the Corinthians, “The signs indeed of the apostle were wrought among you in all endurance, signs, and wonders, and works of power” (2 Cor. 12:12). If others could do these things independently of the apostle, then the phrase “signs indeed of the apostle” is meaningless.

When the Lord restores one to health through prayer, even remarkably, it is not a miracle, a sign. “John did no miracle” (John 10:21). Does that mean no prayers of his were ever answered? We use the word miracle loosely concerning things to which God does not apply the term. We ought then to avoid its unscriptural use.

God never meant miracles for the entire age. Those that were wrought were works of power of the age to come, i.e., the millennium, a period that will be characterized by these displays of power. Compare Isa. 35:5-7.

The works of power of the age to come that were performed during our Lord’s ministry and the apostolic period were a foreview of the works proper to the dispensation of the fulness of times when Christ’s mighty power shall be displayed in the glory that will then be His.

If one does not wish to acknowledge that the age to come will be between the second advent and the eternal state, he can satisfy himself by defining “the age to come” away! For example, J. Wilmot said,

As this present inhabited world is also spoken of as this present age, so the habitable world to come is the age to come, or, in the use of the plural of majesty, the ages to come.<sup>186</sup>

However, it is senseless to think of miracles in the eternal state.

## The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

A dispensation is an administration or stewardship. Eternity is not a dispensation. Though eternity is called “the ages of ages”, eternity is not time. Titus 1:1,2 speaks of the promise of eternal life before “the ages of time”. Eph. 1:10 speaks of “the dispensation of the fulness of times”. This refers to an administration on earth, in time, not to eternity.

All power in heaven and earth belongs to our Lord (Matt. 28:18) but He has not

---

186. J. Wilmot, *Inspired Principles of Prophetic Interpretation*, p. 39.

yet taken possession of the earth, and reigned. This He will do in the dispensation of the fulness of times when all will be headed up in Christ. This is His millennial reign, when He will administer the kingdom. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:24-28. And when He has perfectly discharged that stewardship then He will give “up the kingdom to him [who is] God and Father . . . that God may be all in all.” As far as God’s purpose of glory in the earth is concerned, history is moving to this grand goal. It will be the fulness of times. J. N. D. wrote:

❖ When once the place of the church is seen, and its place with Christ in heavenly glory, all falls into its scriptural place, and the church itself is not reduced to an improved Judaism, as it is by these teachers. But it is important to notice here that the kingdom is not everything, but the lower part of the glory, the glory terrestrial. Moreover Scripture carefully distinguishes Christ’s headship over all things and His headship to the church. God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, in Him, in whom we have obtained an inheritance; Eph. 1. We are joint-heirs with Christ. As Son of man He is set over all the works of God’s hands, His own creation. All things, the Father excepted, are put under Him. They are not yet actually so (Heb. 2), and He sits on His Father’s throne till they are - till His enemies are made His footstool. They are not so yet. Thus He has not taken the exercise of His kingly power to reign, though owned of God and believers as King. But He is given to be Head over all things to the church which is His body.

But though all things are not reconciled, believers are, marking the difference between the heirs and the inheritance, see Colossians 1. He is the firstborn of every creature for He created them: there is one pre-eminence. He is the firstborn from the dead, the Head of the body, the church: there is another. God is to reconcile all things in heaven and earth by Him. “You [the saints] hath he reconciled.” Thus, His universal supremacy, supremacy given to Him as man, is distinguished from His headship to the church. Compare Ephesians 1:22, and Hebrews 2:6-9, commenting on Psalm 8: see also 1 Corinthians 15:25-28.<sup>187</sup> ❖

W. Kelly wrote:

. . . He will put all things heavenly and earthly under His headship, as the risen and glorified man. What a truth! The whole universe of God under man — no doubt in Christ; but man! What a day that will be, and what a state of things! What joy and brightness when a king shall not merely reign in righteousness in a particular land, but when the whole creation of God, rescued from the usurper and from all the sad effects of the fall, will be under the only man capable of

---

187. *Collected Writings*, 11:548.

using all and governing all for God — capable, too, of filling it with every element of blessing, and upholding it to the glory of God. In that day Christ will accomplish this. He has undertaken this purpose of God, and will bring glory to Him as truly in this scene of government, as already in grace, when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He was once offered to bear the sins of many, and perfectly glorified God as to sin. Yet outward appearances, we know, disclose nothing of the kind. Seemingly sin prevails, and Christ is but the rejected man; but faith knows that the only victory which cost God anything (and it cost Him everything) is won. But what joy when it will not merely be an unseen truth known to the soul, but when every whit of God's creation will proclaim that Christ is exalted over all things! We too shall be there: we shall be with Him. It could not be but that this must be a joy to us: it could not be that a believing soul would despise such glory and bliss, or think lightly of it when it is presented to the heart in the word of God. But surely it will be to us even deeper joy that Christ will be over all things to the glory of God, — though we shall be the nearest and most intimate object of His love, His bride in association with Him as Head over all things that God has made — deeper still to be with Him where He is, that we may behold His glory, loved as He was of the Father before the foundation of the world. (John 17)<sup>188</sup>

Ever since dispensational truth was restored to the church through J. N. Darby, opposers have eloquently denounced the mixture of heavenly and earthly things in the millennium. We are aware that often unwise and foolish things are said and speculation and imagination substitute for sober scripture too often. Be that as it may, the objections of anti-millennarians are not any better. Thus W. Kelly replied to D. Brown:

It is in vain to take advantage of those who ignorantly mix up the heavenly and the earthly, and to break forth into the exaggerated cry — “What a mongrel state! What an abhorred mixture of things totally inconsistent with each other!” The millennium differs from all that has been. The transfiguration was but a partial and passing sample.<sup>189</sup>

And at the transfiguration Moses was not in a glorified body. The disciples were in their natural bodies. And our Lord was transfigured before them. This is surely a mixture. But we ought not to speculate on such things. Christ will head up both heavenly and earthly things.

Is the dispensation of the fulness of times the present period in which we live?

188. W. Kelly, *The Second Coming and Kingdom*, pp. 308,309.

189. W. Kelly, *The Second Advent*, p. 120. The matter is treated somewhat by W. Trotter, *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, pp. 550-555.

J. Wilmot wrote,

The fulness of times, therefore, covers the period of history between the first and second advents of Christ. Its administration is the operation of God in grace and in providence, or, in the terms of the context, “in all wisdom and prudence”, whereby in His perfect knowledge and management of affairs, He shall have comprehended all things in Christ under His supreme headship.<sup>190</sup>

So “the fulness of times”, it is alleged, refers to the present period. By reading Eph. 1:9,10 one would expect that all things are headed up in Christ now. Is it so?

“But now, we see not yet all things put under Him” (Heb. 2:8). This testimony is as apposite today as to the apostles in their day. The total subjugation of the universe to Christ is not yet, but it is as certain as the complete salvation of His elect people. These both shall be His demonstrated accomplishments to be celebrated at His second coming.<sup>191</sup>

It is alleged that Christ’s “investure” has already taken place but Dan. 7:14 has not been completed yet. Obviously not all things are put under Him yet (Heb. 2:8). Let that sink into the soul! When then will all things be put under Him?

Nor yet do we see this completed, it remains as yet an unfinished work, but the Scripture assures us that all will be in subjection to Him in the “world to come”. And it is of this coming world that the apostle says, “whereof we speak”. Our sight of the universal triumph of Christ awaits His appearing; . . .<sup>192</sup>

It is at the appearing that all things will be put under Him; agreed. But it is in the fulness of times that all things are headed up in Him. This false system would have us believe that the dispensation of the fulness of times, in which *all things are headed up in Christ*, is the present period – when *we see not yet all things put under Him!* We do not accept such contradictions. The fact is, the dispensation of the fulness of times, in which all things are headed up in Christ, follows the present period in which we see not yet all things put under Him. When He appears

## *The Habitable Earth To Come*

W. Kelly wrote,

Hebrews 2:5-8 may close with its unmistakeable voice these New Testament witnesses, and the more so as it links them on to the Old Testament, which is the distinctive character indeed of the epistle. It is not only that we are here told of the subjection to Christ of the habitable earth to come (Heb. 2:5), which can

190. J. Wilmot, *Inspired Principles of Prophetic Interpretation*, p. 32.

191. Ibid., p. 37.

192. Ibid., p. 38.

only apply as a fact to the millennial era; but Psalm 8 is cited to prove the putting of all things in subjection under His feet. And so absolutely does this embrace the entire creation, heavenly and earthly, that 1 Cor. 15, citing the same Scripture, has to except Him who put all things under Christ; and Eph. 1, where it is also cited, virtually excepts the Church, because it is the body of Christ, and therefore one with Him who is thus Head over all things. Personally He is now in this place of exaltation; "but now we see not yet all things put under him." This will be precisely in the millennium, and neither in strictness before it nor after it; for in the millennium there will be the display of His exaltation, and this over "all things," whether earthly or heavenly, as the psalm is thus comprehensively interpreted by the Holy Ghost in the later inspired writings which make use of it. The reason why there is a pause between Christ's invisible exaltation to the right hand of power, (where He has this place of headship,) and the sight of all things put under Him, is because, while He is thus on high, God is calling out those who shall be joint-heirs, yea, His bride, even as now they are His body. When God's calling of the heavenly saints is complete, Jesus will come, and in due time, when He is manifested, we too shall be manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3) — a passage which itself supposes men on earth, before whom the manifestation of Christ and the Church takes place. This, too, is millennial, and possible neither in the present age nor in eternity.<sup>193</sup>

### *The Times of Refreshing*

See Acts 3:19-21 in JND's translation.

Our Lord "became a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy" (Rom. 15:8,9). He died "for the nation; and not for the nation only" (John 11:51,52). Israel shall yet have a supreme place, not as part of the church, but as head of the nations under Messiah's sway; for they "shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. 110:3).

Thus rejection of Christ was the occasion to introduce the church. This was the purpose of God. The church was formed at Pentecost (Acts 2), though the doctrine of it awaited revelation through Paul. Our Lord had prayed "Father forgive them . . ." and there was a suspension of judgment for the time. The Jews were warned in Acts 2:40; and in Acts 3:19-21 an appeal was made. The introduction of the church at Pentecost in no way sets aside the promise to the fathers, or Christ's death for the nation. All was secured by that mighty work for God's glory and the blessing of saints, though that blessing may have various associations and privileges beyond salvation, according as it pleases God.

Acts 3:21 states that God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets

concerning the times of the restoring of all things. It was thus a subject of O.T. prophecy. Either these times are the present period or they are a future period. Since Peter refers to these times as *still to come*, those times did not arrive at Pentecost. W. Kelly remarked,

If ever a time was when the Holy Ghost wrought mightily in the power of divine grace, if ever there was a time when the saints of God on the earth were filled with a sense of His goodness and of that which Christ was to them, (I do not say for thorough intelligence, but for practical power,) it was at Pentecost. For great grace on all, there was nothing like the very hour in which Peter uttered these words. At that day, surely, if ever, it might have been thought that the seasons of refreshing were come by the power of the Holy Ghost upon the earth, that times of restoring all things were then established morally by the gospel. Certainly, if blooming and abundant fruits in souls could account for such a feeling, there was peculiar excuse for it then. But this was the precise moment which the Holy Ghost seized by the apostle Peter to declare in the most emphatic manner that these times are still future; that a further mighty change needs to be wrought; that it is not to be effected by fresh or repeated missions of the Holy Ghost on Christians or for Christian purposes, but by sending Jesus — that Jesus who is gone away to heaven; and that, when He comes from heaven once more, then and not before shall be the times, not of the destruction of earth and heaven, but contrariwise of the restitution of all things of which God has spoken by His holy prophets since the world began. The testimony of the prophets, thus appealed to, ought to leave the meaning of this Scripture entirely unambiguous. It is not a question of New Testament declarations and hopes, but of that which was already written or spoken by the mouth of the prophets, "His holy prophets," it is said, "since the world began."

There can be no doubt therefore that the intention of this statement of the Holy Ghost by Peter was to let the Jews know that their repentance and conversion, that their sins might be blotted out as a nation, is an antecedent condition of the great revolution yet to take place for this world. When the heart of Israel as Israel is touched, when they turn to the Lord — it may be but tremblingly and with very partial understanding of His grace, but when it is a real work in their heart, God shall send Jesus from heaven. Our Lord Himself uttered similar truth in the close of Matthew 23, which passage was before us a short time ago. He left their house unto them desolate, "till" — not for ever, but "till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah."<sup>194</sup>

W. Trotter has dealt at length with the antimillennarian argument that "restitution" (KJV) means "fulfilment" or "accomplishment." The contention is that

193. W. Kelly, *The Second Coming and Kingdom* . . . , pp. 334,335.

194. W. Kelly, *Lectures on the Second Coming and Kingdom*, pp. 295-297.



Christ would not come until all that the prophets prophesied had been fulfilled or accomplished. W. Trotter pointed out that this argument leads to the absurd result that Christ could not come until after “the last judgment” was accomplished!<sup>195</sup> We can see the reason for such arguments because this scripture states that the heavens must receive Christ “till [the] times of [the] restoring of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets . . .” It is clear that the restitution of all things follows His present session at God’s right hand. That is, His reign, His restoring of order in the earth, will follow His session at the Father’s right hand.

There are other “until”s connected with the times of refreshing. We do not mean by this that each “until” realizes its fulfilment in the same 24 hour period. Besides the heavens receiving our Lord until the times of the restoring of all things, we are told that He sits at God’s right hand until His enemies are made His footstool (Acts 3:21); also, Israel’s house is left desolate until they say, “Blessed [be] he that comes in the name of [the] Lord” (Matt. 23:39); and, “blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in” (Rom. 11:25). We also read, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of [the] nations until [the] times of the nations be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

In order to bring in blessing to this earth under Messiah’s universal sway, He will come from heaven taking vengeance on His enemies (2 Thess. 1:8,9; 2:8,9; Rev. 19:19-21). At that time He will smite the nations, the Gentiles (Rev. 19:15), and thus the times of the Gentiles, or nations, will terminate. Then He will reign 1000 years (Rev. 20). The rebels will have been purged out of Israel (Ezek. 20) and so “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26); and the nations will be blessed (Rom. 11:25) and Christ will shepherd them in righteousness (Rev. 19:15).

