TRANSLATED INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON – Chapter 16

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

by Philip Mauro: 1928

IT has long been my conviction that the present day weakness of God's people, their internal disorders and divisions, and the utter failure of their collective testimony to the world, are mainly due to the fact that they are not instructed and established in the great truth declared in the opening verses of Colossians, namely, that when God received those who believed "the word of the truth of the gospel" (v. 5), He delivered them "from the power of darkness" (a kingdom) and translated them "into the Kingdom of His dear Son "(v. 13).

This is fundamental gospel-truth; and it behooves all "Fundamentalists" to take due note thereof.

It is truth that gives glory to the exalted Son of God, "the King, eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Tim. 1:14). It is truth that assures the people themselves as to their perfect security. It is truth that was intended to carry conviction to all men that Jesus Christ is truly the One sent of God (John 17: 21). Therefore nothing is more urgently needed at the present hour than that this basic truth, now so generally neglected, should have given to it, in the ministry of Christ's servants, something like the prominence given to it in the New Testament Scriptures.THE KINGDOM NOT THE CHURCH THE BASIS OF UNITY

What is commonly emphasized by orthodox teachers at the present time is that those who are saved through faith in Jesus Christ are forthwith incorporated into the Church; which is the body of Christ, and is also the spiritual temple now

being built “for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 1:22, 23; and 2: 22). This is truth indeed, and truth of superlative value. But it belongs not in such close association with the gospel as the subject we are considering. For the Scriptures connect the Gospel directly with the Kingdom rather than with the Church. The message that conspicuously marked the beginning of this era which is specially characterized by the forgiveness of sins (the era of the New Covenant) was “the Word of the Kingdom” (Mat. I3: I9), John the Baptist had prepared the way by his “baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke. 3:3). And Jesus was anointed King and was sent to Israel “to preach the gospel to the poor;” and Himself said, when the people besought Him not to depart from them: “I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent” (Luke 4:I8,43).

Furthermore the preaching of the Kingdom of God was the chief business of the apostles and evangelists, as may be seen by consulting the record given us of the ministry of Paul (Ac. 13:22, 23, 32-34; 17:7; I9:8; 20:25; 28:23,41; Rom. 14-17; I Cor. 4:20; I5:50; Col. 1:I2, 13; 2 Tim. 2:8 &c. &c.). Indeed that apostle expressly says that the gospel is preached for “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5, marg. and I6:26); and further, that the particular object of his own ministry was “to make the Gentiles obedient” (15: 18). Those who believed the gospel were said to have become “obedient to the faith” (Ac. 6:7), to have “obeyed from the heart” (Rom. 6:17). And on the other hand they who are doomed to “everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord,” are they who “obey not the gospel” (2 Th. I: 7-9). The word obedience expresses a kingdom-relation. It is the state of heart of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, which none can do “but by the Holy Ghost” (I Cor. I2:3).

Now it is most needful for us to observe that, whereas the Kingdom— that is, the relation of the redeemed of the Lord to God’s Anointed King—was the prominent theme of the preaching

and teaching of the Lord Himself and of His apostles, the subject of the Church (that is, in the comprehensive and eternal sense of that word, not in the local sense) was not developed until the latter part of Paul's life; until in fact his active ministry was ended. For it was during his imprisonment in Rome that he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which that great truth is unfolded. Prior to that we have on the subject of the Church (in this all-inclusive sense) only the brief and unexplained statement of Christ, "On this rock I will build My Church; and the gates shall not prevail against it" (Mat. I6:18).

The main conclusion properly to be drawn from the facts briefly set forth above is that the subject of the Kingdom of God is of the very essence of the gospel of Christ, and is of immediate and vital importance to all mankind, both to them that are within and to them that are without; whereas the subject of the Church (as God's spiritual house now being builded) is of interest only to those who have been already translated into the Kingdom; and for them it has not the same direct and practical bearing upon their life down here as has the truth pertaining to the Kingdom. For the Church (in this broad sense, for we are not speaking at all of the local churches) belongs rather to eternity than to time (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:23); for it is as yet unfinished, being now in process of formation. Whereas the Kingdom belongs to the present; for Christ is reigning now. Hence, if this immensely practical truth were given its rightful place in the preaching and teaching of Christ's ministers, it would tend to unify the divided people of God.SALVATION A CHANGE OF ALLEGIANCE

By Colossians 1:12,13 we are given to know that a complete change takes place in a man's allegiance, that is, in his governmental or political relations with the invisible "principalities and powers" (v. 16), when he believes on Jesus Christ through "the word of the truth of the gospel, which" (says the apostle) "is come unto you, as it is in all the

world” (vv. 5, 6). It is “the Father” Himself Who makes that change of relationship; and the change includes two acts of sovereign and almighty power: first, He delivers, or sets free from the “power”—that is to say, from the rule or dominion-“of darkness” (to which all men are by nature in subjection); and second, He translates those He has thus set free from their natural allegiance into the Kingdom of His dear Son—that is to say, He transports them as it were bodily across the otherwise impassable frontiers of the domain of sin and death, and places them safely and securely in “the Kingdom of His dear Son.”

