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By R. G. REED, D. D.

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# WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

By  
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## FOREWORD

The lectures that make up this little book were delivered by Rev. R. C. Reed, D. D., before the Christian Workers' Training School of the Synod of Mississippi, at Belhaven College, June, 1921.

Those who heard the lectures asked for their publication, and appointed the undersigned a Committee to carry into effect their wishes. The manuscript was secured from Dr. Reed, and, by the good offices of the Presbyterian Committee of Publication, they are now given to the public.

We hereby commend these lectures to all seekers after truth, believing that in them they will find helpful and trustworthy guidance.

J. B. HUTTON, *Chairman.*

J. M. WELLS.

GEO. H. CORNELSON.

J. M. VANDER MEULEN.

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*Committee.*

# WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?



## CHAPTER I.

### THE ANSWER OF THE PREMILLENNIALISTS

This is an old subject. All Bible subjects are old subjects, especially all theological subjects. No matter which one you deal with, you will find it leading back to the sad day that Adam and Eve left the garden under a curse, but bearing a promise. All theology heads up there, and starting from that point, it flows through the whole Bible, spreading out over all its history, its legislation, its worship, its Psalms and its prophecies. We can select no topic in theology for discussion that is not about as old as the race of man. Nor has any topic lain dormant or neglected through the ages. Every topic has been thought over, and prayed over, and fought over from time immemorial.

Let it not be set down against thy servant that he has chosen an old subject. It is a prominent theme of the Old Testament and of the New; of prophets and apostles; of early Church fathers; of medieval and modern Church fathers. It may rea-



sonably be supposed that all has been said about it that is worth saying. I could only bring you something new by bringing you something untrue. It is possible, however, that you are not all familiar with all that has been already said, and that I may be able to render you a service by threshing over some old straw.

Many answers have been given to the question: What is the Kingdom of God? We can notice only a few of them. We begin with the answer given by the Premillennialists. We will let Rev. C. I. Scofield speak for them. We assign him this place of honor because he is accorded the position of a distinguished leader by his brethren of like faith. The great Prophetic Conference which met in Philadelphia in May, 1918, sent him a letter, expressing their sorrow that he had been hindered by sickness from being with them, and pouring out their thanksgiving to God for what Dr. Scofield had done in the way of Bible study, and in bringing together the results of his rich study in the edition of the Reference Bible, "which," said they, "God is now distributing throughout the world, to the eternal blessing of multitudes." From this, it is fair to assume that the members of the Conference endorse the type of Millenarianism set forth in the Bible. Otherwise they could hardly think its distribution would be "to the eternal blessing of multitudes." Another reason for selecting Dr. Scofield as spokes-

man is that this Reference Bible has had wide circulation among our own people, and has made his views familiar to great numbers of them. Still another reason is that his views may be supposed to have the endorsement of all the distinguished men whose names appear on the title page of his Bible as consulting editors, viz.: Rev. Henry G. Weston, D. D., LL. D., Rev. James M. Gray, D. D., Rev. William J. Erdman, D. D., Rev. Prof. W. G. Moorehead, D. D., Rev. Elmore Harris, D. D., Amos C. Gaebelien, and Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D. D. They would not give the influence of their names to secure a favorable reception for the Bible, if they did not approve of the peculiar doctrines which it is sent forth to propagate.

Let us look then at the answer which Dr. Scofield gives to the question: What is the Kingdom of God?

“(a) Davidic, to be established under an heir of David who is born of a virgin, therefore truly man, but also Immanuel, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

“(b) A kingdom heavenly in origin, principle, and authority, but set up on the earth, with Jerusalem as the capital.

“(c) The kingdom is first to be established over regathered, restored, and converted Israel, and is then to become universal.

“(d) The moral characteristics of the kingdom are to be righteousness and peace. The meek, not the proud, will inherit the earth; longevity will be greatly increased; the knowledge of the Lord will be universal; beast ferocity will be removed; absolute equity will be enforced; and outbreking sin visited with instant judgment; while the enormous majority of earth’s inhabitants will be saved. The New Testament adds a detail of immense significance—the removal of Satan from the scene. It is impossible to conceive to what heights of spiritual, intellectual, and physical perfection humanity will attain in this, its coming age of righteousness and peace.

“(e) The kingdom is to be established by power, not persuasion, and is to follow divine judgment upon the Gentile world-powers.

“(f) The restoration of Israel and the establishment of the kingdom are connected with an advent of the Lord, yet future.

“(g) The chastisement reserved for disobedience in the house of David fell in the captivities and world-wide dispersion, since which time, though a remnant returned under prince Zerubbabel, Jerusalem has been under the overlordship of the Gentiles. But the Davidic Covenant has not been abrogated, but is yet to be fulfilled.”

Such is the answer given by the Premillennialists in Dr. Scofield’s own words as found in a foot-note

to Zech. Chap. 12. In another place he defines the Kingdom of Heaven as the "Messianic earth rule of Jesus Christ, the Son of David." Its structure is to be that of a world empire, with its capitol in Jerusalem, its first subjects regathered and converted Israel, and its speedy conquest world-wide. Jesus is to reign in His visible human form, with regal splendor and limitless power. Note:

1. This kingdom has no existence at present. Christians of this age are not members of it. The dispensation in which we live is not a kingdom dispensation, but a dispensation of grace. A kingdom rule implies law, but we are not under law but under grace.