O. T. Allis objects thus:

For if the offer of this kingdom had already been postponed for the entire Church age, what right had Peter to offer it practically at once to Jews whose hands were red with the blood of their Messiah, and on exactly the same terms as those on which it had been offered to them some three years previously? If this is not the meaning of Peter’s exhortation, there was no postponement of the kingdom offer. The kingdom was just as much “at hand” when he preached this sermon as it had ever been.<sup>196</sup>

The answer is simple. The *offer* of the kingdom was not concluded before the cross.

The offer took two forms, however. Before the cross the kingdom was preached as “at hand.” Messiah hadn’t died then. But by the time we reach Acts 3, He had

died and gone to heaven. Consequently the form of the offer takes this change into account. The kingdom was not preached by Peter as at hand. And thus a national repentance was needed concerning their guilt in killing Messiah. Certainly there was a change in the form of the offer.

Consider the parable of Luke 13:6-9. For three years the Lord came seeking fruit from the fig-tree, i.e., Israel *as a nation*. Note that for the following year the servant (i.e., the Holy Spirit) applied what was necessary in order to produce fruitfulness. It produced no fruit. But note that the Lord’s work in respect to seeking fruit from Israel for 3 years was carried on by another. And this corresponds to the two forms of the offer. We find the Spirit’s testimony to Israel carried out as recorded in the beginning of Acts. He dug the ground and dunged it. Now, this parable teaches something or it does not. It teaches that this continuation of seeking fruit from Israel continued for a year after the Lord’s ministry of three years.

We should now enquire about when this added year of the Holy Spirit’s effort concerning the nation ended. The parable of Luke 19:11-27 gives us the clue. The embassy that these citizens (Jews) sent after the man WHO WAS GONE was Stephen. They sent him up with the message of rejection to the Man now gone to the far country. They listened to Stephen until he said that he saw the Son of Man in the glory. Blessed thought, the Shekinah is linked with Jesus.

Thus ended the year of grace during which God still sought fruit from Israel as a nation. Rapid changes then took place. The Ethiopian and Samaritans found Christ (Acts 8). The great apostle of the nations was saved (ch. 9). Peter preaches to Gentiles (ch. 10), etc. etc.

We are offered another objection and that is that if this is so, then the “church age” might have terminated at its beginning, but this termination could not be so early according to Rom. 11:25.<sup>197</sup> We have already considered the synchronization of four *untils*. The point is that God knew they would reject the offer. What if one says that this could not be because if it was God’s purpose to introduce the church, then this was not a bona-fide offer? This is the same morality issue raised with respect to the offer of the kingdom by our Lord, when He knew the church was going to be formed. The difficulty results from reasoning from self to God. *I* should not make offers when my plans are otherwise. Reason not thus about the sovereign God. He uses these things to bring out the perversity and depravity of man. “But what if . . .” is a question as useless as it is uninformative. “But what if . . .” in such a case as this is, in effect, a denial of the sovereignty of God. It could not be otherwise than it was and God made these moral tests to bring out the heart of man.

195. W. Trotter, *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, pp. 249-254.

196. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 140.

197. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 140.

There are those who profess to believe (and rightly so) in the total depravity of man who raise this “moral” issue. That seems strange indeed, for that very depravity ensured that the Jews would reject the kingdom offered in the Person of the Lowly One. God well knew how to make the test strike at the very citadel of self. Hardened in that rejection, they stoned Stephen to death. The times of refreshing are still ahead.

### *Is the Reign of Christ a Step Backwards?*

An amillennialist said,

We have never been able to see the purpose of such a reign, nor can we understand how the Lord’s physical presence, visible to a comparatively small number of His people, could mean more that [sic] His spiritual presence experienced by them all, unless we choose to dispense with faith and walk by sight.<sup>198</sup>

A postmillennialist said,

But strange as it may seem, after nearly twenty centuries of enlightenment by the Holy Spirit, this same idea of a world power kingdom of Jewish supremacy has been taken up by all types of Premillennialism and made the main plank in their system. Though the modern advocates have eliminated some of the grosser elements, they still look for a political and military kingdom, with Christ sitting on a throne built by human hands in the earthly city of Jerusalem, exercising a rod-of-iron rule, administering justice to the people, and dispensing those blessings which result so largely in world prosperity. But, embellish it as they will, what an anti-climax it would be for the Lord Jesus to be brought down from the indescribably glorious throne in heaven to occupy for a thousand years a cramped earthly throne of human origin!<sup>199</sup>

Also strange as it may seem, after nearly twenty centuries of gospel preaching, the millennium has not commenced. Rather, instead of the leaven in the three measures of meal being the gospel converting society, the leaven, as always in scripture, represents something evil – and the doctrine of Christ is steadily being corrupted; the food of God’s people is being perverted.

Instead of the world getting better, when Christ comes conditions will be as in Noah’s day (Matt. 24:37-39) and Christ will come to destroy (Rev. 17:14, 19:14). Hence it shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:28-30). Nations will be destroyed, not converted, and will need shepherding with

an iron rod (Rev. 2:27). This will catch them when they are hoping for peace and safety (1 Thess. 5:2,3). See also 1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:20, 21; 3:1-5, 13; 4:3,4; Titus 1:10-16; James 5:1-8; 1 Peter 4:17-18; 2 Peter 2:1-7, etc., etc. And what about *succession* in the church? See Acts 20:28-31 and Rom. 11:22.

From the viewpoint of God’s purpose for the earth, and blessing on the earth, it is a forward step that Christ shall regulate all for God’s glory. Christ’s earthly throne is not of human origin. The throne of David is the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23). It is not at all a question of “cramped.” Does he mean that our Lord can’t fit into it? Does he mean that it wouldn’t represent sovereign, universal, earthly power? Does he mean it denotes a restriction of His power?

We have elsewhere considered the effect upon walk resulting from a denial of the personal reign of Christ. Denying the millennial kingdom involves Christians directly with the world.<sup>200</sup> This results from denying that the kingdom will be brought in by judgment and substituting for that and Christ’s personal glory the various results accomplished by Christians. The effect of this is to set aside the heavenly calling and the true nature of the church.

The above two quotations no doubt have a spiritual sound to the advocates of those systems. Just the opposite is, in fact, the case, for both systems Judaize and incorporate worldly methods, principles and programs.

These apparently spiritual sounding objections were refuted by W. Kelly over 100 years ago, thus:

No doubt, preconceived views and traditions of men make this a great difficulty to some Christians. It may be desirable therefore to remove, if possible, some of their chief difficulties. The future kingdom of Christ visibly established over the earth seems to many conscientious souls a step backward. The more you maintain the exceeding blessedness of the Church now, and that form in which the kingdom of Christ is actually known by faith, the more you do violence to their most cherished thoughts and expectations. They look for the stability of that which now is, yea, for its progress. But that seems a going back. They turn our own weapons against us; they ask whether Christians have not now in this world the Lord Jesus Christ known in the most blessed manner? Has not the Spirit of God been poured out personally and in power, so that the believer may walk by faith in the deep joy of an unseen Saviour? Are we not then, they argue, contending for an inferior order of things, for another age to succeed the present, in which sight will take the place of faith, and every natural good will abound to the people of God, and it will be simply power

198. G. L. Murray, *Millennial Studies*, pp. 19-20.

199. L. Boettner, *The Millennium*, p. 287.

200. As seen, for example, in S. Travis, *The Jesus Hope*.

governing righteously, instead of the Holy Ghost strengthening the saints unto patience and the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, in the knowledge of Himself and the power of His resurrection? Are we not then, they say, pleading for a retrograde movement — a going back, instead of forward, according to the usual principle of God's ways? The answer is plain and conclusive, as the difficulty is only owing to a contracted view of the subject, i.e. to ignorance. Let us seek to look a little more largely and deeply at the manner in which God has wrought upon the earth; and it will soon be seen that the very objection against the truth which has passed before us this night turns, as is so often the case, into a positive argument in its favour.

What has been witnessed in this world? Before Christ's coming Israel was under law; but Israel disobeyed, Israel was broken up and dispersed, because they were guilty of rebellion and idolatry, as they were also of refusing and crucifying their own Messiah. It is plain that nothing could be more miserable — no ruin more complete. Then, after the cross comes another thing. The rejected Messiah takes His place in heaven, head of a new glory, after a manner quite unexpected, not according to Old Testament expectations. I do not mean the bare fact of His going to heaven; nor simply of His taking His seat at the right hand of God; for these things were predicted in the Psalms. Neither do I refer to the bare fact of blessing the Gentiles with His people; nor even to the Gentile call when the Jews were rejected; for the prophets without doubt were not silent on these great particulars. But I mean Christ's becoming the head of a body in heaven, and His abiding there; so that the Holy Ghost should be sent down to form men out of Jews and Gentiles into union with Himself and with each other, so making one new man, the Church, the body of Christ, while at the right hand of God. All this, I say, is the mystery that was entirely hidden in the Old Testament times, and only revealed now to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. But if we turn our eyes to the Church upon the earth, what witness of a calling so high and glorious do we find now? Alas! the same tale as Israel told before of sin, rebellion, and idolatry; no less dishonour put upon Jesus, no less persistent resistance of the Holy Ghost. And if God spared not the natural branches of the olive tree, will He for ever refrain from cutting off the wild-olive Gentile that He was pleased to graft in? Assuredly He will not sanction the iniquity of Christendom, but judge it yet more sternly. He who abandoned Shiloh, He who profaned His own house in Jerusalem, winks not at all that He beholds now done, under the name of Christ, in every land under heaven. Indeed, He lingered long with Israel, pitying them, lifting them up, and warning them; but still He was there finally as a judge of His people, and in the very Cherubim of glory in the

book of Ezekiel was that which told of the wrath that fell upon the people when His glory departed from them for a season. So with Christendom, whatever may be the long-suffering grace of God. I do not doubt there is this difference in Christendom, that the Holy Ghost being sent down to abide with us for ever, never under any circumstances leaves the children of God in this world, any more than He abandons utterly any individual who really belongs to God in this age. Yet, weighing in the light of His word the past and present state of Christendom, I cannot conceive a more heinous insult to His goodness and His holy nature and character, than the notion that He looks with approbation upon the sinful, distracted, anomalous condition of that which bears the name of Christ upon the earth. I do not doubt for a moment His mercy, spite of all around, His faithfulness in blessing the word, the sure dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the believer and the Church: yet, for all this and more, Christendom's history is the history of foul sin, sorrow before unknown, burning shame, constant dishonour against the Lord.

And how stands in these respects the future age? how "the world to come," whereof we speak? The Lord Jesus comes; and at once — in a moment — those who wait for Him, the faithful in the past and in Christendom, are caught up to be with Him, glorified and translated to heaven. Is not this progress? Is it not a most precious step in advance that the Church, failing, scattered, degraded, and never so much as now, should be thus taken out of the scene of her sins and follies, and be with Christ Jesus for ever in glory? And when He is manifest in that glory, and we shall be manifested in glory along with Him, is this, I would ask in my turn, is this a retrograde step for the Church? Who would not allow that it is the precise contrary? Take again another look. He comes, and all the saints with Him. Forthwith the countless and proud enemies of Israel are overwhelmed and destroyed; the poor trembling Jews are delivered as from the jaws of the lion; the proud chivalry of Western Europe, alas! apostate with the mass of the Jews, perish in their rebellion against the Lord of lords, and King of kings. The mighty one from his fastness in the north comes, hoping to take advantage of that "peeled" people, and so seize the holy and long-coveted land of Israel, not believing any more in the glory of God to be manifested in Jerusalem, than men believe in the grace of God now; but he, too, and all his company, are humbled and broken for ever. The Lord Jesus destroys all His enemies, inward and outward, near and afar off, down to the last enemy, not merely of the Jews, but of Israel as a whole. The Assyrian is overthrown. Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, the great north-eastern antagonist of Israel in that day, may still remain for a brief space. After the awful

judgment of the Western powers, judged still more awfully under the beast and the false prophet, the Lord Jesus will discomfit all the nations, His foes; He will deliver and exalt His people, sanctifying the name of Jehovah in both. He will not only bless Israel, but make them an eternal blessing in the earth. If this be not progress for Israel, what is progress?

And therefore it is that, so far from the administration of the fulness of times (Ephesians 1:10) being an act of retrogression in the ways of God, it is the most real and manifest progress, if anything can be so viewed. But then you must beware of comparing the heavenly body of the Church in its calling with the earthly people of Israel. This has been the source of the mistake. Compare Israel in the past or present with Israel under Messiah and the New Covenant, and then say whether this be retrogression or advance. Take in the fulness of times; view the fulfilment of the entire sweep of the divine purposes; look upon the gathering of all things in heaven and in earth, under the headship of the Lord Jesus, and then you will have the truth simply, but you will have it also gloriously; for then Christ will be the manifest head over all things to the Church, glorious with Him, and, like Him, the sharer of all He has in that day. Even now, wondrous grace! He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Do you think it is to speak too boldly or irreverently, if I say that He will have no reason to be ashamed of His Church then? Will not the Church be the reflection of His own beauty and glory; all of it the fruit of divine grace to us? How could He be ashamed of His own likeness, then? I ask once more, will this be progress for the Church? Again, when Israel is no longer stiff-necked and self-confident, boasting about the law, and really and ever breaking it; when the law is written upon their hearts; when they possess all the blessings of the new covenant; when they bow before their own Messiah, no longer despised and spit upon, but received, adored, reigning over them and their land — will not this be progress for Israel? Most assuredly and emphatically.

Again, when the heavens are no longer arrayed against the earth, because of the pollutions and rebelliousness of this lower scene; when the prince of the power of the air falls, who with his angels makes the heaven to be the chief seat of his plans and efforts to delude and destroy the world, as well as to accuse the saints of God; when all these higher places are cleared of the foe, and Jehovah hears the heavens, and the heavens (instead of turning a deaf ear to the bad and bold world below) shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel, who shall then be sown and bear fruits, instead of being as now vainly scattered by every wind that blows will not this be progress? And when land or water shall know neither scorching heat nor devastating tempest, when the fruits of the earth shall be no more visited

by drought or mildew, by palmer-worm, locust, canker-worm, or caterpillar, when (save as a special curse for contempt of God) the four sore plagues shall be no more, and health, peace, and plenty shall be everywhere, and the harvest never perishes, and the herds are no more perplexed nor the flocks made desolate, and the beasts groan and cry no more; but contrariwise the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed, and the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: for water shall break out there, and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water, and grass with reeds and rushes shall be where dragons lay, and a way of holiness shall be there, an unerring way for the feeblest, and neither unclean man nor ravenous beast shall be there; but the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard with the kid, and the calf and young lion and fatling shall be there led of a little child; and cow and bear shall feed, their young lying down together, and the lion eat straw like an ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child put his hand on the cockatrice' den, nor hurt nor destruction be on all God's holy mountain: — will this be progress, or will it not? Manifestly, whether we look at the heavens, the earth or sea, at the Church above, at Israel or the Gentiles below, or even at the lower creation, it is triumphant progress in every sphere and every object, and it is all through Christ, all through His blood, all to His glory and God's glory by Him. If the lack of seeing progress in the millennium has deterred you, if you have hesitated about Christ's appearing and kingdom lest it might be a step backward in God's ways, blame yourself for your ignorance; beware of the false teachers who so misled you; commit yourself henceforth more simply and fearlessly to God and His word, the only source and standard of truth.

