THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM – Introduction

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

by Philip Mauro: 1928

Through an incident of recent occurrence I was made aware of the extent—far greater than I had imagined—to which the modern system of dispensationalism has found acceptance amongst orthodox christians; and also of the extent correspondingly great—to which the recently published "Scofield Bible" (which is the main vehicle of the new system of doctrine referred to) has usurped the place of authority that belongs to God's Bible alone.

The incident alluded to above is what prompted the writing of this book. For it awakened in my soul a sense of responsibility to the people of God to give them, in concise form, the results of the close examination I have been led to make of this novel system of doctrine (dispensationalism).

Let it be understood at the outset that my controversy is solely with the doctrine itself; and not at all with those who hold and teach it, or any of them. Indeed I was myself one of their number for so long a time that I can but feel a tender consideration, and a profound sympathy likewise, for all such.

Moreover, as I said in another place:

"It is obvious that, in a matter involving truth of God so vital to His entire household, personal considerations must needs be disregarded. I greatly regret having to mention by name the "Scofield Reference Bible"; but that cannot be avoided, inasmuch as it is unhappily the case that that publication has been, and is, the chief agency for

promulgating the errors against which I feel called upon to protest. I deeply regret having to bring any man's name into the discussion. But we must deal with conditions as we find them. It is a matter of grief to me that a book should exist wherein the corrupt words of mortal man are printed on the same page with the holy Words of the living God; this mixture of the precious and the vile being made an article of sale, entitled a 'Bible,' and distinguished by a man's name."

It is mortifying to remember that I not only held and taught these novelties myself, but that I even enjoyed a complacent sense of superiority because thereof, and regarded with feelings of pity and contempt those who had not received the "new light" and were unacquainted with this up-to-date method of "rightly dividing the word of truth." For I fully believed what an advertising circular says in presenting "Twelve Reasons why you should use THE SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE," namely, that:—

"First, the Scofield Bible outlines the Scriptures from the standpoint of DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, and there can be no adequate understanding or rightly dividing of the Word of God except from the standpoint of dispensational truth."

What a slur is this upon the spiritual understanding of the ten thousands of men, "mighty in the Scriptures," whom God gave as teachers to His people during all the Christian centuries before "dispensational truth" (or dispensational error), was discovered! And what an affront to the thousands of men of God of our own day, workmen that need not to be ashamed, who have never accepted the newly invented system! Yet I was among those who eagerly embraced it (upon human authority solely, for there is none other) and who earnestly pressed it upon my fellow Christians. Am deeply thankful, however, that the time came (it was just ten years ago) when the inconsistencies and self-contradictions of the system itself, and above all, the impossibility of reconciling its main positions with the plain statements of the Word of God,

became so glaringly evident that I could not do otherwise than renounce it.

At that time I was occupied almost exclusively with the central doctrine of the system; a very radical doctrine indeed concerning the supremely important subject of the Kingdom of God, which our Lord and His fore runner proclaimed as then “at hand,” and which they both identified with the era of the Holy Spirit.* [*John preached, saying, “Repent Ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” and he announced the coming of Christ, saying, “He shall baptize you with THE HOLY GHOST” (Mat. 3:1,11). And Christ Himself taught a Jewish rabbi, saying, “Except a man be born of water and of THE SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Compare Paul’s definition of that Kingdom: “For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy, IN THE HOLY GHOST” (Rom. 14:17).]

According to the new dispensationalism, our Lord and John the Baptist were not proclaiming the near coming of that “Kingdom of God” which actually be gan shortly thereafter with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and which actually was then “at hand,” but were announcing a kingdom of earthly grandeur for which the carnally minded Jews and their teachers were then (and are still) vainly looking; though the earthly kingdom of Israel is not called in the Scriptures, “the Kingdom of God,” and though (as is now evident enough) it was not “at hand” at all.

As I continued, however, to study this new system of teaching in its various details, I found there were more errors in it, and worse, than I had at first expected; and these, as they became evident to me, I have attempted, by occasional writings subsequently, to expose. The work, however, is not yet finished; and hence the need for the present volume. Indeed, the time is fully ripe for a thorough examination and frank exposure of this new and subtle form of mod ernism that has been spreading itself among those who have adopted the name

“Fundamentalists.” For Evangelical Christianity must purge itself of this leaven of dispensationalism ere it can display its former power and exert its former influence.

Happily, however, there is a positive and construc tive side to what I am now seeking to accomplish. For the object is not merely to expose the errors of twentieth century dispensationalism, but also and mainly to set forth the great, and truly “fundamental,” truths of Scripture which that system has, for those who have received it, either completely obliterated or at least greatly obscured.

Finally it is appropriate in these introductory remarks to call attention (as I shall have occasion to do once and again in the pages that follow) to the striking and immensely significant fact that the entire system of “dispensational teaching” is modernistic in the strictest sense; for it first came into existence within the memory of persons now living; and was altogether unknown even in their younger days. It is more recent than Darwinism.

Think what it means that an elaborate, ramified and comprehensive system, which embraces radical teach ings concerning such vital subjects as the preaching and ministry o[Jesus Christ, the character and “dispensational place” of the four Gospels, the nature and era of the Kingdom o[God, the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel of the kingdom, and other Bible topics of first importance, a system of doctrine that contradicts what has been held and taught by every Christian ex positor and every minister of Christ from the very be ginning of the Christian era, should have suddenly made its appearance in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and have been accepted by many who are prominent amongst the most professedly orthodox groups of Christians! it is an amazing phenomenon indeed. For the fact is that dispensationalism is modernism. It is modernism, moreover, of a very pernicious sort, such that it must have a “Bible” of its own for the propagation of its peculiar doctrines, since they are not in

the Word of God. Ample proof of this will be given in the pages that follow.

Nevertheless, what I now urge in view thereof is only:—

First, that we have in these historical facts a most cogent reason why we should, each for himself, scrutinize this modern system most carefully in the light of Scripture; and second, that the above stated fact, of the very recent origin of the system, raises the presumption that dispensationalism is not in accord with the truth of God, and is not to be accepted except upon clear and ample proof.

In concluding these introductory remarks I would point out that this modern system of “dispensational teaching” is a cause of division and controversy be tween those followers of Christ who ought to be, at this time of crisis, solidly united against the mighty forces of unbelief and apostasy; and further that it tends to bring the vital truth of our Lord’s second coming into discredit with many, because it associates that great Bible doctrine with various speculative details for which no scriptural support can be found.