2. It was the purpose of Christ to establish this Kingdom at His first advent. He declared it to be at hand. He meant by this that it was the next thing on the Divine program—the next thing in the revealed plan of God. The Jews were expecting the establishment of the Kingdom at that time. They had long cherished the hope that when the Messiah came He would deliver them from their enemies, reconstitute their nation and inaugurate a reign which would result in fulfilling all the glowing predictions of their prophets. This was a legitimate hope, warranted by a sane and correct interpretation of the Scriptures. They and Jesus did not differ as to the earthly seat and visibility of the Kingdom, as to the prosperous and glorious

reign of the Messiah. They differed only as to the qualification of membership in the Kingdom. They thought their Jewish birth, and their covenant relation to God entitled them to membership. But Jesus demanded righteousness of heart and life. By presenting these demands Jesus brought about His rejection and ultimate crucifixion. Some Jews did receive Him and pay homage to Him. Had the whole nation received Him in the spirit of these few, He would have fulfilled their hopes in the restoration of their national Kingdom.

3. When the nation rejected Him, He postponed the Kingdom till his second advent. Instead of a Kingdom with its rule by law, He established a church under a dispensation of grace. This is something entirely new, mentioned for the first time when Christ said to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church." No intimation of such an institution is found in the Old Testament. The church, says Dr. Scofield, is the mystery which Paul says had been hid in God from the beginning of the world, and the revelation of which was committed to Paul. "In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the Church." We owe the church to the rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation. But for that, He would have set up the Kingdom of heaven and the earth long since would have been filled with its millennial glories.

4. The Church not only differs entirely from the Kingdom, but it has nothing to do by way of preparing the way for, or ushering in the Kingdom. Its sole object is to gather out of the nations a number of redeemed and believing people who shall constitute the Bride of Christ. When this number is complete, the present dispensation will come to an end. The manner of its ending is described for us in 1 Thes. 4:16, 17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This is called the Rapture and marks the end of the Church's earthly history.

5. Following the Rapture is the great Tribulation described in Jer. 30: 5, 6, 7: "For thus saith the Lord; we have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." This great tribulation, "involving in a measure the whole earth, is yet distinctively 'the time of Jacob's trouble,' and its vortex Jerusalem and the Holy Land. It involves the

people of God who will have returned to Palestine in unbelief. Its duration is three and a half years, or the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel."

6. When the Jews are threatened with complete destruction, and are reduced to an estate bordering on despair, suddenly the Lord appears for their deliverance, coming in His glory with the saints and angels. A great battle, the battle of Armageddon, is fought in the plains of Jezreel, west of the Jordan. Here the destruction of Israel's enemies begins and is completed in Moab and the plains of Idumea. This battle is the first event in the "day of Jehovah" and is the fulfillment of the smiting-stone prophecy in Daniel. (2:35).

7. The deliverance of the Jews, and the destruction of the Gentile world-powers is followed immediately by the restoration of the Davidic monarchy over which Jesus will reign in His own person for one thousand years. "The Kingdom of heaven thus established under David's divine Son has for its object the restoration of the divine authority in the earth, which may be regarded as a revolted province of the great Kingdom of God. When this is done, the Son will deliver up the Kingdom of heaven to God, even the Father, that God (i. e., the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit) may be all in all."

8. It is thus seen that the Kingdom of heaven, which John the Baptist, and Jesus declared to be

“at hand” was not really at hand. After the lapse of nearly two thousand years it has not yet come. When it does come, it will be an earthly kingdom, a restoration and continuation of the Davidic monarchy. It is to realize the covenant recorded in II Sam. 7: 8-17: “Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall children of wickedness afflict them any more, as aforetime. And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. 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 forever. 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 it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David." According to Dr. Scofield: "The Davidic covenant, upon which the glorious kingdom of Christ of the seed of David according to the flesh is to be founded, secures: (1) A Davidic house; i. e. posterity, family. (2) A throne; i. e. royal authority. (3) A kingdom; i. e. sphere of rule. (4) In perpetuity; 'for ever.'"

When the Kingdom is revived it will be substantially the same in its methods of administration. It will be far more extensive, embracing in-

deed all the nations of the world, the Jews occupying a central and favored position, but all the Gentile nations yielding a willing obedience and according peculiar honor to God's chosen people. This Kingdom will be far more prosperous and splendid than any kingdom the world has ever known, but it will still be a kingdom founded on principles of justice and administered by the power of the sword. "Absolute equity will be enforced; and outbreaking sin will be visited with instant judgment." Says Dr. Scofield, "Under the Kingdom the ancient method of administering the theocratic government over Israel is to be restored."

The principles or laws of the Kingdom are given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. This was the primary object of the Sermon on the Mount—"to give the divine constitution for the righteous government of the earth." "In its primary sense, the Sermon on the Mount is pure law, and transfers the offence from the overt act to the motive. In its primary application, it gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church. These are found in the Epistles. Under the law of the Kingdom, for example, no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven. Under grace, the Christian is exhorted to forgive because he is already forgiven." Christ's whole ministry belonged to the dispensation of law. "With the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, begins the dispensation of

grace," and only in the Epistles do we learn of God's dealings with sinners under grace. This distinction is very strongly emphasized by Dr. Scofield. Speaking of the different dispensations, he says Christ's commands are accompanied with the warning of hell fire, whereas, the commands belonging to the dispensation of grace are set forth as privileges, accompanied with great rewards. They are the language of encouragement, not of penalty. "Under the reign of Christ, there will not only be no relaxation of the Law of Moses, but a tremendous extension of that law, transferring the crime from the act to the thought."