Let me appeal to your conscience, you who accept the truth here insisted on: does it in very deed lower your thoughts of Christ's appearing? does it make you more earthly-minded to believe the kingdom of God shall be thus visibly introduced at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ? Surely you feel, on the contrary, that it fills a void in the future as nothing else can, gives meaning to a vast field of otherwise misunderstood Scripture, and vindicates the goodness, and power, and purposes of God in Christ with manifest triumph. . . .

The grand point to seize is the union, without confusion, of heaven, earth, and all things in them, under the Lord Jesus displayed in visible glory. The early Chiliasts wrongly dwelt on the earthly things of the kingdom; the moderns have been in general disposed to look only at the

heavenly things. The truth which God is now reviving from His word is the united system in which heaven and earth, so long severed, are bound together under the last Adam and His heavenly Eve, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. To many this presents an idea which revolts them; but I fear its source is thoroughly infidel — the reasoning from present experience so as to reject the plainest testimony of Scripture. Eph. 1:10, Col. 1:20, are most decisive, and above all exception as being imbedded within the highest unfoldings of Christian doctrine which the New Testament contains. But in truth they are found almost everywhere, in one form or another. Thus the Transfiguration in the three earlier gospels presents the clearest view of this most harmonious blending of the earthly with the heavenly, of men in natural bodies with those already risen and changed, and Christ the acknowledged chief and centre of the scene; and this is the more to be heeded, because 2 Peter 1:16, 17 treats it as a sort of sample of the kingdom. "For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Nor is the gospel of John silent. Not only does John 3:12 attest the "earthly" and the "heavenly" things of the kingdom of God, but the same principle alone explains John 17:22, 23. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Expressly this is the time of glory, ours in title now, but by and by to be so displayed that the world shall know (not "believe," but "know") that the Father sent the Son, and loved the saints after the same wondrous love. This is not the present state of things in which nothing of the kind is exhibited to or known by the world; neither can it be the eternal state when there will be no world to know it, even if it were the aim then and thus to make it known. The accomplishment of the Saviour's words can only, therefore, be in a condition which essentially differs from the present state and from eternity; and this, it is evident, can only be the millennial kingdom, with its heavenly glory an object of knowledge to the world below, and a spring of unceasing praise and glory to God.

No wonder that the Apocalypse sets its seal to the same precious truth; but such will be found to be the fact in Rev. 20, where judgment is given to the risen saints, who shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years: a reign which, as it is not begun yet, so it is inconsistent with what is revealed of eternity. The only time that

intervenes is the millennium, which follows the advent of Christ in Rev. 19, but precedes the resurrection of the rest of the dead, the wicked dead, to judgment in the close of Rev. 20. But this is not all; for Rev. 21, after giving a complete picture of eternity in verses 1-8, opens from verse 9 a retrospective vision of the millennial state, and presents to our view the glorified bride of the Lamb under the symbol of the holy city Jerusalem that descends out of heaven from God, in the light of which the nations walk, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and homage unto (not "into") it. What more evident than that here we have the symbolic representation of the same truth we saw in John 17:22, 23? For the world, the nations of the earth and their kings, cannot but see in these glorified saints the fullest witness that they share the glory of Jesus, and that they are loved of the Father as Christ was. No such sight can be as things now are; neither does it suit eternity, when nations and kings of the earth have for ever passed away. The millennium alone exactly meets the case, when heavenly and earthly things are thus seen in glorious accord.

But, in fact, though in various degrees of strength and clearness, the same truth appears throughout the Scriptures. For if the earnest expectation of the creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19), which can only be when Christ at His coming has raised them up and at His appearing has displayed them, this again can only be the millennial era. For then creation, as all the prophets bear witness, shall be set free and sing for joy, instead of being dissolved in order to form the new heavens and earth, which will characterize the eternal state. When those who now have the firstfruits of the Spirit are no longer groaning but revealed in glory, creation will be not destroyed, but delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. This is clearly the millennial day of gladness; not the passing away of the creation, when God shall make all things new for the final state. Then again 1 Cor. 6:2, 3 is most explicit; for what would be the sense of the saints judging the world or angels in eternity? Take it of the millennium, and all is plain; it is just one of the peculiar features which distinguish that day from the present on one side, and from eternity on the other. Again, Phil. 2:10, is plain; for though our Lord be exalted now, yet it is not yet the period when, in virtue of the name of Jesus, every knee bows, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings — when every tongue confesses that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. As this is manifestly not yet the fact, so neither does it harmonize with the eternal state as it does with the intervening millennium. For the point is man thus exalted, and every creature compelled to own him Lord, if it do not bow, as we do by grace with hearty good-will. Now, the grand truth of eternity will be God all in

all; not the special glorification of man in the person of our Lord Jesus.<sup>201</sup>

### *Is the Millennial Kingdom a Spiritual Reign Now?*

The amillennial system takes away from Christ His glory manifested in the very place where He was humiliated. The idea of a literal reign is called "crass literalism".<sup>202</sup> When analyzing the system of D. Brown, J. N. Darby made the following trenchant remark which is apropos to the amillennial system.

Here he takes glories [see 1 Peter 1:11] for no personal glories of Christ at all, but "the glorious results of the sufferings." (p. 424.) Now that tells the tale of the system. It is one which excludes Christ's person and personal glory, to substitute results in man for them.<sup>203</sup>

Christ is not yet on His own throne. If you believe that He is now on His own throne, why do you not produce scripture for your belief? It is neither stated nor implied that He is on His kingdom throne now. In fact, scripture explicitly tells us about the throne on which He is. Read Psalm 110:1-3 and Rev. 3:21. One day He will sit on His throne of glory (Matt. 25:31) when He shall have come to judge the living at His appearing. *Then* shall He rule in the midst of His enemies (Psalm 110:1-3). The rod of His power is not going out of Zion now. Then shall the deliverer come from Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26) and all Israel be saved. His people shall be willing in the day of His power (Psalm 110:3). They shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21). And He will shepherd the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27).

Concerning our reign with Him, W. Kelly remarked,

The reign of Christ and the glorified saints is heavenly, but *over the earth*. Only the old Chiliasts, and their modern followers, treat it as "on" the earth, as is wrongly said in the Authorized and even the Revised versions of Rev. 5:10. The local dwelling is properly *ἐν*, the sphere of rule is *ἐπὶ*, a distinction maintained in Hellenistic Greek, as in the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament. The vision being "in heaven" determines nothing as to actual place, as we may see from Revelation 12 and elsewhere. Nor is it confined to those beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, but comprehends, first the general body of saints in those seen seated on thrones, then those beheaded, and lastly such as refused the worship of the beast and his mark. The first general class was already risen; the two other companies only now lived, in order to reign with Christ, as all of course are to do. "Know ye not

201. W. Kelly, *The Second Coming and Kingdom*, pp. 313-331.

202. It is the pretension of a judaizing system to be spiritual.

203. J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings*, 11:590.

that the saints shall judge the world?.....Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3)<sup>204</sup>

We shall now consider three methods by which it is sought to show that the reign with Christ is transpiring now. This, of course, involves one's understanding of what is meant by "the first resurrection". The reign with Christ is regarded as:

- a. the new birth, or
- b. the passage at death to heaven (in the intermediate state), or
- c. resurrection

First, some say the reign with Christ is a spiritual reign of the saints on earth now, and cite Rev. 1:6, Col. 1:13 and Eph. 2:6. Coupled with this is the idea that the first resurrection is the new birth.<sup>205</sup>

This has the slightest show of plausibility because the new birth is quickening, i.e. making alive. However, the NT never uses the word resurrection for this quickening. Resurrection is only used of the quickening of dead bodies.

Fatal to this view is that the first resurrection has in it "souls of those beheaded" (Rev. 20:4) and they are seen reigning. These beheaded souls cannot refer to living saints now, since beheaded persons are dead.

Furthermore, 1 Cor. 4:8 and 2 Tim. 2:12 show that the reign was future for the then living saints, as does Rev. 3:21. In fact, 1 Cor. 4:8 is a rebuke. The present time is not reigning time for the saint.

Second, there are those who apparently are aware of the above rather obvious points. So it is alleged that the thrones of Rev. 20 are in heaven and reference is made to Rev. 1:4; 3:21; 4:2ff, etc. John sees souls, not bodies, it is said, and they reign with Christ, Who is *in heaven*.<sup>206</sup> Coupled with this is the idea that the first resurrection is the translation of the soul to heaven. The souls are those seen in Rev. 6:9 as under the altar.<sup>207</sup> Another says it is a reign of martyrs in heaven.<sup>208</sup>

Notice how the idea of what the first resurrection is has been shifted in this

204. *The Bible Treasury*, 16:128.

205. See W. E. Cox, *Biblical Studies in Final Things*, p. 163.

206. W. Hendricksen, *More Than Conquerors*, pp. 191, 192. G. L. Murray, *Millennial Studies*, p. 184. T. S. Salmon, *The Lord's Coming . . .*, p. 73. A. Hoekema in *The Meaning of the Millennium*, p. 150.

207. R. Zorn, *Church and Kingdom*, p. 114.

208. L. Morris, *The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 236-238. P. Mauro, *Of Things Which Must Soon Come to Pass*, p. 616. However, Group one in Rev. 20:4 are not martyrs except by amillennialist definition. P. Mauro says that Rev. 20 does not mention the second coming and too little attention has been paid to this point. Well, do not refract the light of scripture through amillennialism and try Rev. 19 for the second coming. It is a continuous vision from ch. 19 to 21:8.

second scheme. The first view had at least some show in alleging that the new birth, i.e., quickening, was the first resurrection, but was obviously wrong in having beheaded souls reigning as living Christians on earth now. What show of reason does this second view have? None. Nowhere is the translation of the soul to heaven called quickening, much less resurrection. The idea is mere assertion. This is not faith (Rom. 10:17) but rather the necessity of this form of the false system.

As to John seeing souls, W. Trotter well said:

It is objected by some that John only saw “*the souls* of them that were beheaded,” &c. But this is merely a term to designate their state just previous to their resurrection, and marking the identity of those so designated, with “the souls under the altar” in chapter 6. “It is no more implied, that they were still in an incorporeal state, than the title “the dead” in verse 12, (“I saw *the dead*, small and great, stand before God”) implies that these last were still, at that very time of standing before him, *dead men*.” To take a similar instance, “And when the devil was cast out, *the dumb spake*,” (Mat. 9:33,) surely does not imply, that he was still dumb when he did so! It is quite a common mode of expression in such a case.<sup>209</sup>

Note also that this method makes the souls under the altar, with their imprecatory prayer, Christians. Think about this! We are accused of Judaizing; but here is a clear case. Who puts this imprecatory prayer in the mouth of “Christians”?

The third manipulation is to say that the new birth is the resurrection and when the soul goes to be with the Lord that is the living and reigning with Christ. This is the culmination of the first resurrection, it is alleged.

This is a peculiar mixture. The first resurrection starts on earth at the new birth, according to this scheme. But it amounts to a process. Of course, this is all imagination. And why is it that the soul going to be with the Lord is the “living”? Was the soul dead while the saint was on earth, though born again? Or, does the character of the divine life communicated in the new birth change when the soul goes to the Lord? The truth is that this system is false and clouds the fruits of redemption. But we are thankful that there are cases where men’s hearts rise above the shackles of their system and notions.

We conclude that the idea that the millennium is a spiritual reign now obscures, distorts and confuses scripture and our apprehension of our privileges.

### ***Will all Saints Share in the Coming Kingdom?***

Yes, the totality of the first resurrection will reign with Christ (Rev. 20:6).

### ***Are Rewards for the Millennial Kingdom?***

The fact that rewards are for the kingdom means that reward is connected with the appearing of Christ in glory. Rewards are not connected with the rapture. The rapture is in no sense whatsoever a matter of reward. The notion of partial rapture for the godly (and who are so godly as the propagators of this view?) makes of the rapture a reward in itself. Does anyone espousing such a notion have any idea of what the body of Christ is?

There will certainly be differences. However, the gracious Lord will find something in each Christian’s life that He can acknowledge (1 Cor. 4:5).

---

209. *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, p. 480.

## Chapter 12

### *The Mystery of Christ and the Church*

We are not going to consider here the mystery of Christ and the church exhaustively since that would involve writing expositions of Ephesians and Colossians. Rather, some aspects of it will come under our notice.<sup>210</sup>

The reader may find interesting the words of Sigurd Gridheim who wrote:

. . . the inclusion of the Gentiles is referred to as a previously unrevealed mystery because it is based upon the abrogation of the Mosaic law and entails a degree of nearness to the Lord that exceeds the expectations of the old covenant . . .<sup>211</sup>

This witness is true.

#### *Introduction*

In Scripture the word “mystery” is not used concerning something that cannot be found out. Neither is it that we must exert ourselves to discover the meaning of something that is mysterious. Rather, it is something that was hidden previously and the time has now arrived when God reveals what had been hidden. We know it by divine revelation and the Spirit’s teaching, giving spiritual understanding.

It is important to bear in mind that the Scripture often views the church on earth in responsible testimony. But, positionally, we are seated in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6). We are in union with Christ Who is there, and are viewed as “in Christ.” This was not true of OT saints, nor will it be true of millennial saints.

So, the spiritual unity that Christians have with Christ as one body means that we now have a position *in* Him, in heaven, before He comes for us and takes us above to be *with* Himself. Physically we are here, but by this union in Him we are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). I repeat; the word is “in” Christ Jesus, not ‘with’ Christ Jesus. We will be ‘with’ Him when He receives us unto Himself at the rapture.

