HE LIMITETH A CERTAIN DAY – Chapter 13

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM – With an Examination of DISPENSATIONALISM and the "Scofield Bible"

by Philip Mauro: 1928

This brings us to a question of great interest, namely: When the times of the Gentiles are ended. What then? Will "the Day of the Lord" then come? Will Christ appear suddenly as a thief in the night, as the lightning that lighteneth from one part to another under heaven? Will the door of salvation then be shut? Will the dead be raised and righteous separated from the wicked? Will the eternal day of glory dawn, the New Jerusalem come from heaven, and the new heaven and new earth appear? Or is there to be, as is now commonly taught among evangelical christians, a post-gospel salvation for the Jewish nation, a salvation in which Gentiles also are to have a subordinate portion? For it is now taught that after this present era of the grace of God is ended; after the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the convicting and regenerating power of the Spirit of God have done all they can do for the salvation of Jews and Gentiles (as between whom it is written that there is "no difference"); then our Lord Jesus Christ will appear again in Person, and will be seen by the entire Jewish nation (for this doctrine puts the fulfillment of the prophecy, "His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives" into the next "dispensation") and the whole Jewish nation will be converted by the sight (Zech. 14:4). And after that wholesale conversion of the Jewish nation (which meanwhile is to be reconstituted in Palestine), those converted Jews are to go forth into all the world as missionaries to the Gentiles. (See the "Scofield Bible," note on Zech. 8:26).

By this same "authority" it is asserted that:

“Israel as a nation always has its own place, and is yet to have its greatest exaltation as the earthly people of God” (note to Rom. 11:1).

And again:

“According to the prophets, Israel, regathered from all nations, restored to her own land, and converted, is yet to have her greatest earthly exaltation and glory” (note to Rom. 11:26).

The order of these alleged future happenings, as given in this new “Bible” is: First, “The return of the lord”; then “Restoration to the land”; and then “National Conversion” (note to Deut. 30:3).

And not only is there to be a salvation consisting of “earthly exaltation and glory” for the Jewish race, but the whole earth is to have a system of worship consisting of a revival of the sacrifices and other “shadows” of the law, which Christ (according to God’s Bible) abolished by His sacrifice upon the cross (Heb. 10:1-9). For, according to the “Scofield Bible,” Jerusalem is yet to be the religious center of the earth” (head line inserted above Zech. 8: 20); and further it is asserted that:

“In the days when Jerusalem has been made the center of earth’s worship, the Jew will then be the missionary, and to the very nations now called Christians'” (foot note on Zach. 8: 23).A RADICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY DOCTRINE

Here is modernism with a vengeance. Think of it, my brethren! For nineteen centuries it has been taught as one of the most indisputable of christian verities, that NOW is the day of salvation. But here is a copyrighted “Bible” that tells us of a coming day in which all the inhabitants of the earth will be saved and blessed; a day in which the most glorious triumphs of the Gospel of Christ will be made to look contemptably cheap and insignificant; a day when conversion will be on a

national, a wholesale, and a world-wide scale!

I protest against this doctrine, first of all because of its radical and revolutionary character; seeing that the teaching that there is to be another day of salvation, is subversive of foundation truth plainly taught in the New Testament.

But besides this general objection, there are certain specific objections to be considered; among which are the following:

1. This now doctrine proclaims a salvation different in kind from (and of a distinctly inferior grade to) that "common salvation" ("common," that is, to all races and classes of men the world over) which the gospel of Jesus Christ offers to all men everywhere, upon the essential condition of individual repentance and faith.
2. The New Testament knows of but one salvation; and that salvation is identified with the Gospel of Christ; which is expressly declared to be "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). And another scripture, speaking of Christ says, "Who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). And again, the apostle writes to the saints at Corinth concerning "the gospel by which also ye are saved" (1 Cor. 15:1,12). But, without further citation of texts, I give it as the indubitable teaching of the New Testament that "salvation" is of one sort only, without any "respect of persons"; and that it comes only "by the Gospel" (Eph. 3:16). Hence, in setting forth a different salvation, apart from the gospel of Christ, this doctrine contradicts fundamental truth of the New Testament. Here then is a matter for the serious attention of all "Fundamentalists."
3. The doctrine in question proclaims "a second chance" for some who reject God's mercy now offered through the gospel. For whereas the New Testament, again and again, now in one form of words and now in another, declares