The subjects of this Kingdom will be men of flesh and blood-members of a fallen race, the lost sons and daughters of Adam. They are to be converted, not by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, but by the power of Jesus at His return in glory. Not all of them will be saved but the vast majority, and they will be so completely transformed that they can realize in their lives that exalted ideal of righteousness which lays its solemn requirements on the secret thoughts and intents of the heart. The evil that exists in the hearts of the minority who are not saved will be sternly repressed. Every outbreak of sin will be met with sudden judgment. Despite the evil that remains, it can be said of the Kingdom in the large that the will of God is done on earth as in heaven.

All lower nature shall share in the blessedness of the Kingdom. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."

Not only will the old Davidic Kingdom be restored in the essential principles of its political administration, but the old system of Levitical worship will be restored. The temple, as described in Ezekiel, will be rebuilt; the sacrifices and offerings will be renewed, and the priests and Levites will be initiated once again into their offices. These temple rites and ceremonies are to continue as long as the Kingdom endures. Both are guaranteed by the same promise. "For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. 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 my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests my ministers." Jer. 33: 17-21.

Among the older Premillenarians, it seems not to have been generally held that these prophecies concerning the restoration of sacrificial worship and its continuance through the Millennial period were to be taken literally. Increase Mather is quoted by Dr. David Brown as saying: "It hath been charged upon those who did in the primitive times assert the glorious reign of Christ on earth that they did also maintain that there would be sacrifices and other ceremonies of Moses' law: So Jerome saith that the ancient doctrine held." Dr. Mather refuses to believe that it ever once entered into the heart of any of those godly and learned teachers in the Church to imagine such a thing. He then gives his own opinion in very emphatic language: "Sure I am that the Word of the Lord is express to the contrary. The truth is that Christ by His coming abolished the ceremonial law and nailed it to His cross, and buried it in His grave. And a most loathsome work do they perform both to God and man, that dig up the ceremonies out of that grave where Jesus Christ buried them above sixteen hundred years ago." Dr. Brown follows this quotation with the statement: "It is otherwise in our day, and we cannot wonder. Once admit a vicious principle, and though it take centuries to show its true nature, it will at length come out, and now it has." Dr. Brown's book was published in 1846. He mentions one Premillennial

writer who still in his day held with Increase Mather. In my investigations of the writings of more recent Premillennial writers, I have not found one who hesitates for one moment to perform that "loathsome work" of digging the ceremonies of the Mosaic law out of the grave in which Christ buried them. Dr. Campbell Morgan expresses the general view when he says: "Palestine re-inhabited by the nation of Israel, is to be divided; and each tribe will return, not to the section of land previously occupied, but to a portion which stretches from the seaboard across the land. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, and will possess a temple far larger and more magnificent than before, the size of which is given by Ezekiel. The city will not merely be the seat of rule exercised over Israel; but the metropolis of government for the whole world-wide worship of God." The prophecy of Isa. 2: 2, 3, is to have a literal fulfillment: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house (i. e. Zion) shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."

The nations are to be won to the temple worship at Jerusalem through the missionary efforts of the Jews after they have been restored to their own land and converted. Dr. Scofield sees a picture of these missionary labors in Zech. 8: 23: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." Dr. Campbell Morgan also assures us that the Jews of that time will be the most wonderful missionaries the world has ever known.

Such then is the Kingdom of God, according to the Premillennialists. It is the Kingdom of Solomon, exalted to heights of national prosperity, and spiritual purity, far transcending the imaginations of that day, because a greater than Solomon will sit on the throne. It will be the same throne, however, with the same seat of government, and the same centre of worship. I cannot do better than to let Dr. Campbell Morgan paint the finished picture: "Creation is to be freed from its groaning and travailing in pain; the blight upon nature will be removed; and a perfect manifestation of its beauty will take the place of all it now suffers in company with fallen humanity. Ferocity shall be driven from the beasts, roses shall bloom in the desert, and the whole of nature which today is

blighted and cursed by sin shall be perfected in beauty, because the King who has redeemed man and earth shall Himself be governor. Premature death shall be unknown, and physical vitality shall be strong and generous." What about the children? "With what shall they play? with that from which today we carefully and necessarily guard our little ones? The weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den; while a little dimpled fist shall be entwined in the mane of the lion to lead about that royal playmate! What a glorious picture of child life in the day of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ!"

"These glimpses of happy times to come require one to repeat that sin will not be exterminated during this period; but instead of being rampant, as it is today, daring to lift its head and laugh in the face of righteousness, it shall lick the dust and be kept in check by the presence of the Master. Then shall men know as never before, the possibilities of humanity and of the earth under the righteous reign of God's own King."





## CHAPTER II.

## THE ANSWER OF PROPHECY

This answer is decisive for or against the pre-millennial view. It is here that the advocates of this view get their conception. If their interpretation of prophecy be correct, they have made out their case, and their view must be accepted however great the difficulties with which it may be encumbered.

I. Let us look at some of these prophecies. Isa. II: 1-12: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his

reins. The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

Jer. 32: 37-42: "Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be

my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts; and they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them."

Zeph. 3: 14-20. "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy; the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out;

and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

This is but a small sample. The Premillennialists see this splendid Messianic Kingdom all the way from Genesis to Malachi. Dr. Scofield finds what he calls the Palestinian covenant in Deuteronomy 28, 29 and 30—He makes this covenant to consist of seven parts: (1) Dispersion for disobedience; (2) The future repentance of Israel while in the dispersion; (3) The return of the Lord; (4) Restoration to the land; (5) National conversion; (6) The judgment of Israel's oppressors; (7) National prosperity. He carries this covenant through both the Old and New Testaments, and finds in various Scriptures the fulfillment of its different parts. He makes this the program according to which God shapes the whole subsequent history. In like manner Dr. J. M. Gray finds this same theme, the establishment of an earthly Messianic Kingdom dominant in all parts of the Scripture: "Where shall one begin in the Bible to talk about it? Genesis is filled with it, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. You cannot understand the book of Psalms until you have this great truth as

its key. It is the beginning and the ending of the so-called prophetic books from Isaiah to Malachi. Matthew is rich in this teaching, Luke possesses it, the Acts, Romans, and when we come to the book of Revelation—what is that book without it? It is the warp and woof of the whole Bible.”