Our spiritual position is in Him in heaven. It is very important that we apprehend this great fact if we would understand the mystery of Christ and the church. Generally in the NT the body of Christ is viewed in *responsibility* here on earth. It

210. The subject of God’s sovereignty in Ephesians is treated at length in ch. 6 of my *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men*.

211. “What the OT Prophets Did Not Know: The Mystery of the Church in Eph. 3:2-13,” *Biblica*, 84: 5, pp. 531-553 (2003).

does not follow from this that our *spiritual position* is on earth. If we are unclear about this, or if we think that our position is here on earth, our conduct in responsibility will be adversely affected accordingly. We will take on aspects of Judaism as it was in the OT, or we will lower our practice to something like that of a millennial Israelite under the new covenant.

The fact is that the Christian is seated somewhere. He is either here on earth, as is true of Israel, or the Christian is seated in heaven, the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. We are united to the head of the body in heaven. Christ and His body cannot have two different positions before God -- such is that union. The Head is in heaven and we are in Him there. You must not say, but I see I am here and I do not feel I am there. For example, Scripture declares that you are dead (Col. 3:3). Do you refuse that because you do not feel dead? Since when do human feelings determine these things?

Roman 16:25, 26 mentions the mystery, but the subject of the mystery of Christ and the church is not developed in Romans. Colossians and Ephesians bring before us aspects of this mystery. There is some overlap on this subject in these two epistles. The overlapping matters are considered in different viewpoints. Moreover, Ephesians goes further than Colossians regarding this mystery. In general, we may say that Colossians views the saints having *Christ in them*, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27); and they are to set their affections on things above (Col. 3:2). In Ephesians, the saints are looked at differently, but, of course, in a complementary way: *they are in Christ*, seated in the heavenlies in Him. Concomitant truths are developed in each epistle respectively regarding these two differences in the unfolding of this mystery in accordance with the Spirit’s intent.

These respective lines of truth will not be spiritually understood without by faith laying hold of the fact that our spiritual union with Christ means that our position is in Him in heaven! -- and thus Christians form a heavenly company in contrast to Israel, an earthly company.

Union with Christ in heaven means we are a heavenly company. Now, every thing that is true of a Christian, as such, requires a corresponding practice in our lives. Every positional truth requires a corresponding practice. If we are in Christ, and Christ is in us the hope of glory, these things necessarily connect us with another place than this world. Our hope is not here, our object is not here, our affections are not to be set on things here. We are here to display Christ, Who is our life while we wait for Him to come and take us to the Father’s house (John 14:1-3). These are immense truths. When we do something, we ought to be displaying Christ. Christ is the standard for everything. This actually is a subject in itself, for it involves the new creation by which we are to walk (Gal. 6:15, 16); but that is not our subject here.

Above, attention was called to the fact that there are concomitant truths connected with this mystery; and, that the unfolding of this mystery in Colossians



and Ephesians differs, though all is complementary. As an example of a concomitant truth, Eph. 1 opens with an aspect of the mystery that shows that your place, reader, is Christ's place before the Father, for you are taken into favor in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). We are related to our Beloved in the closest possible way. Your union with Christ involves this. The Father has taken you into favor *in the Beloved*! Is there love more than this, love that gives you the place of His Beloved (as man) before Himself? Thus are you bound up with the Beloved in one bundle of light and love and place before the Father! The measure of our place before the Father is the measure of the Beloved's place. Do you seek to apprehend more of the blessedness of this spiritual blessing in the heavenlies? As a hymn rightly says:

"Loved with love which knows no measure,  
Save the Father's love to Thee."

### ***General Outline of Ephesians***

- Eph. 1:1-14: Heavenly blessing in a heavenly Christ. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, we are taken into favor in the Beloved, Who is to head up all things to God's glory.
- Eph. 1:15- 2:10: A heavenly company seated in a heavenly Christ. Greater power than creatorial power, which wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead and giving Him the highest place, wrought in us also. In heavenly glory, His body is the fulness of Him Who fills all in all. We have been quickened with Him, raised up together with Him, and seated in the heavenlies in Him.
- Eph. 2:11- 4:16: A heavenly display on earth. Jew and Gentile united, forming one new man, formed to be the dwelling of God -- in the Spirit -- the heavenly mystery unfolded; "the whole body" on earth, in activity, representing Christ.
- Eph. 4:17-5:21: A heavenly walk on earth that answers to Eph. 1:1-4:16.
- Eph. 5:22-6:9: A heavenly walk in the earthly relationships that we have.
- Eph. 6:10-24: A heavenly stand in the spiritual conflict in the heavenlies.

In Eph. 2 we are *sitting*; in Eph. 4:17- 6:9 we *walk*; in Eph. 6:13, we *stand*. The walking and standing are brought before us after the sitting. Why? It is because the sitting is our heavenly position in Christ, and the walking and standing here in testimony derive their character from the position. It is all heavenly. This reminds us of 1 Cor. 15:48:

and such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones].

### ***Heavenly Blessing in a Heavenly Christ***

***(Eph. 1:1-14)***

### ***Every Spiritual Blessing in the Heavenlies in Christ is Ours***

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

There are spiritual blessings which are not in the heavenlies in Christ. Those which are in the heavenlies in Christ are unique to those who are seated together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). These are distinctive blessings for those united in one body to the Head. There never was a head for the body until Christ was there as man, consequent upon having finished the work on the cross, having been raised from the dead, and having ascended above. Then He sent the Holy Spirit in a special capacity and function (cp. Acts 2:32, 33), to baptize those who had believed on Him, and were waiting at Jerusalem (Acts 1; 2:1-4), into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). The Spirit is the *bond* of this union formed on that occasion. This union subsists to this very day (Eph. 4:4) and will subsist eternally (Eph. 3:21).

The Spirit is omnipresent and always was here. Yet He was sent by the Father (Gal. 4:6) and the Son (John 16:7). Thus, His coming points to a special and distinctive function consequent on Christ's going away (John 16:7). He will be removed at the rapture of the saints (2 Thess. 2:7); i.e., He will be removed regarding the special function for which He came. After His removal He will, of course be here for various operations, as He was here for various operations before being sent from the Father and the Son in the special capacity and operations regarding the body of Christ formed by the baptism in the power of the Spirit into one body.

This distinctive work of the Spirit goes on from Pentecost (Acts 2) until the removal of the saints at the rapture. This distinctive work is connected with the mystery of Christ and the church, concerning which silence had been kept. It is a distinctive work as being heavenly in character. This distinctive work involves more than being born again and more than knowing one's sins are forgiven, though the distinctive work involves persons who are born again and who know that their sins are forgiven. All saints of all ages are, or will be, born again. That is a work of the Spirit of God also, but it is not among the distinctive operations of the Spirit under consideration. We are considering the distinctive, heavenly spiritual blessings in Christ.

This distinction between earthly and heavenly spiritual blessings is clearly seen in John 3. The Lord Jesus indicated to Nicodemus that he should have known that a profound change had to be wrought in a man in order for him to see the kingdom of God. Our Lord brought this before Nicodemus before the cross. New birth is not a distinctive heavenly truth. All OT saints were born of the Spirit, having a new

nature from God. Of course, their standing before God did not involve the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins as we Christians know it -- and it could not be so until the trial of the first man, to see if he was recoverable from the fall, was completed and the finished work of Christ had taken place. Moreover, the new Israel under the new covenant will have the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 10:16-18). That also is not distinctive Christian truth. The mystery of Christ and the church is beyond those spiritual blessings, great as they are. The new birth and the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins is necessary for spiritual blessings on the earth.

Note the force of John 3:12:

If I have said the earthly things to you, and ye believe not, how, if I say the heavenly things to you, will ye believe?

What earthly things had the Lord spoken of? Why, the new birth, the necessity of it to see the kingdom of God, and that a man must be born of water<sup>212</sup> and the Spirit. Our Lord differentiated that from heavenly things. The distinction is evident and profoundly important. Our Lord's words certainly indicate that there was truth to be revealed that was of a heavenly order in distinction from what is of an earthly order.

So, there are earthly spiritual blessings and heavenly spiritual blessings. The truths embraced in the mystery of Christ and the church are of a heavenly order, stated in our text at the beginning of this section to be "spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." There are two points to note regarding this:

1. There is a Blessor, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That God was always God, that the Father was always the Father, is not the point in this text. The Father and Son (and Spirit) eternally were in this divine relationship in the Godhead. That is not the point here. The Son took holy manhood into His Person and as man is in relationship to God and the Father as His God and Father (cp. John 20:17). He has brought us into this relationship also. And so the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us.
2. He has blessed us "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." Note how many spiritual blessings. It is every one that there is. There are none with which we are not blessed. However, note that the blessings referred to are in a particular sphere. That sphere is "the heavenlies," not the earthlies, where the new Israel under the new covenant will be blessed. Moreover, they are "in Christ." "In Christ" denotes the place, the position, we are in before our God

---

212. Water is used figuratively here for the Word of God, and connotes the cleansing from the defilement of sin. This involves being washed all over (figuratively speaking) and the Lord could say of the disciples that they were clean through the Word that He had spoken to them (John 15:3). This is not repeatable, but foot-washing for defilement picked up in our walk is needed and is repeatable (John 13:8-11). There came from our Lord's side water and blood, signifying that the work of Christ provides for both the removal of the defilement of sin (signified by the water), as well as of the guilt of sin (signified by the blood).

and Father. We are not in the world, we are not in Adam, we are not in the flesh. The new Israel under the new covenant will not be in Adam and not in the flesh, but they will be in the world and of its order when Christ exercises His governmental control over it, the government proceeding from Israel and Jerusalem. Their commonwealth will be here; ours is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

We Christians are a heavenly people. 1 Cor. 15:48 says:

. . . and such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones].

Clearly, it is as the Second man that our Lord is here spoken of as the heavenly one. He is placed in contrast with the first man, Adam (1 Cor. 15:47). When he entered this world in incarnation, He was in His Person the second man, of course, but there is a position for the second man which was not taken in incarnation. That position was taken consequent upon finishing the work that the Father gave Him to do, consequent on resurrection and then exaltation above. So, while He was the second man *out of heaven* (1 Cor. 15:47)<sup>213</sup> from the moment of incarnation, and thus *a heavenly man*, there was no union of members in one body united to Him as Head. He subsequently took His place above, in heaven. He continues as *the heavenly man*. We Christians are in union with Him there by the Holy Spirit sent down, forming the body united to Him there. And thus 1 Cor. 15:48 is true of us. It could not have been true of OT saints. The things which we have been considering are dependent upon the Son's having become man, accomplishing the work, and ascending up where He was before, only that he went up as man. He took manhood above. It is as man that He is head of the body and we are joined to Him. This could not be in the OT. And this body is the assembly of God that we read of in the NT. That the church is the aggregate of all saints in all ages is a myth.

Let us be clear, then, that the location of "the heavenlies" is where Christ is right now. That is where He is seated, and that is where we are seated in Him. That is where our distinctive, heavenly, spiritual blessings are. They are of that place and characterized by that place -- thus heavenly. That is our Christian position before our God and Father.

### *Chosen in Christ*

All saints of all ages are necessarily born again and are elect. However, regarding some things that we have in common with saints who are not of the church, there are aspects that differ. This is the case with election. Our election is stated to be from *before* the foundation of the world, while blessing for Israel is stated to be determined by God *from* the foundation of the world. This difference is in accordance with the heavenly place of the church and the earthly place of Israel.

---

213. This does not mean that His humanity came from Heaven. It did not. It came from Mary by the overshadowing power of the Spirit (Luke 1:35). It means that He was characterized by heaven, a heavenly man though walking on earth.

Moreover, God can choose persons without choosing them “in him.”<sup>214</sup> While all saints are elect, only those composing the church are chosen “in him,” chosen from before the foundation of the world. I am quite aware that God is omniscient, and that known to Him are all His works from the beginning. We may not rightly use that against the way in which these matters are presented to us, by the Spirit of God, in Scripture, so as to force elimination of the distinctions Scripture makes. These distinctions show us that the church’s position is heavenly while Israel’s is earthly. J. N. Darby wrote helpfully:

❖ If God were to choose a part of the world now, it would be as sovereign as doing so before the world: I know in His holy wisdom He does not, but it would be as sovereign as doing it before the world. But He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world; and the effect is, He has chosen us for what is not of the world, but far above the world . . . This was sovereign goodness, giving us a place according to His own counsels. <sup>215</sup> ❖

It is important to bear in mind that election from *before* the foundation of the world<sup>216</sup> (cp. 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2, 3<sup>217</sup>) has to do with the distinctive place the

214. There are elect angels. They are not chosen “in Him.”

215. *Collected Writings*, 10:272.

216. When speaking to the Father about “thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (John 17:23) -- unspeakable love -- He also says that “thou lovedst me before [the] foundation of [the] world” (John 17:24). We are bound up in *that* bundle of love, with the Son, regarding that eternal love of the Father for the Son. In Eph. 1:4 we read: “he has chosen us in him before [the] world’s foundation . . .” In Whom? in “Christ, foreknown indeed before the foundation of [the] world” (1 Pet. 1:20). This all ‘pre-dates’ (so to speak) the foundation of the world. These things concern the saints of God’s present work. In contrast, the kingdom prepared for those who receive the future gospel of the kingdom is stated to be “prepared for you from the [the] world’s foundation” (Matt. 25:34). This phrase also appears in Heb. 4:3 where it has in view Israel’s future rest in the kingdom. In Heb. 9:26, the earthly priesthood is connected with this phrase. But Christ’s present heavenly priesthood is of another character, while in the millennium it is after the order of Melchisedec.

Concerning Rev. 13:8, the better translation is: “[every one] whose name had not been written from [the] founding of [the] world in the book of life of the slain lamb.” See also Rev. 17:8. No doubt all saints are written in the book of life (a figure, no doubt), but it is not stated that we were written from the founding of the world. And there we may leave the matter.

217. “. . . in [the] hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the ages of time” (Titus 1:2). An important point is that this was determined before time began by the One who cannot lie. In contrast to this, there also were promises made by God after time began, such as to Abraham. These promises made in time are for the earth, in contrast to those made before time -- they were made for the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. 1:1 speaks of this promised life: “according to the promise of life, the [life] which [is] in Christ Jesus.” See also 1 John 2:25. But, no matter what promises of God there are, all are made good by Christ (2 Cor. 1:20). Regarding the question, “To whom did God make the promise?” the answer may be left with this: “. . . that [they who are of] the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of [his] promise in Christ Jesus by the glad tidings” (Eph. 3:6).

