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I

THE THEME

THE Bible revelation regarding the kingdom presents the purpose, process and final realization of a divine government in the earth. This objective is the heart of the kingdom prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done *in earth*, as it is in heaven." The kingdom revelation is a distinct body of Scripture running through both the Old Testament and the New and its study, of necessity, leads to some definite conclusions touching the meaning of much unfulfilled prophecy, the two advents of Christ, the present age of Grace and the future of both Jews and Gentiles.

Considering only kingdom passages, both historical and prophetic, such definite conclusions are not difficult from the fact that this revelation is presented in those Scriptures which are more easily harmonized than the familiar body of truth from which are drawn the doctrines of salvation. Salvation revelations are sufficiently clear ; but upon them the theological discussions of centuries have been centered. On the other hand, such general study has not been given to kingdom truths. In fact, many students of theology are confessedly ignorant on this subject. However, there is no conflict between Salvation and Kingdom themes. They cover widely different fields of Biblical doctrine.

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In view of these facts, it may be helpful to note some of the essential values accruing from, and conditions governing, the study of kingdom truth:

1. *Bible interpretation is incomplete without it.*

It stands to reason, since one-fourth of the Bible is in prophetic form, and five-sixths of the Bible is addressed to one nation to whom the kingdom promises are given, that any plan of study which avoids prophecy and ignores, or "spiritualizes," God's covenants with His chosen earthly people will be incomplete, misleading and subject to mere human assumptions.

The accurate study of the kingdom in the Old Testament and the New affords the only comprehensible approach to the New Testament doctrines of "This present evil age" (Gal. i. 4), "The church which is his body" (Eph. i. 22, 23), and "Things to come" (Jno. xvi. 13).

It has been pointed out that two distinct revelations were given to the Apostle Paul. In Arabia he received directly from God the gospel of grace (Gal. i. 11, 12) which he has presented, in the main, in the Roman and Galatian letters. This is a revelation of a new order, a new relationship to God, which is neither a perpetuation of Judaism, nor a modification of that system. Judaism remains intact and follows its predicted course, according to Scripture, to the end. The new revelation of "the grace of God which hath appeared," and which is **made** possible only by the cross, should not be

colored by the Judaic teaching. It is a complete system in itself and, like Judaism, continues intact to its predicted end. For what else is Paul contending in Galatians if it is not that these two distinct systems shall not be mixed? And yet to what seeming avail are those pleadings to law-ridden, Judaized Protestantism to-day?

The second revelation came, in the main, from Paul's two years of imprisonment. This body of truth embraces the plan of the ages, the whole doctrine of the Church and the present out-calling of a heavenly body and bride as recorded in the Ephesian and Colossian letters. It is this advance body of truth which is never comprehended apart from the exact lines of distinctions laid down in kingdom revelations.

Theology, as usually presented, is disproportionately concerned with the Arabian revelation and a grave harm is done when such theology, creeds or catechisms, built largely on one aspect of New Testament teaching, are supposed to be adequate interpretations of the whole divine revelation. The theological student who enters his ministry with such presuppositions and limitations, inaccurate in many of his conceptions and prejudiced toward whole bodies of truth about which he knows little, will be incompetent to minister the whole Word.

An illustration of this may be drawn from 1 Tim. iv. 1-6. It is set forth here that the young Timothy may win the high title of "a good minister of Jesus Christ," if he is faithful in putting the

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brethren in remembrance of the awful apostasy with which the present age must end (see also 2 Thess. ii. 1-10). How shall any minister discern an age-closing apostasy with its divinely ordered relations to the final triumph of God in the earth if he does not know these exact revelations which form the whole program of the kingdom according to Scripture?

No minister, therefore, can "preach the Word" in its right proportions, or be a "good minister of Jesus Christ" who habitually ignores the great prophetic themes. Nor is he excused in his neglect, or prejudice, by virtue of the fact that he represents a majority, or that other ideals have been set before him by his teachers. What is the particular knowledge that gives proficiency to the minister of Christ if it is not a thorough understanding of the Scriptures? Successful men of other professions apply themselves continually to the acquirement of accurate knowledge covering every phase of their chosen calling. Are these the accepted standards of the ministerial profession? Would we choose to be operated on by a physician who knows no more of surgery than the average theological student knows about prophecy? Yet the knowledge of prophecy, in its main features, is distinctly a part, and a very large and qualifying part, of the material committed to those who are called to "preach the Word."