In view of such statements as these from leading Premillennial writers, we see the justice of what Dr. David Brown says: “Premillennialism is no barren speculation—useless though true, and innocuous though false. It is a school of Scripture interpretation; it impinges on and affects some of the most commanding points of the Christian faith; and when suffered to work its unimpeded way, it stops not—such is its peculiar character—till it has pervaded with its own genius the entire system of a man’s theology, and the whole tone of his spiritual character, constructing, we had almost said, a world of its own; so that holding the same faith and cherishing the same fundamental hopes as other Christians, he yet sees things through a medium of his own, and finds everything instinct with the life which this doctrine has generated within him.” How true this is will further appear as we proceed. It has been frequently observed that persons generally see what they are looking for. There may be no harm in this, provided in looking for what they wish to see, they do not overlook some things which it might be well to see.

In the present case, those who find the earthly messianic Kingdom in all the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation fail to see what the great mass of learned and devout students of Scripture have claimed to see; they fail to see in the Old Testament the whole or any part of this present dispensation of God's grace. They tell us that while they find prophecies of the suffering Messiah, they do not find any traces of the Church which that suffering Messiah founded, and which has had nearly two thousand years of most wonderful history. Dr Scofield says expressly that the establishment of the Church was a mystery, a secret hidden in the counsels of God until revealed to the Apostle Paul, and that "in his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk and history of the Church." Dr. Gregg, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg, Canada, says, "We are not surprised to learn that the Church is a mystery; that is, not revealed to Moses and the prophets. Christ chose Paul, and the Holy Spirit used him for this purpose. Peter knew of the character and glory of the Kingdom of heaven when Christ returns. He had been given a vision of it on the Mount of Transfiguration. But he did not know of the calling and destiny of the Church." Dr. Campbell Morgan in commenting on the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy says that only sixty-nine weeks have been accounted for. He calls the other week the "Miss-

ing Week." His explanation is that the sixty-nine weeks had their fulfillment in the history, terminating with the death of Christ. Then occurs an interpolation, a period that has no place in prophecy. We are living in that period, a period of which prophecy takes no account. It will continue through this dispensation, and then God will resume the "times and seasons" which were broken in upon when man rejected Christ, and the missing week will find its fulfillment. This is exactly in line with Dr. Scofield in dealing with Christ's statement, "the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." He says the phrase "at hand" does not necessarily mean that the Kingdom was near, but that "it was the next thing in the order of revelation as it then stood." The revealed plan of God was the coming of the Messiah and then the Kingdom, but the plan miscarried in consequence of the rejection of Christ, and there occurs this dispensation, unmentioned in prophecy because unprovided for in the plan of God. Obviously there is a vast difference practically between the Bible of the Premillennialists, and the Bible of those who hold the opposite view. The former have a Bible stuffed from lid to lid with a splendid glorious earthly Millennial Kingdom, but in which from Genesis to Paul's epistles there is no place for the Church which is the body of Christ, the Church which He purchased with His own blood, the Church which is His bride



and which is destined to reign with Him in glory. It had no place in the revealed plan of God, is but an interpolation, enclosed in a temporal parenthesis. It might be left out altogether without interrupting the flow of prophecy. The latter have a Bible, in which they find a distinct reference to the present dispensation in Genesis 3:15, where it is said, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," and in which they trace in ever growing clearness the many gracious promises which are finding their glorious fulfillment in all the triumphs of Christ's present Kingdom of Grace, and are destined to find their complete fulfillment when this Kingdom of Grace merges into His Kingdom of glory. Here are two widely separated schools of interpretation. We shall have to decide, every man for himself, which is correct.

2. The Premillennialists found their view on the literal interpretation of prophecy. They insist persistently and relentlessly on this manner of interpreting prophecy. "The throne of David is a phrase as definite historically as throne of the Hohenzollerns, and as little admits of spiritualizing," so says Dr. Scofield. This means that wherever you find the phrase "throne of David," you are to understand it as the throne which David occupied in Jerusalem, and signifying an earthly Kingdom with Jerusalem as its Capital. It is the custom for Premillennialists to insist strongly that

“the Bible means what it says,” and that what it says is literally true. They cite certain literal fulfillments of prophecy, such as the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, His riding into Jerusalem on an ass, and assert that these are specimens of the way all prophecy is fulfilled. For example Pastor Wm. L. Pettingill, Dean of the Philadelphia School of the Bible, says, “God has always fulfilled his promises literally. And the fact that He so fulfilled them gives us an unmistakable clue to promises yet remaining unfulfilled.” “People are having much controversy in these days about the matter of interpretation of prophecy. There are those who say that prophecy is not to be taken literally and that we are not to look for its literal fulfillment; but the fact is that very much prophecy has already been fulfilled, and that not one word of prophecy has ever been fulfilled otherwise than with absolute literalness.”

It is perfectly obvious that if this be the true method of interpreting prophecy, the great bulk of predictive prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. It must be admitted, as Dr. Scofield asserts, that “this portion of the Bible, nearly one-fourth of the whole, has been closed to the average reader by fanciful and allegorical schemes of interpretation.” For some divine and inscrutable reason the prophets jumped over the long drawn centuries of the Christian church, and gave themselves to picturing glo-

rious visions of times and seasons and events belonging to far-distant ages, and having to do for the most part with the restoration and glorification of the Jews. The Church really has no practical interest in this portion of Scripture. Its earthly career terminates with the Rapture, which occurs before the Millennium, and it has no part in that Kingdom.