(continued...)

Christian has in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), in contrast to Israel’s place in the earthlies, so to speak. This involves the eternally distinct place that the church has (Eph. 3:21). In the point of view presented in Ephesians, we are seated there (Eph. 2:6). In Hebrews, where we are looked at as in the wilderness, on our way home, we are partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), which at the same time is an upward calling (Phil. 3:14) and a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9). The distinct place for Israel is not stated to be from *before* the world’s foundation. Thus, we are a *distinctive* heavenly people.

The Lord spoke anticipatively of the Christian not having his moral source from the world (John 17:14) even as He was not of the world.<sup>218</sup>

### *Taken into Favor in the Beloved*

. . . having marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to [the] praise of [the] glory of his grace, wherein he has taken us into favour in the Beloved (Eph. 1:5, 6).

“Adoption” means sonship, as in Gal. 4:5. It does not mean we have been adopted into God’s family the way humans adopt a child that has not been born into their family. Every child of God is born into the family of God. In Scripture, adoption, or sonship, does not refer to birth; it refers to dignity and status before the Father. It was in God’s eternal purpose that we should have this place. It pleased Him that it should be so. He willed it so. And all this results in praise of the glory of that grace so displayed. And in such glory of His grace, He has taken us into favor in the Beloved. Now, the description of Christ as the Beloved bespeaks the love of the Father for the Beloved. This is limitless love!

This mind-prostrating display of the grace and love of the Father appears at the beginning of Ephesians as soon as it could be said. It is as if our Father could not

217. (...continued)

It is remarkable how the word “promise” is used in connection with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, He being the power of these promises that are of *the heavenly order*. See Luke 24:9; Acts 2:23; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:13.

218. It is altogether wrong to say:

By God’s sovereign election, those who are saved were placed in eternal union with Christ before creation ever took place (John MacArthur, *Ephesians*, Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, p. 11 (1986).

Christ is God and man in one Person and that union of the two natures did not exist until the incarnation. To speak of our union with Him before creation would involve the Christian being in deity, for the Son had not then taken humanity into union with His Person. Our union with Christ is consequent upon the seal with the Spirit and is in connection with His risen manhood (John 12:24). We have the resurrection-life of Christ.

wait to tell us of His holding us in the same bundle of love as He holds the Beloved! Our Father has taken us into His favor *in* such a One as His Beloved. It is not merely that God has accepted us. No doubt He has done so. But that is not the point here. We are before our Father in the same favor as the Beloved, not only of that *kind* of favor, but of that *measure* of favor which is measured by the Beloved's being in that favor. That is the favor in which we stand before our Father.

“Loved with love which knows no measure,  
Save the Father's love to Thee.”

### *The Mystery of His Will*

. . . in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of his grace; which he has caused to abound towards us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for [the] administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him . . . (Eph. 1:7-11).

### *The Fulness of the Time*

Just previously we saw that our Father has brought us into the dignity and place of sonship before Him. In Gal. 4:4,5 we read:

. . . but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of a woman, come under the law, that he might redeem those under the law, that we might receive sonship.

The Jew under the bondage of the law, and the Gentile with no claim on God, both received this gift of sonship from God. When? It was consequent upon God's Son coming and doing the redemptive work on the cross. And when did He so come and do that? It was “when the fulness of the time was come.” It was when the epoch of the completion of the trial of the first man to see if he was recoverable from the fall had come. That era of time had extended from the fall until the crucifixion of Christ. That is “the time”; and “the fulness” of it was when Christ was here on earth. His death brought “the time” to an end. The work of Christ had Israel's future as a nation in view (i.e., the new Israel under the new covenant), and also the present heavenly work that is being done:

But this he did not say of himself; but, being high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad (John 11:51, 52).

Thus, the work of Christ has made provision for the future blessing of Israel, as such, when all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26). The work of Christ has made

provision for the blessing in *earthly* places. Meanwhile there is going on the *heavenly* work, also provided for in the work of Christ. The children of God are now acknowledged to be such and are enabled by the work of Christ to take that position. “Children of God” denotes the nature we have as partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) while sonship denotes dignity, or ‘coming of age.’

But because ye are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father. So thou art no longer bondman, but son; but if son, heir also through God (Gal. 4:6, 7).

Thus the sons have the Spirit of His Son, standing in the liberty of sonship<sup>219</sup> and empowered by the Spirit of His Son to cry, Abba, Father. This the Son did in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36). We have been brought into this unspeakable nearness, so that nearer we cannot be. God has also bestowed heirship on us. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). We are bound up in the same bundle of heirship with Christ.

We need to realize that our union with Christ identifies us with Him *in heaven*. Our place before the Father is the same place as is the Beloved's place. Our sonship is patterned after His in that we have the Spirit of God's Son and cry Abba, Father, as He did. Christ is heir of God and we are co-heirs with Christ. There is not a spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, with which we are not blessed. But that is still not the whole story.

### *The Fulness of Times and The Mystery of His Will*

The groaning creation will yet experience a new era:

. . . set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. 8:21).

In the administration of the fulness of times there will be the liberty spoken of here. It is the time of the glory of the children of God.

When the Christ is manifested who [is] our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

We have seen that it was in “the fulness of the time” that the trial of the first man from Adam fallen to the cross was completed and that the rejection of Christ by the first man was the occasion of the work of Christ -- and that this provided for both the distinctive heavenly and earthly blessings. There is an epoch in the history of this world when these respective blessings, the heavenly and the earthly, will be displayed through the sovereign action of Christ. Thus, in Eph. 1:10 we read of “the fulness of the times,” the epoch in which this display will take place. This is the epoch we call the millennium, the 1000 year reign of Christ. It is an “administration”

219. The power of sonship shall also be applied to our bodies in due time (Rom. 8:23).

in the hands of Christ. “The fulness of times”<sup>220</sup> is the epoch of the completion of God’s ways in the present creation before He makes the new heavens and the new earth. Then, there will no longer be “time.”

“The mystery of his will” is that during that epoch Christ will “head up all things.” Universal administration will be in the hands of Christ. That Christ would reign over the earth was not a mystery (cp. Psa. 8, etc.). It was a mystery that the Son of Man would have universal administration, heading up “all things in the heavens and the things upon the earth.” Between that period of time and the cross the mystery of Christ and the church has been revealed. A special, distinctive, heavenly people is being formed: those united to Christ as members of His body, the body formed once-for-all by the baptism in the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2), we being joined to that already formed body by being sealed with the same Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13, 14). When that is completed at the rapture, God will then prepare the earth for the time of this administration.

This universal administration in the hands of the Son of Man (a title signifying that He had been rejected) was a hidden secret, the mystery of God’s will. I trust the reader understands the connection of the “mystery of his will” with the mystery of Christ and the assembly. The revelation of these mysteries awaited the end of the trial of the first man and the finished work of Christ, with the setting aside of the Mosaic covenant, and the setting aside of Israel meanwhile; and the gathering of Jew and Gentile united in one body to the Head in heaven, so intimately united that the Head and the body are stated in 1 Cor. 12:12 to be “the Christ.” These members are the heavenly co-heirs.

### *Pre-trusted in the Christ*

Preparatory to the administration of the fulness of times, when Christ heads up all the things in the heaven and upon the earth, the heavenly work that is involved in the mystery of Christ and the church must have been completed. This involves having a body which is the complement of the Head, a body which is the fulness of Him who fills all in all. It is in that administration that He will fill all in all (Eph. 1:21). But He must have His fulness for that administration, which is His body, in glory with Him. Thus, the work of accomplishing this universal administration, which was unforeseen by the prophets of Israel, must begin before the time of the Gentile blessing which was foreseen by the prophets of Israel, but seen in connection with the new Israel under the new covenant, when Jew and Gentile will not be united in one body, and Israel will be the head of the nations under Messiah.

Thus, there must be Gentiles who trust in Christ *ahead* of the time of the

220. The fulness of the times will also mark the end of the times of the nations (Luke 21:24), for the smiting stone of Dan. 2 will smash the image which depicts the Gentile power of empire. See also Psa. 2 and 110; Dan. 7.

administration of the fulness of times. This is the force of Eph. 1:12, 13.

### *A Heavenly Company Seated in a Heavenly Christ (Eph. 1:15- 2:10)*

### *The Fulness of Him Who Fills All in All*

. . . and set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come; and has put all things under his feet, and gave him [to be] head over all things to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all (Eph. 1:20-23).<sup>221</sup>

We should consider one other matter before proceeding to ch. 2. God is a God of fulnesses, so to speak. We have just considered two of them. There is another fulness at the end of Eph. 1. The assembly is the fulness of the heavenly Christ!

### *This Age*

“This age” is the Mosaic age. The Mosaic **system** was ended by God, but the Mosaic **age** continues on.<sup>222</sup> The church is not an age. It is above ages; it is heavenly. It is seated in the heavenlies in Christ. It is not seated in the earth, as the new Israel under the new covenant will be. “The end of the age” is most certainly not the end of a mythical ‘church age.’ “The end of the age” is the end of the Mosaic age. The Mosaic age will be displaced by the administration of the fulness of times. Meanwhile, since Christ was rejected, Satan has been given a new status. He is declared to be the god of the world, or age (2 Cor. 4:4). And, indeed:

the whole world lies in the wicked [one] (1 John 5:19),

and that is what characterizes this present age!

### *The Age to Come*

“The age to come” means the time of the administration of the fulness of times, when Christ exercises universal sway and “the god of this age” is bound in the abyss for 1000 years (Rev. 20). He will not be the god of the age to come.

Christ’s headship over all things is His in title at this present time while His co-heirs are being gathered from Jew and Gentile. When the last one to be a member of that body is brought in, He will come and catch us up (1 Thess. 4:15-18) and we shall be with Himself. Subsequently when He comes in glory, He and His body,

221. See also 1 Pet. 3:32.

222. This is discussed in my *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1.

which is His fulness, i.e., His complement, will be displayed together in glory.

### *Two Aspects of the Body of Christ*

The body is viewed as complete on earth at every moment. That there is one body on earth is denied, of course, by many but it is so:

... the Christ: from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to [the] working in [its] measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love (Eph. 4:16).

“The whole body” is presented here as in activity. This activity is not going on in heaven. Gifts of ministry, joints of supply, each one part working, is not going on in heaven. It is “the whole body” presented here as so engaged. Thus, it is clear that there is a view of the body presented in Scripture that shows it exists here on earth.

The saints with the Lord are of the body, but not seen in the activity of the body, which is here on earth representing the head.<sup>223</sup> Eph. 4:4 refers to this body on earth: “[There is] one body.” The local assembly is neither the body nor a body. The body in 1 Cor. 12 is this body on earth. The church is presented in Scripture as on earth in 1 Cor. 12. It is the church in which the apostles were set (1 Cor. 12:28). It is the assembly on earth where the gifts function.<sup>224</sup> The Head, viewed in connection with the body here on earth, is called “the Christ” in 1 Cor. 12:12. This is so from Pentecost to the rapture. This is so in the time of our displaying Christ in this world. This is a completeness of the mystic man of 1 Cor. 12:12 as regards testimony here. But there is another aspect of the body.

The time will come when we will *all* be with the Head. Eph. 1:23 speaks of this when the present work is completed. This view of the body is:

the fulness of him who fills all in all.

The time of the display of Christ’s glory, i.e., the administration of the fulness of times, cannot occur until the body can be said to be the fulness of Him who fills all in all. There is a completeness of the body on earth viewed in *testimony*; but this is not yet the fulness of Him that fills all in all. *That* is a completeness for *glory*. Every member must be there with Him for this fulness. J. N. Darby wrote:

❖ God has exalted Christ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, and, therefore, called “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ; but this is quite another thing. We are His fulness, that is, we complete the mystic man, Christ being the Head. For the church is that which completes and displays Christ’s glory

223. The body is heavenly as to position, but is here in testimony.

224. These matters are gone into in an 8 page fold-out paper called *The Whole Body*, available from the publisher.

in the world to come; and then there will be not only Christ in heaven, known to the believer, but Christ ruler over the earth, over all things. It is a blessed thought, that it is not merely God as God who fills all things, but that Christ in redemption and mediatorial fulness in grace and righteousness fills all things.

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.

Everything from the dust of the earth up to the throne of God has been the scene of the accomplishment of, and witness to, Christ’s glory. But when He does actually thus “fill all things,” and it is not merely known to faith, it will not be alone, but as the Head of the body which is now being formed, taking the church to share in His dominion and glory. All things will be subject to Him in that day; but the church will be associated with Him. Just as it was in the garden: Adam, the image of Him that was to come, was lord over all the creation; Eve was neither a part of the creation over which Adam reigned, nor yet had she any title of her own over it, but she was associated with him in the dominion. The passage in Eph. 5 takes up this formation of Eve, and applies it to the church --

this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Christ has every title to this dominion over all things. (See Col. 1). As God, all things were created by Him and for Him. And remark, that in the passage He has a double primacy -- Head of creation when, as Son, He takes His place in it, for He is Creator; and also Head of the church, for “he is the head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.”

A second title to headship is, that He is “the Son” -- not merely as Creator (as we have seen in Col. 1, “hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son”), but by inheritance also. In Heb. 1 we find this counsel and intention of God as regards His Son: “whom he hath appointed heir of all things,” etc. Here Messiah is in contemplation.

A third title to headship is, that He is man. Psalms 8, which celebrates millennial glory, is quoted and applied by the Holy Ghost to Christ in Heb. 2:6-9,

We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels . . . , crowned with glory and honor;

and all things put under his feet. (See also Eph. 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:27).

Thus we see His title to dominion: first, as Creator, “for by him were all things created”; secondly, as the Son, “whom he hath appointed heir of all things”; thirdly, as Man, under whose feet in the counsels of God all things are put. Then, we may add, He cannot take the inheritance as a defiled thing, and, therefore, He has a fourth claim in the way of redemption. His title is to a redeemed and purified inheritance, “the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” With

us, who were under sin, alienated in mind by wicked works, it is not merely purifying: guilt also is removed. Then He takes and makes us His body; as it is written,

We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones {Eph. 5:30}.