Is it possible to exaggerate when speaking of the stupendous change that God has brought about in the kingdom relationship, or allegiance of one who has received Jesus Christ as His Saviour and Lord? Impossible. And on the other hand, can truth so vital, so practical, so fundamental, be slighted without bringing weakness, division, suffering and loss to the people of God, and ruin to their collective testimony? Assuredly not. And it were well we should call to mind in this connection, that loyal devotion to the person of a sovereign, and love of the country of one’s birth, are sentiments which, when opportunity for expressing them is given, make even timid souls as bold as lions, and impel them to deeds and sacrifices of the loftiest heroism. But where, it will be asked, are the heroes of faith in our day? My answer is, that the material is here even as it was in the days of the Apostles, and that what is lacking is that gospel which was preached by them “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” —the Gospel of the Kingdom.”PRESENT TRUTH” (2 Pet. 1:12).

This, I say, is truth of immediate and practical importance; and for the reason that, not only is it closely connected with our personal salvation, but it has to do with the honor of our Saviour, Lord and King, Jesus Christ, Who is “the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Heb. 5:9).

The Scripture makes it plain that the grand object of Christ’s

redemption is the recovery of man from out of that state of disobedience, and his restoration to a state of obedience. That state of disobedience and alienation from God is spoken of in the Scriptures as a kingdom, or "dominion" – "the dominion of sin and death," "the power of darkness," "the power of satan"–; and the state of obedience or subjection to God, into which those who believe the gospel are brought by the door of the new birth (John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1: 23), is also a kingdom–the Kingdom of God.

The basis of man's "reconciliation" to God was laid in "the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10); and by "the gospel of God concerning His Son," the blessed truth of reconciliation is proclaimed to the whole world (2 Cor. 5:18-21); and all men are bidden to return to obedience, or in other words to enter the Kingdom of God. It is thus we are saved; for salvation means to be under the protection of God's King.THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

Reference has been made above to Scriptures which declare that the gospel is preached for "the obedience of faith"; and now it remains only to point out that the obedience of faith is a very different thing from legal obedience. The main difference is that the particular kind of obedience which the gospel demands (and which it also elicits) is free and voluntary, the spontaneous obedience of the heart. THIS HEART OBEDIENCE IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF SAVING FAITH.

In fact, saving faith and heart obedience are one and the same thing. for to "obey'.' and to "believe" are but various renderings in English of the very same Greek word. So likewise, "unbelief" and "disobedience" are different renderings of the same word in the original text. Obedience "from the heart" (Rom. 6:17) is what distinguishes faith from mere orthodoxy that is, from the mere holding of correct opinions and the giving of a mere intellectual assent to the statements of God's Word. For true faith is not a creed, or a matter of opinion, however correct and orthodox, but a thing

of heart and life and deeds; manifesting itself in “works of faith,” that is, acts of spontaneous obedience to the Word of God. Thus it is written that “by faith Noah being warned of God prepared an ark to the saving of his house”; that “by faith Abraham obeyed”; “by faith Moses kept the passover and the sprinkling of the blood”; “by faith” the children of Israel “passed through the Red Sea as by dry land” (Heb. 1:7, 8, 28, 29). By these instances, and by many others, God has plainly shown that true faith is a live, active, energetic thing; its most distinctive characteristic being that it acts spontaneously without coercion or the constraint of pains and penalties for disobedience– in strict accordance with the Word of God; rendering prompt and unquestioning obedience to His commands, even when they run counter to human wisdom and to the desires of the natural heart. “Of such is the Kingdom of heaven.”

Brethren, it is “this gospel, of THE KINGDOM” that is to be “preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Mat. 24:14). Can the preaching of any other gospel accomplish the purposes of God? Impossible. Nay, we can, and we must, put it even more forcibly; for we read of some who had been “moved from him that had called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another.” (Gal. 1:6,7). For any other gospel than that which calls men “into the grace of Christ” is not a “gospel” at all. And the gospel that calls men into the grace of Christ is that which calls them into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son. For testifying “the gospel of the grace of God,” and “preaching the Kingdom of God” are the same identical thing (Acts 20: 24,25).

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