3. This literal method of interpreting prophecy was the Jewish method. They gathered from their prophetic books that when the promised Messiah came He would deliver the Jews from all their political enemies, restore their national existence, re-establish the dynasty of David, with Jerusalem as its capital, and give to the Jews a position of supremacy among the nations of the earth. They were counting on a continuance of the Levitical system of worship. They were correct in their interpretation and in their expectation according to the views of the Premillennialists. This was precisely the program marked out in the prophetic books. The Jews could not have anticipated this dispensation, because there is no mention of it in the prophecies. They did overlook the predictions of a suffering Messiah, and consequently did not expect Him to be crucified. They could not combine the two conceptions. They very naturally took that which linked on to the revealed plan of God. The Church is built upon the crucified Christ and as there is

no mention of the Church in the prophecies, they could hardly be to blame for failing to see any reason for the crucifixion of their Messiah. "The Church, corporately," says Dr. Scofield, "is not in the vision of the Old Testament prophet." The plan was to have the Kingdom follow immediately the advent. The Jews interpreted the plan correctly, but thwarted it by rejecting their King and putting Him to death. The execution of the plan will nevertheless be carried out. It was not abandoned, simply postponed. The Jews will yet realize their expectations. Every prophecy will be literally fulfilled. The throne of David will be set up in Jerusalem, and David's greater Son sit upon it and rule over regathered Israel. This result will be brought about by force, not by persuasion, and the rule will be with a "rod of iron" that breaks in pieces all opposition.

4. This literalism knows nothing of a spiritual Kingdom. The dispensation under which we live is the dispensation of the Spirit, and is put in contrast with the Kingdom age. We are now "not under law but under grace," and this means, according to Dr. Scofield, that Christ is not now ruling as King. Christ, he says, is never called King of the Church, but His titles are Head and Bridegroom. The Church is His body, His bride, but not the subject of His royal authority. His Kingly office is now in abeyance. He is seated on His

Father's throne, not His own, waiting, like the heir apparent, for a future time to sit upon His own throne and have a Kingdom of His own. Such in brief is the answer of prophecy as literally interpreted by the Premillennialists. Can it be a true answer?

### Objections.

I. It subordinates the New Testament to the Old. Dr. Scofield says: "The Old Testament is a divinely provided introduction to the New; and whoever comes to the study of the four gospels with a mind saturated with the Old Testament fore-view of the Christ, His Person, work and Kingdom, will find them open books." Here it is taught that the way to understand the New Testament is to come to it with your mind saturated with preconceptions of Christ and His work formed by a study of the Old Testament. You must study the New Testament in the light of the preconceptions, and make the teachings of the New Testament conform to them. We had always thought this was the mistake of the Jews. Their minds were saturated with preconceptions, and finding that the teachings of Christ did not conform to them, they rejected Him. We had supposed their preconceptions were wrong. No, say the Premillennialists, they were right in forming their preconceptions of the Messiah and His work by a literal interpretation of prophecy. They were right in expecting the Mes-

siah to re-establish the Davidic Kingdom. This was according to the revealed plan of God. They were wrong in not accepting the terms on which the Messiah proposed to restore the Kingdom. But is it not evident that their preconceptions were the cause of their not accepting His terms? But our Premillennial brethren come to the New Testament with the same conception, and yet they accept the Messiah. How account for the difference? We think it is accounted for in that they accept the Messiah before they form their preconceptions, and then coming to the New Testament, already committed to Jesus as the Messiah, they force His teachings to square with their preconceptions. Take one or two examples: The Messiah said: "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Commenting on this Dr. Scofield says: "At hand is never a positive affirmation that the person or thing said to be at hand will immediately appear, but only that no known or predicted event must intervene. When Christ appeared to the Jewish people the next thing in the order of revelation as it then stood should have been the setting up of the Davidic Kingdom." Dr. Scofield never offers any proof of the statements in his foot notes. He is just as positive and unqualified in his statements as the inspired writers even when he contradicts them flatly. The phrase "at hand" occurs over fifty times in the gospels and Acts, and in every

instance the person or thing said to be at hand was at hand: Matt. 21: 1; 34; 24: 32, 33, etc.

As another illustration of forced interpretation, take the parables in the 13th of Matthew. Dr. Scofield calls these parables, "first mystery," "second mystery," and so on up to the seventh. Here is the way Dr. Scofield opens up one of these mysteries; the fifth: "Again the Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." "The treasure," he says, "is Israel, especially Ephraim, the lost tribes hidden in the field. Our Lord is the buyer of the field at the awful cost of His blood. The note of joy is also that of the prophets in view of Israel's restoration." As proof of the correctness of this interpretation, he cites Deut. 30: 9, "and the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every 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 thy fathers:" Also to Isa. 49:13: "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted." And a number of others. This is a specimen of the way he cites Scriptures—crowds his footnotes with them, creating the impression that his view is

abundantly sustained by Scripture. On examination, the texts cited are about as relevant as the answer to the conundrum, why is an elephant like a brick bat? Because there is a B in both. By such method, you can prove anything. Nothing but the rack and thumb-screw can extract such a meaning from the parable of the treasure hid in the field. But to allow the parable to mean what it says would be to allow that the Kingdom of heaven has a present existence, and that it is something very different from a splendid earthly empire. And thus Dr. Scofield runs a plowshare through the whole New Testament and cuts it all to pieces, telling us which is Kingdom teaching and which is not.