The Holy Ghost comes down and consecrates us to be the body of Christ in living power; and in unity, because baptized with the Holy Ghost into one body. Not only is each soul quickened and sealed by the Spirit, but believers are “baptized into one body by one Spirit.” This began at the day of Pentecost, and since then this baptism has been the portion of every believer. It is a great and blessed truth that, however we may have grieved the Spirit, still, individually, the Holy Ghost abides with the believer and reproves him. And it is also most blessed as regards the church, that the Holy Ghost is not, like the Lord Jesus, only here a little time with His people, and then going away. “He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” And mark this that the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost in the church is in virtue of the redemption which Christ has wrought, and not dependent on our use of the privileges given (though when present His action is according to the use or abuse of these privileges).

The church of God, united to the Lord Jesus Christ, has its place, first, by virtue of Christ’s Person; secondly, in redemption by Christ; thirdly, by the presence of the Holy Ghost. This is not a question of prophecy, but it is the power of divine living grace, putting the church in divine glory. The moment the Holy Ghost thus formed the church, it is treated down here as the body of Christ, “from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” Just as, in the growth of a child, the body is there, and each member is in its place, and it grows up into its full stature.

225 ❖

### ***Head Over All Things to the Assembly***

It is not stated that Christ is *over* the assembly, for the assembly is the body of Christ. He is Head *of* the body. The assembly is not put, and will not be put, under Christ’s feet, for the assembly is His body. The Lordship of Christ has to do with individual Christians. He is the Lord of each one of us. But Scripture does not speak of Him as Lord of the assembly. Those who write and speak of Christ’s Lordship of the assembly have wrong thoughts about this matter. In 1 Cor. 10, for example, the titles Christ and Lord are carefully used according to the point being made. Neither is Christ king of the church, though it be Presbyterian doctrine. The assembly is not a kingdom. Christ will be *over* Israel, but He is not *over* the church, for it is His body. The church is not the “spiritual Israel,” it is a heavenly body.

### ***Him Who Fills All in All***

225. Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, 5:273-275.

The phrase “all in all” must be looked at in each context where it appears because it does not necessarily refer to the same thing each time. Here it has to do with Christ being head over all things. That refers to the time when He appears in glory, when everything is in the hands of the Son of man. Preparatory to that display, the body must be in glory and thus be that fulness of Him that filleth all in all, ready for His display. This will occur consequent upon the rapture; and the display of glory will occur at the subsequent manifestation of Christ in glory (Col. 3:4; Rev. 20). While it is as man that He asserts this headship, it could not be unless in Him all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt. He is the God-man, the Son having taken humanity into His Person, yet, just as it was as man that He died (though not without being God also), as man He shall assert universal headship over heaven and earth (though not without being God also).

This universal headship of Christ is presently His in title. The time will come when He will enter the place of asserting it. Meanwhile the heavenly company must be completed and all be home with Him. Then the work with the Jewish remnant must commence, preparatory to the formation of the new Israel under the new covenant. Then He must appear in glory to smite the nations and take to Himself His great power, and reign. He will discharge the kingdom perfectly, and having done so, “gives up the kingdom to him [who is] God and Father” (1 Cor. 15:24). He will have conducted all in perfection, including anything in which man had failed, glorifying God in doing so. Thus, He did not have to have the kingdom taken away, as in the case with Israel and with the nations. This will bring in the new heavens and the new earth where God (Father, Son, and Spirit) “may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

Christ as God and man continues eternally, of course. He is already on the other side of death -- which is the last enemy to be annulled (1 Cor. 15:26). And we shall be on the other side of death long before the new heavens and the new earth are brought into being. We shall, as He Himself, cross the boundary between the old creation and the new heavens and earth without any change. We shall always be the assembly, the church, the tabernacle of God (Eph. 3:21; Rev. 21:3).

\* \* \* \* \*

Why would anyone deceive themselves by looking for those truths that are part of the mystery of Christ and the church in the OT? The Scripture has warned us that it is not there (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:4, 9).

### ***The Church and the Kingdom are Not the Same Thing***

Let us consider the following from J.N.D.:

❖ The church has no relation nor any contact with the kingdom, save that it

exists down here in the field, over which the authority of the kingdom is exercised. Later on, the church will reign with the Lord over that same field.<sup>226</sup>



He published this statement in 1843, relatively early in his career. Later, he wrote the following:

❖ When I speak of the "kingdom" it is a different thing. [It is of great importance to distinguish between the kingdom and the Church.] We there get the display of power and government, not union and fellowship. Even the testimony of the kingdom comes necessarily to be quite a distinct thing. I should distinguish altogether "the gospel of the kingdom" and "the kingdom" from what we are accustomed to call "the gospel" [We employ the term "gospel" in a very limited sense; but in the Scriptures it is used in a much more general way. For example, the apostle could say that, when Timothy came back from them, he brought good tidings (preached the gospel) of the brethren's faith and charity. Again we read, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them." (Heb. 3:3.) To them it was the promise of the land. The word is not restricted to the grace now preached, it is simply "good news;" and there may be the good news of the kingdom, or the good news of Canaan.] and the Church." Paul taught the kingdom, and he taught the gospel, and he taught the Church; but he never taught them as the same thing. [He preached the kingdom of God; but it is a very distinct thing that God should set up a reign of power on the earth (take the word "reign" instead of "kingdom," and you will see at once that this is quite distinct from the idea of the "Church"); that would not necessarily touch the question that Christ was going to have a Bride united to Him in glory. And when he speaks of his ministry, he distinguishes his own ministry into a ministry of the gospel, and a ministry of the Church.]

There is one revelation - God is going to take to Himself His great power, and to reign. There is another truth - there is to be a bride and body of the King. Again, certain things setting out the grace of God are necessary for the soul to be saved. These three things [The kingdom, the Church, and the salvation of the soul.] are, very plainly, quite distinct.<sup>227</sup> ❖

And again, he wrote that the implications of the words "kingdom" and "body" are vastly different:

❖ The kingdom and the body are different. "Head over all things to the church" is wider, too, than the kingdom. Kingdom implies a king; a body implies a head. The church is precious to God. Everything that Christ has, I have; the same life, the same righteousness, the same glory. If my hand is hurt, I say it is I who am hurt. Paul was

226. *Collected Writings*, 1:286.

227. *Collected Writings*, 12:372-373.

converted by this truth, "Why persecutest thou me?" It shews what grace has done for us -- taken us out of ourselves. The body of Christ shews out the fulness of redemption, and the purposes of God respecting it.<sup>228</sup> ❖

But the word "kingdom" can refer to several different things. How about the "kingdom of heaven"? Could that be the church? Here is what J.N.D. wrote:

❖ People very often take the kingdom of heaven as if it were the same thing as the church of God; but this is in no way the case, though those who compose the church are in the kingdom. Supposing for a moment that Christ had not been rejected, the kingdom would have been set up on earth. It could not be so, no doubt, but it shews the difference between the kingdom and the church. As it was, the kingdom of God was there in the Person of Christ, the King. Only as He was on earth, it was not the kingdom of heaven. But Christ being rejected, He could not take it outwardly then, but ascended on high. Thus the sphere of the rule of Christ is in heaven. The heavens rule, and the kingdom is always the kingdom of heaven, because the King is in heaven; only at the end it will be subdivided, so to speak, into the kingdom of our Father, the heavenly part; and the kingdom of the Son of man, the earthly part. If we understand the kingdom of heaven as the rule of Christ when the King is in heaven, it is very simple. If Christ had set up a kingdom when He was with the Jews, it would not have been the kingdom of heaven, because He was not in heaven. Hence, it is said, "the kingdom of God is among you," but "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The gospel is the only means we have of gathering souls into the kingdom, and such are properly the children of the kingdom; but, within its limits, Satan works and sows tares, and they are in the kingdom. Take Popery, Mohammedanism, all manner of heretics: these are tares which have been sown where the good seed had been. Church means, or is rather, simply an assembly - an idea which has nothing to do with the thought of a kingdom. The parable I did not read, where we have Christ sowing the good seed, is not a similitude of the kingdom of heaven. A kingdom is a sphere where one rules as king. Christ is simply there sowing the word in men's hearts. It does not describe the kingdom of heaven, nor even the kingdom begun by the King being on earth; it is individual in its character.<sup>229</sup> ❖

In Matthew 16, the Lord Jesus spoke about the building of the church and about the keys of the kingdom of heaven which He gave to Peter. Because these two things appear so close together in the text, it is possible for some to think that they may somehow be connected and that the church and the kingdom of heaven may be the same thing. Well, here is what J.N.D. wrote about that matter:

228. *Collected Writings*, 127:345.

229. *Collected Writings*, 11:281-282.



❖ But, further, who is the builder? The Lord only. "I will build"; not "I am building." He was going to build it. But He only was the builder, and it is not finished yet. But His work no power of hell can prevail against. But it is only His work, what He builds. Hence, when Peter alludes to it in his epistle, he has no idea of being a builder, any more than a foundation. "Unto whom coming [the Lord], as unto a living stone . . . ye also as living stones are built up," 1 Pet. 2:4. They come and are built up, as living stones are built up. They are built on the Lord, as living stones they come. There is no human builder, and Christ is that on which they are built. Whatever others did, I suppose Peter understood as taught of God what his Master said. But Paul, speaking of the church in the same way at the end of Ephesians 2, says the same thing: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." There is no human builder, and Christ is the chief corner stone. There is a house of God where there are builders; 1 Cor. 3. Paul was a wise master-builder. Others might build wood, hay, and stubble, which Christ never does: corrupters might corrupt it. Here man was builder and his work might all be burned up.

I only notice this that by the contrast we may see the more clearly what is spoken of here: not a corporation subsisting at any one given time upon earth, of which scripture does speak, but of a working going on and wrought by Christ Himself, and as yet, of course, unfinished. Further, there are no keys to the church; neither Peter, nor anybody else, had any keys for the church. It was a building going on of which the Lord was the builder, and that does not want keys, nor are keys things to build with. The keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to him, and no doubt he used them, and to good purpose too. It is a very serious mistake to confound the kingdom of heaven and the church. They are distinguished here and never confounded anywhere. Chapter 13 has given us the kingdom of heaven. Chapter 16 tells us of the church, and then adds a distinct commission as to the kingdom; one is founded on the Father's revelation to Peter, and Christ is the builder, not Peter: the other is Christ's commission especially given as a distinct thing. "And I say also," or more clearly, and "I also say to thee"; the Greek can have no other sense. The Father's revelation had laid the foundation of the church, and Christ was going to build it. Christ names His servant, an act of authority, and entrusts him with the keys of the kingdom. If we must have a wise master-builder of the church on earth, it was Paul, if we are to believe him, not Peter. The keys of the kingdom were surely given to Peter, and he used them, and administered it for Jews and Gentiles. Every Christian owns that whatever in his apostolic ministry he did, as sent by Christ, heaven sanctioned. Remark, he bound nothing in heaven; but what he bound and loosed on earth, heaven held for good, and it was sanctioned as bound or

loosed there, but the things bound or loosed were only on earth.<sup>230</sup> ❖

In the parables of Matthew 13, mention is made of the kingdom of heaven and some have supposed that this chapter allows the church and the kingdom to be the same. Hear again from J.N.D.:

❖ Again, I find in one essay, "the body itself is a visible community — a kingdom." This is very mischievous confusion. The body of Christ is not His kingdom. It is very convenient to assume it, but there is no ground for it whatever. His body is Himself; His kingdom is what He rules over, apart from Himself, He being King over it. King of the church is a thing unknown to scripture [Even "King of saints" is recognized to be a false reading. It should be "King of nations" .]. When He takes to Him His power and reigns, it will be over all the world. The field is the world now. The devil's work [the tares] is in the scene of His kingdom now. They are not members of His body. We are His body, His bride — of His flesh and of His bones; His kingdom is not that. He does not nourish and cherish His kingdom, He governs it, not His bride and His body. There is not a more mischievous error on these points than what is assumed here as a thing to be taken for granted. The kingdom may be realized within certain limits, and so far as to limits coincide as Christendom with the professing church; but the field is the whole world, and the form that the kingdom takes in fact is the work of the enemy as much as of the Lord. That is not true of the body, and shews the profound evil of the false doctrine which makes baptism the means of communicating life and introduction by union into the body, for a large part of what is in the kingdom is introduced by Satan — namely, the tares, which are to be burned. Have they had life and union with Christ communicated to them by the sacrament of baptism? And let it not be said here, "Yes; but, being the seed of the wicked one, they have lost it again." In the parable they are introduced by Satan, and the theory of the Anglican catholic is that they are introduced by baptism and union thereby. Can there be a greater or more deplorable confusion?<sup>231</sup> ❖

### *Is Christ King of the Church?*

❖ Besides, it is not true that the church is itself the spiritual kingdom; not one of the passages quoted by Mr. Olivier says so. The saints obey, it is true, but Christ is never called the King of the church. We come to *God's* throne of grace. There is a single passage in the Revelation which might be quoted: "King of saints,"<sup>232</sup> Rev. 15:4. But this passage is so doubtful that one can found nothing upon it. We find

230. *Collected Writings*, 24:160-161. See also, 14:104 for additional comments on Peter's keys.

231. *Collected Writings*, 15:351-352.

232. Griesbach rejects it absolutely from the text in order to put there "nations," instead of "saints."

nothing in the word to bear out the thought that Christ exercises royal authority over the church, and the teaching of Matt. 13 renders this distinction important. Mr. Olivier does not pretend to apply here the passages from the Old Testament, such as King in Zion. In the New Testament he finds none. But then his theory -- of a spiritual kingdom and an outward kingdom, as two different spheres, falls to the ground. We have simply "the kingdom of heaven," which is not the church at all.<sup>233</sup>



\* \* \* \* \*

❖ There is no more common error at this present time than to make out that the kingdom and the church are the same. Allow me to tell you that that is one of the great roots of popery. The papists think that the kingdom and the church are the same, and their great ground of assumption is that very identification for the simple reason that the kingdom supposes power applied to compel subjection. Hence, therefore, they ground upon that their title to put down kings, because what are the kings of the earth compared to those that have got a heavenly kingdom? They use, therefore, the title of the heavenly kingdom to put down earthly kings and to make a priest a far more important person really than the earthly king. Hence, again, their vain dream is founded upon this great confusion. Well, but you will find the same thing among most Protestants. I will just give you one or two examples to show you how very prevalent this delusion is, and how very important it is that we should distinguish in this matter.

Take a very respectable set of persons in Protestantism -- the Presbyterians. Well now the whole of their system is founded upon Christ being the King -- not Christ being the Head of the church, but Christ being King. That was the battle cry of the old covenanters, and that was the great cry at the time that the Free Church was established. It was that Christ was the King -- that the crown of England was using its title against the rights of Christ. In the case about which there was so much talk some years ago, and to which I need not refer more particularly, this was the great thought. It was Christ's title of King in the church that was disputed. So you will find in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is their grand standard of doctrine. In short, they always go upon the ground of Christ being King of the church.