that there is no salvation, no mercy, no hope, nothing but everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, nothing save the blackness of darkness forever, for those who reject the gospel, this doctrine says, not so, but that a whole generation of Jews who have not obeyed the gospel will be saved after the gospel day is over (to a lower grade salvation, to be sure, but such as the natural heart greatly prefers); and that Gentiles too will then be saved through the instrumentality of those Jews who are to be converted apart from the gospel; and not by faith, but by sight. In this respect dispensationalism resembles Russellism.

4. This doctrine sets forth a special salvation (earthly supremacy and dominion) for Jews only. Thus it builds again that "middle wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles, thereby undoing the work of the cross of Christ, which broke that wall down (Eph. 2:14). In other words, it revives racial differences which God has abolished forever, and makes Him a "Respecter of persons" (2 Cor. 5:16; Mat. 12: 50; Rom. 3:9, 22, 23; 10:12; Ac. 15:9; Eph. 2:14).
5. I have already indicated that the salvation thus said to be reserved for persons of Jewish descent, is more attractive to the natural heart than the salvation offered by the gospel. But it should be noted particularly that is the very thing the Jews had been taught by their blinded leaders to expect from their Messiah; and it was because He did not fulfil the prophecies according to their carnal misinterpretation of them, that they rejected and caused Him to be crucified. Hence this doctrine vindicates the attitude the Jews took towards Jesus Christ.
6. This new dispensationalism places the special salvation whereof it speaks in an era subsequent to that of the gospel: whereas the Scripture not only declares emphatically that "now is the day of salvation," which expressly limits salvation to this present era, but it

also teaches impressively, and in various ways, that there will be no mercy for any when once the gospel day is ended. See Luke 13:23-27 (where the question was “are there few that be saved?”),’ Luke 17:26-30 (noting the words, “until the day,” “the same day”); 2 Thes. 1:7-9, &c.

7. The new doctrine takes no account of the truth that Jews, like all other human beings, belong either to the first Adam, or to the last Adam; are either “in Adam” (where “all die”) or “in Christ” (where “all are made alive”). Those Jews who are to be saved by this post-gospel salvation, are neither one thing nor the other. (This will be referred to more in detail hereafter). They are nondescript. Confessedly they have no part in the first resurrection, else they would be given glorified bodies, and be caught away to be with the Lord. Hence they must be “flesh and blood”; but if so, then they cannot have the Kingdom; for the same passage which describes the resurrection and transformation of those that are “in Christ,” contains this emphatic declaration. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor.15:50). “NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION”

According to the teaching of the New Testament, salvation is strictly limited to this era of the Gospel. This has been briefly stated above; but it is of such importance as to call for further consideration. For the gospel-appeal derives its urgency from the revealed truth that there is but one day of salvation, and that it is now.. What else could be the meaning of those words of intensest earnestness: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6: 2)? Could those words have been written if there were to be another “day of salvation” for any part of the human race? Certainly not.

And how could the apostle Peter have written that the Lord's seemingly long delay in fulfilling "the promise of His coming" was because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9), if His coming was to be followed by day in which conversions are to be on a wholesale and national scale? If the modern doctrine of a Jewish millennium, whose blessings are to be shared by Gentiles, is the revealed truth of God, then the very reasons that are given to explain the great length of this present age (foreseen by Peter) would be compelling reasons why the Lord's coming should be hastened.

The apostle says that "the long-suffering of our God is salvation," which saying clearly places "salvation" on this side of the Lord's second coming. And then he appeals to the epistles of Paul as teaching the same thing (vv. 15,16); adding the significant statement that there are in those epistles "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures to their own destruction."