Obviously his method is wrong. The common sense method, and the age-long method is to interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New. The dictum of Augustine has been generally accepted from his day: "The New Testament is latent in the Old, and the Old Testament is patent in the New." The truth revealed in the New Testament is in the Old, but is hid in shadow; whereas, the truth revealed in the Old is flooded with light in the New. The prophetic word, says Peter, was like a torch shining in a dark place till the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. To turn from the New to the Old Testament is to turn



from the splendor of the midday sun to the twilight of morning.

2. Literalism breaks down when strictly applied. Look at the restoration in Isa. 66: 19-23: "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel unto the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Are we to believe that in the good time coming all the methods of modern transportation, the railroads, the steamships, the automobiles, the aeroplanes are to be scrapped, and the Jews brought back to their own land in the primitive fashion here described? He who can believe

this must have a genius for credulity. But a harder thing remains, verse 23. Our Premillennialists insist that the Levitical rites are to be restored, and that Jerusalem is to be the center of worship for the whole world. A conservative estimate puts the present number of earth's inhabitants at one and a half billion. Suppose transportation could be furnished for all these, how long would it take them to worship at one shrine? Put the rate at one hundred thousand a day, how often could they worship? Could they all worship every week, every month, or even once every year? Only once in forty-two years.

Another truth worthy of notice. Slavery existed among the Jews. It was deemed quite a privilege for them to take captives in war, and reduce them to bondage. Well, this delightful feature is to find place in the splendid restored Millennial Kingdom. Isa. 14: 1, 2: "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors." Some of us have been able to think with complacency on the system of slavery

which existed here in the South in the days of our fathers. The masters were the high bred, dominant Anglo Saxon race and the slaves were from the most degraded and debased tribes of Africa. Perhaps we should think differently of it, with the Jews as masters and the high bred Anglo-Saxons as slaves.

3. Literalism yields a prophetic Messiah utterly dissimilar to the historic Christ. It represents him as concerned chiefly for the deliverance of the Jewish people from their enemies, bringing them all back to the homeland, and restoring and building up their national life to the greatest height of material prosperity. To this end He will destroy all the nations that oppress them, "breaking them in pieces as a potter's vessel." He will take the reins of power in His own hands, and having made His Kingdom secure by bringing all nations beneath His scepter, He will "rule them with a rod of iron." While sin will still be permitted in the hearts of the people, He will not tolerate any outward expression of it. As soon as it manifests itself, He will visit it with instant judgment.

It is hard for us to see in this picture any of the lineaments of the historic Christ. Jesus of Nazareth did not show the slightest concern about the deliverance of His people from the power of the Romans. He never uttered a word to encourage any discontent with the government under which

they lived. He never hinted at any desire for the re-establishment of the national life, and gave no evidence that He cherished any ambition for the worldly glory and national prosperity of His people. His spirit was as far removed from that of the world-empire builder as the East is from the West. He was meek and lowly in heart, and commended this spirit to others as a condition of soul rest. "He made Himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a slave." He taught that he who serves is greater than he who rules.

Moreover, Jesus of Nazareth from the day that He was manifested to Israel showed Himself intent on delivering the people from their sins. He told them that this was the purpose of His coming, to call sinners to repentance, to seek and save the lost. The only conquest that had any interest for Him was the conquest of the hearts of men. This did interest Him very much. He esteemed it more than His necessary food to lead one poor outcast from darkness to light. He said that such conquests were of like interest to His Father and the holy Angels—the repentance of even one sinner causing joy in the presence of God. The Christ of history makes the impression that He set little store by regal splendor or imperial power and material wealth—all of these having not the value of one redeemed soul.

I love best the Jesus of the cross; the Jesus who wept over sinners that would not let Him save them, who seemed so absorbed in winning us back to His Father's love that He appeared not to notice who were rich and who were poor, who were high and who were low—all were sinners and He was here to save them, and He is still so taken up with this that He ever lives to intercede for all who come unto God through Him. He is far more winsome than the conquering Hero, and the reigning King, imposing His will upon a world prostrate at His feet, which the literalists find in the Messianic prophecies.

## CHAPTER III.

## ANOTHER ANSWER FROM PROPHECY

The prophets speak a very different message to different classes of interpreters. We have seen that the Premillennialist are severe literalists. They charge those who put a spiritual meaning on prophecy with the same vicious method of interpretation as that which was popularized by Origen in the early Church. But this is a mistake. Origen's method is known as the allegorical. It finds types and analogies of spiritual truths in the plain, simple didactic narratives of the Old Testament. We have read no recent writer who compares with Dr. Scofield in the use of this method. For example, in the first chapter of Genesis, he finds the "greater light," to be a type of Christ; the "lesser light," to be the type of the Church, and the stars to be the type of the individual believer. We turn to the 24th Chapter of Genesis, where Abraham sends his servant to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor to get a wife for Isaac. "This entire chapter," says Dr. Scofield, "is highly typical. (1) Abraham, type of a certain king who would make a marriage for his son. (2) The unnamed servant type of the Holy Spirit, who does not speak of himself, but takes of

the things of the bride-groom with which to win the bride. (3) The servant, type of the Spirit as enriching the bride with the Bride-groom's gifts. (4) The servant, type of the Spirit as bringing the bride to the meeting with the bride-groom. (5) Rebecca, type of the Church, the "Ecclesia," the called out, virgin bride of Christ. (6) Isaac, type of the Bride-groom, whom not having seen the bride loves through the testimony of the unnamed servant. (7) Isaac, type of the Bride-groom who goes out to meet and receive the bride." This is the kind of allegorizing which the judicious Calvin says makes a nose of wax out of the Bible, so that one can make it mean anything he wishes it to mean. Unquestionably there are many types in the Old Testament and some allegories. But to find them everywhere in all the historic narratives as Dr. Scofield does is to be guilty of the very fault of Origen, the fault which Dr. Scofield charges on those who would 'find a spiritual meaning in prophecy.