So again with the Independents -- just the same thing. When they managed to get the upper hand in England for a time they made very small scruple of sending the king to the block because they considered him to be the enemy of the King of the church -- that Christ was the King, and not King Charles; that King Charles had behaved very badly and deserved to suffer, and so on; and they were the asserters of the rights of the King.

---

233. *Collected Writings*, 1:286. See also 15:352; 23:328.

Well now there was a grand fundamental error made by all of them. Thus Protestants are just as guilty in another way as the Romanists, for although they do not use the title of Christ to exalt themselves against the powers that be, habitually they do use it when the powers that be fail (as they consider) to behave themselves quite right. Then they think they are perfectly entitled to call them to account, and, if necessary, to put them down, or even send them to the block. Now all this you see is a complete inversion of the right relationship of a Christian man to the powers of the world, and all founded upon the very plausible idea that whether you call Him Head of the church or call Him King of the church, it is all one and the same thing. They say that it is only "hair-splitting brethren" that see anything different; that it is only persons who continually put themselves disagreeably forward and tell people that they do not understand the scriptures; that it is only persons that have that rather quarrelsome, disagreeable style of convicting persons of not knowing the word of God.

Now, beloved friends, I say that however disagreeable it may be to be proved guilty of not knowing the word of God, this is the very thing that we do affirm; this is the very thing that we do assert now, that this is a subject of the greatest possible moment, that is, that our true relationship to Christ is not King of the church -- that He is never so treated -- nay, that He is not even called "King of saints" except in a passage in the Revelation which every scholar knows to be a mistaken translation, the true meaning in that case being, "King of nations," and not "King of saints," or King of the church at all. In short, there is no such thought, and the fact is very important. It is no mere idea, and it is no litigious objection to people's dogmas. It is a vital point, not for salvation, but for the true place of the church -- the true relationship of the church -- and you must remember our duties always depend upon our relationships. If I am wrong about my relationship, I am certain to be wrong about my duty. I am certain to make a duty of what is wrong, and that is exactly what the effect was to one or other of the different classes that I have referred to. That is what they have done. I need not repeat it, but I say that the opposite of the relationship is a fatal thing. The way it works is this. If my relationship to Christ is that of a member of the body to the head, my relationship is of the most intimate kind; my relationship is of the closest nature, and the Head loves me as He loves Himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh. Such is the relationship of Christ to the church. It is so intimate that you can have no person between you and the Head -- none whatever. You see all depends upon it. The principle of the clergy depends upon it, because if that is the relationship the clergy are at an end. There is no such thing; it is only an imaginary class of beings as far as the truth is concerned. That is, they have no real title in the word of God. There is no such being in the word of God. There is no such position at all. It is only a thing that has been conjured up by persons who do not know the relationship of the church of God to the Head. So exactly that of which I am speaking now -- the relationship of the members to the Head -- excludes all dealing of the church with the world. The world

is nothing to the church. The church is a thing separate from the world -- not controlling the world -- not punishing the world, not putting the world under force to compel it to render unwilling subjection. All this is a total confusion between the kingdom and the church -- the kingdom as it will be by and by with this only difference, that then, as we know, the obedience will be real except only in a certain set who afterwards become rebellious and are so judged and punished.

Now all this then I maintain, beloved friends, is of a very practical nature, because the reason why so many saints are troubled in their souls among Presbyterians and Dissenters generally is this very thing. If I am only in the relationship of one of a people who have a king, well there is a long distance between the king and the people. No wonder I am not very intimate with the king. No wonder I am not on very happy terms with the king. I ought not to expect to be. My business as one of the people is to remain in a lowly outside place altogether, feeling indeed how poor my subjection is; but as to pretense to draw near the king -- to go continually into his presence -- it would be a very unbecoming thing in a subject to dare to do such a thing. Thus you destroy the very vitals of Christianity by this doctrine. It is not only that I speak now of great public errors, but I say that you destroy practical Christianity every day and every hour, and I hold, therefore, that this very mistake now of confounding the kingdom and the church is one of the most fatal in its consequences, not for sinners as a question of looking to Christ to be saved, but for Christians as a question of enjoying their own proper relationship, and of walking accordingly. Whereas if you know your place -- as brought into the church of God -- the body of Christ -- then there can be no intimacy more complete; there can be no oneness more absolute. You are put, therefore, as a part of Himself before God, and instead of its being too high or presumptuous, or anything of the kind, on the contrary, it is merely faith in the truth -- it is merely appreciation of the grace that He has shown you; for it would be perfect nonsense for the body not to share the blessing of the Head; it could not be, and therefore you must deny the fact -- you must deny the relationship -- not to enjoy this blessedness which you have in communion with the Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of God. <sup>234</sup> ❖

\* \* \* \* \*

234. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 8:243-245. See also 10:147; *The Bible Treasury*, 6:82; 7:107, 355; 10:78; 11:242.

## Chapter 13

### Concluding Remarks

#### *What About the Lord's Supper and the Kingdom?*

◆ As presented in the Gospels it is the continuation of the passover but under a new aspect, and the outward form of memorial changed. The broken bread is the symbol of His body given for us, the wine of His blood which does not merely screen from judgment, but was shed for the remission of sins. The supper has two aspects which we may be permitted to distinguish as the kingdom aspect and the church aspect. In the three synoptic Gospels the Lord's supper is given in its connection with the kingdom, save that in Luke we have its character of grace beside, but not quite so fully as in 1 Cor. 11 where we have the distinctive and special church characteristics of the Lord's supper -- in remembrance of the Lord, and until He come. Like the passover it is a memorial, but rather of the Lord than of His work, but unlike the passover which is an ordinance for ever, as long as time endures, the supper in its church aspect ceases when the Lord comes. "Until He come."

At the last supper, i.e. the last in its original character, the Lord instituted the new thing, and as recorded in Matt. solely in view of the gathered remnant. The Lord looked onward to this last passover when, in virtue of His atoning work on the cross, He would set aside the old form; and He said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." But this in Luke (where the Lord joins the supper with the remembrance of His person) is not merely the body given and the blood, the seal of the new covenant and the sure foundation of every blessing, but His person, Himself rather than what we have through Him. Nor need we wonder that He who has proved His love to us personally, when about to give a constantly recurring memorial of Himself as dying for us -- "Do this in remembrance of me" -- should say "with desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." As the disciples were constantly in His thoughts, so He would be ever in ours.

The linking on of the new thing to the old is evident. "As they were eating" the old passover,

Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave to the disciples and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

*This*, not the lamb but the bread broken, is to be the symbol of His body. And now that He was come, bread (which is connected with the thought of Himself as the true bread from heaven) is the most suited symbol. Only here the bread is broken and means death, as well as the blood separate from the body. Death was prefigured in the passover, but in the supper there is more. It is communion with Him as the One that died in our stead and for us. Eating is always the expression of fellowship. Those who partook of things sacrificed to idols had fellowship with demons, and we in partaking of the bread and wine have communion with the body and the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). On the passover night the blood was to be sprinkled on the doorpost; but now under the symbol -- wine -- we drink it, and by faith realize its power for the remission of sins. Thus eating the bread and drinking the wine is the outward expression that we eat His flesh and drink His blood, without which none can have life.

The gathered remnant on that night were the representatives of all who have since believed in Christ. On the day of Pentecost they were formed into the church of God. This was a new thing, a new position for the believing remnant, and the Lord added daily and soon brought in Gentiles. The church was formed before Gentiles were added to it, and when they were brought in, they did not change the character of the saints as a remnant, of being the continuation of the unbroken line of grace from the beginning. So Paul in Gal. 4 does not sever the Jerusalem which is, from the Jerusalem which is in bondage, though he shows how widely distinctive they are. The first in bondage, the second free, still Jerusalem, the two being so far identified that the promise to the first is enjoyed by the second. The prophet who has bewailed the calamities of the earthly Jerusalem looked onward to millennial blessedness (Isa. 54). But the millennial is not yet come. Meantime the apostle, that is the Spirit of God, takes the promise and endows the church with it. Jerusalem is called the holy city, the city of solemnities, the place where God rests. This will be manifestly so in the millennium, but now for a time the earthly character of the holy city is in abeyance, and the heavenly Jerusalem, from above, is now our mother. Saints were always a remnant, and will be until the reign of peace, when the power and the rule shall be with them and not with the wicked (Dan. 7:18). As a remnant the line of saints is continuous whatever the dispensation, or the name by which God was specially known, whether El Shaddai, Jehovah or Father; and there never was a moment when God had no saint upon the earth.

The church position, unknown till Pentecost, is beyond the remnant character of saints. Not as a remnant are we joint-heirs with Christ, not as children of the Jerusalem which is from above are we the members of the body of Christ, but because we are made the church of God by the indwelling Spirit, therefore are we joint-heirs with Christ and members of His body. The characteristic and distinguishing work of the church from every other family of heaven is the being baptized into one body by the Spirit. As the Spirit is one, so is the body. This unity is not predicated of any number of saints save of the church, and it ever subsists --

though we may have failed to keep it in the bond of peace. Thus, while the saints of the church have not lost one of the privileges possessed by those of the former dispensation, they have besides unspeakably greater. And the Lord's supper, which in one aspect is a continuation of the passover, is also connected with new truth and higher blessing which the passover never could convey.

The Lord's supper is not properly a type of His death as was the passover. It is truly a memorial. Types in scripture are the shadows of things to come; and when the true Lamb was come, there was no more room for the type. The eating and drinking of the bread and the wine are commemorative of the body and of the blood, and was so ordained by the Lord. For He was going away and leaves a memorial of His dying love, though in Matthew and in Mark the prominent thought is not "do this in remembrance of me," but that the blood is shed "for the remission of sins." This would be their joy, the time was coming when He would share it with them again -- "drink it new <sup>235</sup> with you in my Father's kingdom." It is evident from this that Matthew does not give the church aspect of the supper, while equally plain that it is an advance upon the original passover. For the Lord's supper as enjoyed by the church will cease before we enter the Father's kingdom. But we, beside being the house of God and Christ's one body, we follow in the wake of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. We share with them in the Father's kingdom, not in the kingdom of the Son of man, i.e. the millennial earth, but as risen and in bodies of glory. Then the Lord as the risen man in His body of glory, the model after which ours shall be fashioned, will partake with all the risen saints of this new wine "which cheereth God and man." They will rejoice in the presence of the risen Lord, and He will rejoice over and with them.

This is the Father's kingdom, which does not mean eternity but the heavenly portion of the glorified saints, during the time that man upon the earth is enjoying the blessings of Christ's millennial reign. For the present the Lord would no more drink of the fruit of the vine. He waits to drink new wine with them in a new scene. Clearly the Lord here is not speaking of the joy of the church while here below; for the church of God is never called the Father's kingdom. Nor is the earthly remnant so called, who will again have their feast of the passover, and after a fuller sort (Ezek. 45:21). Not a lamb, but a bullock, to be followed by sacrifices on each of the following seven days. For then even the earthly remnant will know remission of sins; then will be the new covenant in contrast with the old which sealed death upon the transgressor.

---

235. {The Father's kingdom is the heavenly side of the coming kingdom. Literal wine is not drunk in heaven any more than there are horses in heaven (Rev. 20). These are symbolic of something; in the case of wine it signifies *joy*, the joy of our being with Himself, and His joy that we are with Him there. In a footnote to Matt. 26:29, JND's translation says:

Not 'anew,' but (*kainos*) 'in a different manner,' 'of another kind:' see Heb. 12:24.

Mark gives the supper from the same stand-point as Matthew, in connection with the kingdom, but with the differences characteristic of each Gospel. In Matthew we see the rejected Messiah with the gathered but despised remnant. In Mark the Lord speaks as Servant. He does not say "with you" when looking onward to the drinking wine in the kingdom. It is not His association with the disciples but His own reward as having perfectly done the will of God that sent Him. When the kingdom of God is come, then the Servant will again drink of the fruit of the vine, but then it will be new. As Servant {which is the way Mark presents the Lord} He does not say "kingdom of my Father," but "kingdom of God." This change and the omission of "with you" are in harmony with the character of Mark's gospel which presents the Lord as a Servant. Kingdom of God has a wider significance than "kingdom of my Father." Wherever righteousness, peace, and joy are found, there is the kingdom of God. These marks will be found among the saints of the millennium in the kingdom of the Son of man {the earthly sphere of the coming kingdom}, and therefore the kingdom of the heavens is also called the kingdom of God. But the moral marks of the kingdom of God are to be found now, and perhaps with deeper significance, for it is righteousness, peace, and joy *in the Holy Ghost* {Rom. 14:17}. The present time marked by faith and patience is with these moral and spiritual characteristics pre-eminently the kingdom of God. And the Lord drinks of the fruit of the vine now, the new vine of the kingdom {He is speaking figuratively}, in gathering disciples to His Name and Person. The shame and reproach of the world are joy to those who are thus gathered. The blood here as in Matthew is shed for the remission of the sins of many, both Jews and Gentiles, the "nigh" and the "far off." It is the supper, but not the Lord's supper with its church privileges common to all. The church as such is not in view here, but the kingdom of God which is founded upon the blood of the new covenant. This new covenant is with God's Israel and always gives them the prominent place. They had this pre-eminency during the old covenant until the middle wall of partition was broken down. They will have it again when the saints of the past, and these who now share in the Lord's rejection, drink wine with Him {share joy with Him} in the Father's kingdom. The old covenant which has vanished away will then be replaced by the new covenant. But whether old or new both are with Israel. No covenant was ever made with the Gentile. Nor is Heb. 8 a covenant with the church, but it declares that all the blessings it will bring to Israel by-and-bye are for the saints now.

In Luke as in Mark it is the "kingdom of God" and morally now as well as in the future glory. Also in Luke the far-reaching of grace is more prominent than in the previous Gospels. For Christ is in this Gospel not so much presented in His official relationship to the Jew as in Matthew, or in His service to God as in Mark, but in His connection with man whether Jew or Gentile -- Christ The MAN in the activities of grace toward all men. Chap. 15 gives the key note to Luke's Gospel, as Matt. 13 to Matthew's. As regards the disciples this grace takes the form of intense personal affection. What more expressive of His love than when He said

with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer  
{Lk. 22:15}?