2. Knowledge of prophetic truth qualifies all intelligent Christian life and service.

The careful student who distinguishes the various

purposes of God in the ages has discovered that there is a distinct rule of life and program for service in the present age which can never, reasonably, be confused with that which has gone before, or that which is to follow. It is a serious mistake to press law-observance in the face of repeated revelations that the believer of this age is not under law as his rule of life (Rom. vi. 14; x. 4, 5; Gal. v. 18; 2 Cor. iii. 11, 17). So also it will be found that, at present, service is the accomplishment of divine undertakings never before revealed, and its motives are alone the mighty governing principles of grace. A real zeal in service will result and a beginning of interest in Bible study will develop when these plain distinctions are carefully taught and observed.

3. Kingdom and prophetic truths are being falsely represented.

The country is being swept by "Russellism" (so-called "Millennial Dawn," "International Bible Students' League," etc.), and the appalling progress of this system which so misrepresents the whole revelation of God can only be accounted for in the unsatisfied hunger of the people for the prophetic portions of Scripture. Such a false system, mixing truth with untruth, and designed to interpret all of the divine revelation, is evidently more engaging to the popular mind than only the Scriptural presentation of the fundamental doctrines concerning God, Man and Redemption. Satan's lies are al-

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ways garnished with truth and how much more attractive they seem to be when that garnishing is a neglected truth! And insurance against the encroachment of such false teaching lies only in correctly presenting the whole body of truth rather than in treating any portion of it as impractical or dangerous. No minister need greatly fear any false system when he is intelligently and constantly feeding the people on the Word in all its symmetry and due proportions. This is not only true concerning the teachings of "Millennial Dawn," but is equally true of the teachings of "Christian Science," "New Thought," "Spiritism," "Seventh Day Adventism" and all unscriptural doctrines of Sanctification.

4. Unfulfilled prophecy is as credible as history.

No one will question that faith is taxed in the study of prophecy more than in the study of history. It is not difficult to believe what has assuredly taken place: it is quite another thing to believe confidently that unprecedented events will occur when based only on the bare predictions of Scripture. This failure in faith doubtless underlies much neglect of the prophetic Scriptures and accounts for a prevalent habit of allegorizing and qualifying prophecy until it is reduced to the limitation of a human opinion. Under this pressure men otherwise clear on the interpretation of the Bible have gone so far as to assert that what Paul wrote in his early ministry was abandoned or

qualified in his later ministry. Revelation requires no such surgery. Such efforts reveal a state of mind which finds it easier to diminish Biblical authority than to increase personal confidence in the accuracy of Scripture. The mighty revelations of the purpose of God cannot be apprehended until the issue of believing His Word has been faithfully met.

5. *Prophetic language is equally as accurate as other Scriptures.*

While some prophecy is couched in symbolic language, those portions which trace the forward movements of the kingdom in the earth are largely free from problems presented by such symbolism, and that body of truth appears in language and terms the meaning of which cannot reasonably be questioned. The pity is that Origen ever conceived the allegorizing method of interpretation, and that his misleading and violent liberty with the text has since found such fertile soil in which to propagate.

A mixture of the teachings concerning Israel, as a nation, with the revelations concerning the Church, the body of Christ, is groundless in Scripture. It is hopelessly confusing and grotesque, for under this plan only Israel's blessings are borrowed; her curses and penalties are, naturally, not wanted. No progress can be made in the kingdom studies unless plain words are taken in their obviously plain meaning. In the Bible "Israel" is not the "Church"; "Zion" is not the body of saints of

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this dispensation; the "throne of David" is not Heaven, nor will it ever be; the "land of your fathers" is not "Paradise" and the "house of Jacob" is not a host of Gentiles ignorantly attempting to force an entrance into Judaism. All such borrowed habits of interpretation must be faithfully judged and abandoned if ever the kingdom portions of God's Word are to assume any order or meaning.

6. Scripture must be rightly divided and applied.

It has been said "All Scripture is for us, but all Scripture is not about us." It all bears a message to us, but is not all our rule of life. It will not do for Gentile believers to read themselves into the great portion of the Bible which treats distinctly of a chosen nation, still a separate people in the earth, under the special unbroken purpose of God and exactly where God intended them to be at this very hour.

So with Christ: He was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). This describes a strictly Jewish mission and purpose. He was also the grounds of personal justification to the Gentile believers (1 Cor. i. 3-8; 2 Cor. v. 21); but the two are separate. Because He was great enough to fulfill the predicted requirements for both Jew and Gentile is no warrant for Gentiles to attempt to intrude into those divine

ministrations which were evidently only for the Jews. A right division and application of Scripture demands that a portion of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus be recognized as belonging to the divine covenants with one nation in which Gentiles have no part (Eph. ii. 11, 12). During these ministrations Gentiles were not in view (Mt. x. 5) nor can they be made to so appear by any fair method of interpretation.