1. Is there any rule to guide us in Spiritualizing the Old Testament? Undoubtedly there is. Whatever we find spiritualized by the New Testament writers we can safely spiritualize. If we go beyond this rule, we should exercise exceeding caution, and recognize that we are liable to put more into the Scriptures than was in the mind of the Spirit who inspired them. To put a spiritual sense

on the language of the prophets is merely to treat their language as figurative. Obviously the language of prophecy is the language of ardent passion and of lofty sentiment. Such language among any people is likely to be highly figurative. But especially among the Oriental people, who are proverbially impulsive and demonstrative. We would reasonably expect the prophets to indulge extensively in figures of speech. One of the very first quotations we come to in the New Testament confirms this expectation. See Luke 3: 4-6: "And he came into all the region around about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins: as it is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ye ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: And the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." This is from Isaiah 40: 3-5. It is too plain for argument that the prophet was using figurative language. But would the literalists allow this if not constrained to do so by the fact that the prophecy had a fulfillment which proves it figurative?

This question is suggested by the interpretation which they put on Zech. 14: 4: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which



is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half toward the south."

The literalists will allow no figure of speech here. "Surely," says Dr. Scofield, "in a land seamed by seismic disturbances it should not be difficult to believe that another earthquake might cleave the little hill called the mount of Olives. Not one of the associated events of Zech. 14 occurred at the first coming of Christ, closely associated though He then was with the Mount of Olives." He could have said with just as much propriety that the forerunner of Christ did not appear at the first advent because there were no upheavals of valleys and depressions of mountains at that time as Isaiah said would be the case at the coming of the forerunner. To be consistent with themselves that is exactly what they would have said, if Luke had not said that the mission of John the Baptist was the fulfillment of that prophecy. The preaching of John, his spiritual mission was the filling of valleys and lifting of mountains to prepare a highway for the King.

We have another illustration of the way the New Testament writers put a Spiritual meaning on the words of prophecy: In Acts 15: 15-18 we have this language: "And to this agree the words of the

prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." The quotation is from Amos 9: 11. Dr. Scofield says this prophecy describes the Lord's return and the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy. The apostle James saw a fulfillment of it in what God was doing through the labors of Paul and Barnabas and Peter. He said the prophecy agreed exactly with the account which they had given of the conversion of the Gentiles.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter gave a lengthy quotation from the 16th Psalm. Dr. Scofield says that this Psalm is "a prediction of the resurrection of the King. As a prophet David understood that, not at his first advent, but at some time subsequent to his death and resurrection Messiah would assume the Davidic throne." But Peter says that David being a prophet saw in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ a fulfillment of the oath which God had made him "that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne," and Peter wanted all the house of Israel to know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord, i. e., ruler, and Christ, i.

e., Messiah, "this Jesus whom you crucified." Peter insisted that Israel, the whole house of Israel, should see in this Jesus their King and Messiah seated on the throne of David according to the oath of God, and the true intent of the prophecies.

We are abundantly authorized by the New Testament usage to regard the Jew as the type of the Christian, Israel as the type of God's children of all ages and Zion as the type of the Church. Rom. 2: 28, 29: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." It was not being a circumcised descendent of Abraham that made one a Jew in any true, spiritual sense, but a renovated heart. All whose hearts are thus renovated are Jews in the only sense in which it ever profited any one to be a Jew. Rom. 9: 6: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." That is to say, all are the true Israel who by faith in Christ have become the children of God. Gal. 6: 15, 16: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Obviously the Apostle's meaning is that all who constitute the new creation are the "Israel of God."

The whole epistle to the Hebrews is intended to show that the Jewish dispensation, its rites of worship, its priests and its theocratic kingdom have been permanently superseded by the present Christian dispensation. These are all treated as types which find their fulfillment in Christ. Look at Heb. 12: 18: We will let Dr. David Brown expound this passage for us: "The Apostle had been contrasting the dispensation of the law with that of the Gospel. Under the one he says we come to Mt. Sinai; under the other we come to Mount Zion. The one was a mount that might be touched—of a palpable and carnal character; the other is altogether the reverse—celestial and spiritual. His voice, under the one spake on earth, under the other, he speaketh from heaven. If vengeance fell on those who refused him that spake from the terrestrial platform, much more shall we not escape if we refuse him that speaketh from the celestial. Whose voice, says he, then—that is, at Sinai, shook the earth? But now he hath promised, saying by Haggai, Yet once more—that is, once in addition to the Sinaitic concussion—I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifyeth the removing of—or God's intention at the time appointed to remove—those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those

things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved—that is to say, having got the very thing predicted by Haggai, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably.” We may pause to inquire, how in the face of this, it can be said that we have no Kingdom at all, but must await one in the future, when the Apostle expressly declares that we have an immovable Kingdom—the very one prophesied by Haggai?