The Holy Spirit seems to have had this particular wresting of Paul's words that we are now discussing in view when He inspired the following Scripture:

> *"Again He LIMITETH a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time, Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4:7).*

For here the Spirit of God uses the word "limiteth," which means to fix the boundary of something; and what God has fixed the bounds of in this case is "a certain day." Moreover, the context makes it plain that the "day" that God has specially marked off from other days is that wherein opportunity was to be given to men to enter into what He here calls "My rest," whereof David and other prophets had spoken. That "rest" yet "remaineth" (so the passage tells us) "to the people of God"

(v. 9); and it makes plain that today is the time for entering into it (v. 11). That rest yet “remaineth” for the reason as here expressly stated, that “they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief”; and therefore men are now exhorted to “labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

That promised “rest” is what the Jews mistakenly supposed to be an era of earthly wealth and ease and world-leadership for themselves. And their error was fatal. How much more culpable then, the error of those who now adopt the same false interpretation of the prophecies, and who do it in the face of plain Scriptures like the one we are considering; which definitely limits the time for entering into God’s rest to now; saying, “Today,” and with the strong emphasis of repetition!

Beyond a doubt then, this passage teaches that there will be no entering into God’s rest, that is, no salvation for any, after this gospel day shall have ended.WHAT MANNER OF MEN ARE THESE?

In connection with this modern doctrine (modern among Christians, that is) of a future Jewish millennium, there arises an exceedingly perplexing question, namely: What sort of people are they who shall inhabit the earth during millennial times?

The “dispensational” doctrine is that the natural descendants of Jacob will be gathered back to Palestine, still in impenitence and unbelief (Zionism is supposed to be the beginning of this movement); that Christ will come to “the air” above (unseen), will raise dead believers, change the living and take all to glory (1 Th. 4:16,17), thus leaving only unsaved persons on earth; that the “great tribulation” will then ensue and will last for seven years (this being the “missing week” of Daniel’s seventy); that thereafter our Lord will continue His descent from heaven, will come visibly to

the earth and take His stand on the Mount of Olives (which will thereupon be physically cleft into two parts, &c.); that the entire Jewish nation will see Him and be instantly converted after some fashion (see explanations below); that the Jews will then go forth and convert the nations of the earth: that all mankind will enjoy uninterrupted peace, plenty and every earthly gratification for a thousand years (all going to Jerusalem every year to keep the feast of tabernacles) during all which period of time the Jews will be in the place of leadership in the world. Out of this teaching (and I think I have fairly stated its main points as taught to me by men sound in the faith) there naturally arises the question already stated: What sort of people will these millennialites be? By the terms of the doctrine itself they will be just natural men, “Jews” and “Gentiles.” They are not “in Christ”; for in Him there is neither Jew nor Greek. Therefore they must be “in Adam,” and hence subject to death.

So far as I am aware the copious literature of those who propagate this doctrine of a Jewish millennium give no definite answer to the above question. I have, however, lately seen in print that the “tribulation saints” (those who go into the millennium, thus constituting a link between this “dispensation” and the next) are “a semi-Christian or semi-Jewish body, who will be called out as witness to God before the end of the present age.” This is modernism truly; for the notion of a people who are half-Christian and half-Jew being called out as a witness to God, is a startling novelty.

Again, in a recent issue of an English periodical, which specializes in the doctrine of a Jewish national restoration during the millennium, there appeared an exposition of the words of Christ: “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23); concerning which verse the writer said:

“Observe, this statement leaves room for a change of dispensation back again to the locality of Jerusalem in

millennial days."

So it does, indeed; and with equal truth it might have been said that the passage leaves room for a change of dispensation to the Sahara Desert.

And the writer proceeds to say that, in those "millennial days," the worship of God in spirit and in truth will be abolished the world over; and the Levitical system with its temple, altar, priesthood, feast clays, and bloody animal sacrifices—will be restored at Jerusalem and will become the religion of all the nations on earth.