7. *There can be but one true system of interpretation.*

It is for the faithful student to discover this for himself. Accepted inferences of so-called Post-millennialism and Premillennialism as possible co-existing systems of interpretation¹ constitute a serious challenge against the dignity and purpose of the Bible itself. Either the divine revelation follows a definite order in the development of the kingdom in the earth, or it does not. If it does, there could hardly be two distinct programs co-existing in the mind and purpose of God. If there is but one order, an individual who confessedly knows nothing of the kingdom body of truth falls far short of being an approved workman, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, when he, through prejudice or preconceived conclusions, is not willing to be moved and molded by the exact and accurate words of revelation. And how much greater is his failure when guilty of withholding these mighty transforming themes from others!

II

THE KINGDOM COVENANTED

THE Bible teaches that God will ultimately triumph over all sin and rebellion in the earth. This is stated in many passages; notably 1 Cor. xv. 24-28: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Thus does the divine record predict the restoration of this universe to its primal blessedness under the unchallenged authority of God, when the Son shall have put down all authority and banished every foe. This purpose, as recorded in the Bible, appears in various stages, or aspects, all leading with the certainty of the Infinite to the glorious consummation.

The reestablishment of the authority of God is first mentioned in Gen. iii. 15, where it is stated that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of Satan, the file leader of all the permitted present confusion in the government of God. In this mighty undertaking, too, Satan must bruise his heel. There are successive methods and various degrees of divine government in the earth following this first reference in Genesis and leading up to the eternal kingdom covenant made with David. In the Davidic Covenant the final consummation is again foreseen in that this covenant is unlimited in respect to time. It is the detail and duration of this covenant that gives it preëminent value as the logical starting-point for all kingdom study in the Scriptures.

The portion of the Davidic Covenant which has to do with eternal rule and government is as follows: "Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it⁴ from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be es-

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established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 11-17).

This covenant, as herein stated, secures an established kingly order which will continue for ever. The element of perpetuity in this kingly rule was not conditioned in Jehovah's oath by sin in the Davidic house. Chastisement was provided in case of disobedience,—chastisement which fell upon the nation in the captivities and the dispersion,—but the eternal purpose of the covenant is not abrogated: "Thy throne shall be established for ever."

Of this eternal covenant and the one condition of chastisement it is written in Ps. lxxxix. 20-37: "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my

statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." The certainty of this covenant is again stated in Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21: "Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne."

Peter, by the Spirit, in his pentecostal sermon reveals also that it was the eternal element in this covenant, to which Jehovah had sworn with an oath, that led David to foresee the Lord always before his face and to demand in his faith, even the resurrection of Christ, that the oath of his God should not fail. Thus Peter spoke of David: "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer

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thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts ii. 25-31).

So, yet again, when the reign of peace through David's Greater Son is pictured to the House of Jacob, over whom he is to rule, the same eternal covenant is mentioned with a chastisement: "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment," which moment, however, has already extended at least twenty-four centuries; but what is this compared with that which follows: "But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer" (Isa. liv. 8)?

The history of the kings from David on, with the sin of the nation, is too familiar to need description. Their complete apostasy ended in chastisement in which they were taken off from the land and scattered among the nations and there was a cessation of the line of kings. These exact events Moses had prophesied a full thousand years before. This prophecy forms a part of the farewell

address of Moses to the nation for whom he had wrought, and with whom, because of the judgments of Jehovah, he could not enter the land. Moses foresaw the national apostasy, the chastisement by exile, and on beyond a period already extended 3,500 years, to that nation's blessings which are yet future, when their chastisement shall have ended and they are regathered into their own land under the unchanging covenant of Jehovah. These prophecies are recorded in Deut. xxvi. 1 to xxx. 20. Only a portion is here given: "And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

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And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you" (Deut. xxviii. 63-68). "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and

do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every good work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over your fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul" (Deut. xxx. 1-10).

There is no more important Scripture relating to Israel than this, and every word of this prophecy covering the time to the present hour has been literally fulfilled. Shall it not be so to the end? Shall they not be regathered as actually as they have been scattered? And that in relation to, and by virtue of, a "return," or second coming (xxx. 3) of the divine Person to the earth? Is there any other explanation of the miraculous preservation of that nation than that Jehovah's oath cannot be broken?