This last passover was the right moment for setting aside the old observance of the passover, and instituting the new thing, but it surely tells of His love when He speaks of His intense desire for it. In Luke, as in the others, the supper is the pledge of the coming kingdom, and the Lord tells of His joy in it; and that because the true Lamb was offered to God. It was not and could not any longer remain a mere shelter from judgment but a full remission of sins through His blood. But Luke gives more and for the first time we have the Lord's supper in its special character of grace. The two other evangelists record "take eat this is my body." Here in Luke "This is my body given for you": also the cup after supper, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you." The "for you" brings His love home to our hearts, and makes us recognize our interest in the blood. And what an appeal to our hearts

This do in remembrance of me {Lk. 22:19}.

This personal remembrance was not in the passover. Now, all that it contained, and all presented in the kingdom aspect of the Supper is merged in that personal and loving remembrance peculiar to the church of God, where we have the enjoyment of a closer intimacy with the Lord.

How suited to this feast it may be added, is the title "the Lord's supper." For it embodies all that He suffered, all that He is in giving Himself for us. All the shame and sorrow of the cross, all the judgment He bore is "for you." Yea all the blessing which the shed blood bestows now, all the glory it will bring soon, all is "for you." The cruel mockings, the bitter scorn, the being forsaken of God, and the triumphant rising, the glorious victory over death, His exaltation as Man at the right hand of God, all are "for you." Why all this "for you"? Because it is not a question so much of our blessing and future glory as of the work of Christ to God. And the church will be God's proof to the world how highly He estimates the person and work of Him who died and rose again. The church in glory is the precious consequence of Christ on the cross. The pledge to us of the glory is the Lord's supper; a token, not for some more favored company, but "for you." O how slow of heart to believe all that His death and resurrection pledge to us. How small our enjoyment compared with what simple faith would lead us into.

There is yet another feature of the Lord's supper which we find in 1 Cor. 11:26:

For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.

Not less in connection with the kingdom, but with His coming. And when He comes, it is to take us to the many mansions {abodes -- spiritual abodes of nearness to the Father} in the Father's house; a higher place than the Father's kingdom. "Until He come" -- this to those who look for Him is the sweetest of all; for then we shall see Him. We shall not see Him, nay, we cannot, without being like Him. But if it

were possible to see Him without being like Him, or to be like Him without seeing Him, which would we desire most? Let love answer. But the counsels of grace have indissolubly joined the two. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Paul as the apostle of the church gives the Lord's supper in its full church character. He received a direct revelation from the Lord concerning it, and links together the two greatest events that were or can be: Christ's coming to die, and His coming again. The Lord's supper is the memorial of the past, and the pledge of the future.

But there is one thing said of the blood which is common to the Gospels and to the Epistle; the blood is that of the new covenant. Since the new covenant is with Israel we may inquire why it is mentioned here where the church alone is contemplated. The answer is, first, that the blood of the new covenant ensures every blessing to Israel, not on the ground of obedience {as under the Mosaic Covenant} but by sovereign grace, and therefore Israel and the church are so far on {i.e., in that particular} the same ground. Israel's covenanted blessings rest upon the blood, and the people, new down-trodden, scattered and peeled by the judgment of God, will be brought back to their own land with clean water sprinkled upon them and be made the head of the nations under the rule of their own Messiah whose blood has secured both their blessing and ours. Secondly, it is the blood of the new covenant to us because we, with whom no such covenant is made, yet enter into the enjoyment of all they will have, and that long before their time of blessing comes, possessed and known in a much higher way and more blessed too. All their earthly blessings are recast for us in a heavenly mould. The Lord will create new heavens and a new earth, and Israel restored will be a part of the new creation then.<sup>236</sup> Now we as being in Christ are individually a new creation; a part of the new creation before the earth feels its power. It will be said to Israel "Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hos.1).<sup>237</sup> We are now sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26). So also Rom. 9:24-26 where the words of Hosea for Israel are applied<sup>238</sup> to the church "even us whom He hath called, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles." So we have all and more than all the blessing given to them by the new covenant. But it is through the same blood, that of the new covenant, that shed for many, which has provided for us some better thing.

If the church's position be that of joyful expectancy, it is else solemn. Showing the Lord's death till He come is not only a memorial; it is a testimony to the world that they crucified the Lord. The church partaking of the Lord's supper is a public witness of the world's sin, and of its condemnation. This solemn testimony has been

236. {There is no proof from Scripture that Israel will be a nation on the new earth.}

237. {This is their millennial status.}

238. {Yes, *application* of the principle, but that is not the same as the *interpretation* of the passage, which is millennial.}

going on for more than eighteen centuries, an unbroken line of witnesses maintained by the power of God; who for the purposes of righteous judgment as well as of grace has not permitted the rage of man, or the power of Satan, to destroy it. For it is no less a witness of the longsuffering of God as of the world's sin. So long as the church remains here, the remission of sins through His blood is preached. When the Lord comes, the Supper ceases, the saints are gathered up, and the judgment of the world begins. Meantime we at the Lord's table have by faith both His dying and His coming again present to our hearts, the foundation and the top-stone of grace.

Such is the feast of the Lord's supper, present blessedness and the assurance of future glory with the Lord. We do not forget what we were; we do not forget that it was our sin that brought the Lord Jesus to the cross. And if we had not a purged conscience, the Lord's supper would be the right time when to afflict our souls. It was in connection with the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread that Israel were told to eat the bread of affliction (Deut. 16:3). There is nothing in the Lord's supper that answers to the bread of affliction. Cleansed by the blood, we gather round His table, and in gladness of heart partake of that which reminds us of what the Lord Jesus had to suffer in order to deliver us from judgment and death; and when we look not only at the bare deliverance but at the blessing and the position which redemption gives us, then we can understand, the apostle when he said "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin." There is no "bread of affliction" for the new creation.

Saints now are not only heirs of the kingdom, but also the church of God. As church, their position is higher than as inheritors of the kingdom, though still possessing every kingdom privilege and honor. The Supper in the Gospels is in connection both with the kingdom and the church, and in both aspects linked on to the original passover. Even in the Epistle, "Christ is our Passover." In Matthew and Mark the original paschal lamb gives way to the Supper, but in connection with the kingdom. In Luke both the kingdom and the saints aspect are given. The highest joy of the kingdom aspect will be when we drink wine with Him in the kingdom of the Father. Waiting for an absent Lord is the special feature of the saintly aspect, "Until He come." Paul writing to the church gives this alone. We shall drink with Him then, not in remembrance of an absent Lord, but new wine in the full and perfect joy of seeing Him.

R. B.<sup>239</sup> ♦

\* \* \* \* \*

It is well to bear in mind that it was given to Paul to connect the Lord's Supper with the truth of the one body. Thus, the loaf has two significances:

1. The loaf speaks of His body given in death for us.

239. *The Bible Treasury*, 15: 82-85.

## 2. The loaf speaks of the one body of Christ.

J.N.D. wrote,

❖ If Jesus attaches value to our remembrance to Him — if He presents Himself to us with so much tenderness in the memorials of His dying love, that love, at the same time, produces in us the very deepest affections — affections which are connected with what is most exalted in the grace of God, and which express themselves in the adoration of the heart. We can understand, then, that although worship is offered in various ways, by hymns, by thanksgivings, in the form of prayers, in praise, etc., we can understand, I say, that the Lord's supper, as representing that which forms the basis of all worship, is the centre of its exercise, around which the other elements that compose it are grouped. The worshipper is thereby reminded of that which is the most precious of all things in the sight of God — the death of His beloved Son. He recalls the act in which the Saviour has testified His love in the most powerful way. Other considerations add their weight to those which we have just presented with regard to the Lord's supper. The worshipper eats in the house of God, as the priests ate of the things with which expiation had been made; he enters with spiritual affection into the perfection of that expiation — of what Christ has been in the accomplishment of it. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." I apply not this exclusively to the Lord's supper, although the most vivid expression of it.

The peace-offering presents, with the passover, the most lively images of the true character of the Lord's supper. The former was a feast consequent upon a sacrifice; in the latter, Israel fed upon the sacrifice, the blood of which was their safeguard against judgment. In the former, the partakers were, God, the priest who officiated, the priests, the worshipper, and those who were with him. The fat burnt upon the altar was called "the food of God." This expresses the full satisfaction of God in the sweet odour of the work of Christ. The priest who offered the blood had his part. That is, Christ partakes in the joy of those that are His through the efficacy of His death. The other priests ate another part. They represent Christians in general. Lastly, the guests of him who makes the sacrifice represent united worshippers. Thus God Himself has His part in the joy; so has Christ; so has the Church in general; and lastly, the assembly which participates therein.

This figure of the peace-offering is realized in a manner more precious in the Supper. Through faith, we feed on, and are nourished by, that holy victim already offered, the sweet savour of which ascends to God. Christ has His joy in our joy. We share in it with all the Church. Already in spirit in heaven, our hearts dwell on that which has given us title to enter there — on that which will be precious above all to our souls when we are there.

United in one body, we shew forth the death of Jesus, which is the foundation of our salvation, "until he come," and we are for ever with Him on high, where remembrance will be lost in the immediate presence of Himself. The praises and thanksgivings of the worshippers are necessarily associated with the acceptance by our God, in heaven, of the sacrifice of Christ. This is ever true as to the heart; but the Lord's supper is the special definite expression of the fact.

In the Old Testament this truth is expressed in figure in a remarkable manner. In the peace-offering, if any one ate the flesh of the victim on a day which was too far removed from that on which the fat was burnt upon the altar as a sacrifice to God, instead of being communion, it was a sin. In the case of thanksgivings, a man might eat of the flesh only on the same day; in the case of a voluntary offering, on the morrow also. The joy of the worshipper, expressed by his eating of the sacrifice, must be in immediate connection with the offering made to God; otherwise, it was profane. In general, therefore, the flesh was to be eaten the same day; and even where greater energy of piety, indicated by presenting a voluntary offering, gave more force to this association, the repast on the morrow was not really separate from the sacrifice.

Reflection upon the truths we have been considering will shew the importance of the Lord's supper in worship, whether we view it in connection with the sacrifice offered to God, as the foundation of all our relationships with Him, or in connection with the affection and the devotedness of Christ for us — the two themes which form the sphere of the spiritual affections that are exercised in worship. But there is another point also connected with it.

We have seen that the Holy Spirit being the source, the power, and inspirer of all true Christian worship, the unity of the body formed by Him, and in which He acts, necessarily holds a prominent place in the worship which He produces in its members so united. Love, which is the soul of it, is defective in one of its most perfect forms, if conscience as to this unity is wanting. The presence of the Holy Spirit produces the consciousness of this unity, of which He is the author and the bond. Now, considered in one aspect, the Lord's supper is the expression of this unity. We are all but "one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (or, as in the original, "of that one loaf"). If the bread broken represents, on the one hand, the broken body of Christ, the unity of the bread represents, on the other, the unity of His spiritual body. As the Spirit embraces all saints, so do the hearts of believers. Thus, "When I knew," said the apostle, "your love unto all saints." And again, "That ye may comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ

which passeth knowledge."

How sweet to find oneself united to "all saints," wherever they may be, in the unity of the body of Christ, as members together of that body, according to all the privileges which attach to it by reason of the love of Him who "nourishes and cherishes" it, as a man does his own flesh. How sweet to feel, through the Spirit, one's union with all that are Christ's, accompanied with the thought, so full of joy, that all those dear to us, as belonging to Him, are cherished by His constant love. Thus it is that intercession connects itself so intimately with worship, properly so-called, being inspired by the affections which are generated by the Holy Spirit. The petitions made by worshippers for grace for themselves are scarcely farther removed from worship, because the consciousness of what we owe to God, which is expressed in worship, necessarily produces the desire of glorifying Him, and of receiving the grace which alone can render us capable of doing so.

With regard to the Supper, we find indeed that not only does it form the prominent feature of the religious exercises of believers, but that, with this end in view, they were wont to unite in the occasional and solemn assemblies. Thus, we read, "they continuing daily with one consent in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house [margin, at home]" — that is, in their private houses, in contrast with the temple. Again, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

It appears, then, that the early believers partook of the Supper even daily, and that, being still Jewish in many respects, they diligently frequented the temple; but then they had, in their houses, in remembrance of Christ, this special service, as to which He had said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

In Acts 20 we read, "And upon the first day of the week [the resurrection-day], when the disciples came together to break bread." This passage implies that this act, though others might accompany it, was the object of their meeting.

It has been supposed that "the breaking of bread" might apply to something besides the Supper, since there is proof that they made a meal at the same time. There is no doubt as to the meal. Christ instituted the Supper at the time of His own last evening's repast; and at first the disciples partook of a supper at the same time that they broke bread; but "the breaking of bread" had a character proper and distinctive to itself, even as it had its formal appointment. Not to perceive this, when it is celebrated, is what the apostle calls "not discerning the Lord's body"; and in the Epistle to the Corinthians he corrects this abuse. The passage shews that they came

together to eat; but, alas! their feast had at Corinth set aside the spiritual service, and some came to take their surfeit in eating and drinking, and left the poor in want. The Supper was not observed in their private abodes, but in a building common to all, and every one brought "his own supper," and the service had entirely lost its character as the Lord's supper. The passage plainly shews that they came together in order to eat, and that they supped together in the common place of meeting, but that the Supper of the Lord was the avowed object of the meeting. To maintain this last institution in all its importance the apostle ordained that the repast, which previously had accompanied the Lord's supper, should be separated from it, that so they might come together in the spirit of devotion, and not bring down chastisement upon themselves.<sup>240</sup> ❖

### *What Is Our Kingdom that Cannot be Shaken (Heb. 12:27)?*

❖ Now, dear brethren, *God shakes everything* except the kingdom which cannot be shaken. He will remove everything save that. Why build that which His coming will destroy? Let us keep ourselves firmly in the word of His patience. He did not possess, He possesses not yet, the fruit of the travail of His soul: all which is not that will perish; let us attach ourselves to that which will not perish. Every other thing will distract us. Impossible for me to enjoy fully the coming of Jesus as a promise, if I am seeking to build the things which His coming will destroy. His Church will be taken up to Him. His Spirit will be for ever its power. His word abides for ever. Let us abide by it. Neither will our labor be lost (1 Cor. 15:30-32), nor the work of faith, although this word be, no doubt, the word of His patience. ❖<sup>241</sup>

---

240. *Collected Writings*, 7:110-114.

241. *Collected Writings*, 4:78.