Thus the doctrine we are examining requires that, during those blissful millennial times, the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be wholly withdrawn from the earth. This is necessary because otherwise it would be impossible to interpret certain Old Testament prophecies literally, and make them fit into a post-gospel era.

But our expositor quoted above realized that it would not do to leave the matter there; so he hastens to inform his readers that, although the millenniumites will not be Christians, (he says it is "an error" to suppose they will be) yet the Jews of that day will be of a greatly improved type; that they will be:

"no more rebellious or idolators. They shall be all religious: they shall be a nation of holiness, obeying the Lord's commands fully; kings and priests to the Gentiles… In all this is a great advance as it regards Israel." And how about the Gentiles?

"The same advance shall be found in regard to the Gentiles also. The remnant of the Gentiles shall own the superiority of Israel, and shall obey and worship the Savior. Idol-worship shall cease. Peace shall be enforced." (Is not this a contradiction of terms?). "They shall go up from year to year to worship at Jerusalem the Lord of hosts, and to keep the

feast of tabernacles."

The Scriptures, however, know nothing of a third order of men, intermediate between the unregenerated children of Adam and the regenerated sons of God.

And what, we would ask, is the agency that will bring about this marvellous improvement in the dispositions and characters of men? What is it that will accomplish "what the law could not do?"

And finally let the reader notice the atrociously false doctrine that myriads of people whole nations, both Jews and Gentiles—that have not obeyed the gospel of Christ, instead of being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," are to be blessed with every carnal satisfaction and delight for a thousand years, including a religion suited to men in the flesh, being composed of forms and ceremonies and sacrifices, those "weak and beggarly elements," in which, even when they served temporarily a typical purpose, God declared He "had no pleasure" (Heb. 10:6).

But this topic of the resumption hereafter of the shadows of the law which Christ abolished by His Cross deserves a more extended consideration. Therefore I take up at this point the question:ARE BLOODY SACRIFICES TO BE RESUMED HEREAFTER?

That the resumption of bloody sacrifices is a part of God's revealed plan for a future day is a prominent feature of the new "dispensational teaching": and specifically it is taught that the sacrifices of bulls and goats, which Jesus Christ abolished by the offering of Himself as a Sacrifice for sin "once for all," are to be continued throughout the thousand years. It is explained that those animal sacrifices are to be carried on for a "memorial" of the Cross of Christ!

Thus in the "Scofield Bible" the following occurs in a note on Ezekiel 43:19:

“Doubtless these offerings will be memorial, looking back to the Cross; as offerings under the old covenant were anticipatory, looking forward to the Cross.”

But what saith the Scripture?

> *“But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”*
>
> *Heb. 9:26*

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when He cometh into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. In burnt offering and offering for sin Thou hast had no pleasure.. Then said I (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) Lo I come to do Thy will, 0 God.” And what was that will of God which He came to do? It is plainly stated in the word, “He taketh away the first that He may establish the second” (Heb. 10:4-9).

In the light of this Scripture it is plainly to be seen that the new dispensationalism contradicts the Word of God in respect to a matter of the first importance, namely, the consequences of the Sacrifice of Christ. For in the last quoted passages it is declared that the coming of Jesus and His offering of Himself as a sacrifice was for the very purpose of taking away those futile slaughterings of animals “which could never take away sins.” Moreover, the wording of the verse last quoted above, indicates that the taking away of the shadowy and futile sacrifices of the Levitical system was necessary to the establishing of the Sacrifice of Himself as the true sin-offering. And finally, the teaching of the entire context (Heb. VIII-X) is to the effect that the Levitical system of sacrifices has been abolished forever by the one Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore the teaching of a future resumption of those sacrifices of bulls and goats, that have been abolished at such a cost, is serious error; and this is

sufficient in itself to condemn the entire “dispensational” system whereof it is a part.