2. It is perfectly manifest from those few specimens from the New Testament writers that they authorize us to put a spiritual meaning on the prophecies which refer to the future Kingdom and glory of the Messiah. They set the example. Look now at one or two of these prophecies, and judge if common sense does not demand that we regard the language as figurative. Isa. 25: 6, 7: “and in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.” While Dr. Scofield describes this as the triumph of the Kingdom age, not even he can put a literal interpretation on the language. The feast is too manifestly a picture of the spiritual blessings. But if the blessings be spiritual why not the Kingdom

spiritual? What we have here is a statement that Jerusalem, hitherto despised and oppressed, as it had been in Israel's day, should yet be a land of attraction and blessing to all the earth. There is no indication as to the time when the promise is to be fulfilled; but as the ancient seat of the true religion, and as the cradle of the church, Jerusalem has always, more or less, fulfilled the office here ascribed to it. More and more is it fulfilling the office as the church, which was born there over-spreads the earth. Isa. 11: 6, 7, 8: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den." Premillennialists do not balk at giving a literal interpretation to this language. "Beast ferocity," says Dr. Scofield, "will be removed." Dr. Campbell Morgan follows in his wake. "You cannot spiritualize this passage," he says. "It is a plain statement of fact that under the sway of our Redeemer, the ferocity of wild beasts shall depart, and nature itself shall feel the blessed influence of the reigning Prince of Peace." "I have been asked," he says, "whether the Golden age will be marked

by dietetic abstinence from flesh, while I do not believe in vegetarianism for today, except under certain conditions, I may express the belief that nature itself will then be free from everything which savors of cruelty; for 'they shall not hurt nor destroy, in all my holy mountain.' Certain it is that the lower animals will be vegetarians, for the lion shall eat straw like the ox." He expects the lion to eat straw like the ox, which, of course, it will have to do if no longer permitted to prey on other animals. Jerome is quoted as saying that the Jews and some Judaizing Christians believed that the literal change in the nature of wild beasts is here predicted. "Most Christian writers, ancient and modern," says Dr. J. A. Alexander, "with Aben Ezra and Maimonides among the Jews, explain the prophecy as wholly metaphorical, and descriptive of the peace to be enjoyed by God's people under the new dispensation."

We have time but for one more prophecy. Isa. 2: 2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of

the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Dr. Scofield sees in this, as usual, the time of the Millennial Kingdom. On the principle of literalism, the prophet says that the mountain at Jerusalem on which the temple stood is to be exalted above all the surrounding mountains, and all the nations of the earth will go up there to worship. Evidently there are to be no physical impossibilities in that golden age. In contrast we give the exposition of Dr. Joseph Adison Alexander, *nomen clarum et venerabile*: "In this verse the prophet sees the Church permanently placed in a conspicuous position, so as to be a source of attraction to surrounding nations. To express this idea, he makes use of terms which are strictly applicable only to the local habitation of the Church under the old economy. Instead of saying in modern phraseology that the Church as a society shall become conspicuous and attract all nations, he represents the mountain upon which the temple stood as being raised and fixed above the other mountains, so as to be visible in all directions." It may be well to add the comment of C. A. Briggs: "It is vain to seek for any physical fulfillment of the prediction. The sublime descrip-



tion transcends anything that is physical or historical, and from this very fact points to the ideal content which is realized in the exaltation of Jesus Christ to be the heavenly temple, the source of instruction, judgment and everlasting peace to the world."

We have said enough, we trust, to show that there is another answer from the prophets than that discovered by the literalists; and that this answer is based on a common sense interpretation of language which is manifestly figurative, which is justified by the writers of the New Testament, and which brings the prophetic books of the Bible into practical relation to the dispensation in which we live.

3. Dr. Scofield would have us believe that these prophetic books, constituting nearly one-fourth of the Bible, have been to all intents sealed books to the average reader of the Bible because of fanciful and allegorical schemes of interpretation, and that it remained for him, and his colleagues to open them up, and give to all readers access to their amazing riches. This invites to a comparison. I have read quite a little bit of modern Premillennial literature. Years ago I began reading it, biased in its favor by two intimate friends who were ardent Premillenarians. I did not read far till it became irksome and I laid it aside. Recently I have taken it up again, and have read several of the writers

whose names stand out most prominent. Among other books I have read one containing the address delivered at the great conference in Philadelphia 1918, and called Light on Prophecy. There are twenty-two addresses. It struck me in reading them that of those that dealt directly with prophecy, each was largely an echo of the other. They all marshal in line the same prophecies, put the same interpretation on them, and lay down the same program for the unfolding of the future. We are to have the outgathering of the Church, the Rapture, the regathering of the Jews, the great tribulation, the second advent, judgment on the Gentile world powers, conversion of the Jews, general but not universal conversion of the Gentiles, a thousand years of the visible reign of Christ in Jerusalem, with Satan bound, the release of Satan for a little season, a sudden and wide spread apostasy, destruction of the man of sin, resurrection of the wicked, and the judgment of the Great White Throne. You can tell when one starts what road he is going to travel, and where he is going to end. They not only have this road blazed, but they have it diagrammed. They have actually visualized the whole plan of God for human history from eternity ante to eternity post. They call this the study of prophecy. I think a bright pupil could matriculate as a freshman and graduate at one conference.

If I mistake not any unbiased mind who has read

these modern, self-confessed illuminators of prophecy will feel that he has come in contact with an entirely different type of student when he takes up the two portly volumes of Dr. Alexander on Isaiah. He soon finds himself in the grip of a master, of one who has studied with patient, painstaking care every word of the prophet in the original Hebrew, and who knows all the shades of meaning imparted to language by various forms and terminations of words, and different construction of sentences, and who brings to his aid a thorough knowledge of all the cognate languages. Dr. Charles Hodge, who during his long life came into intimate contact with the greatest minds of this country and of Europe, said that Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander was the greatest man he had ever known.

The same feeling is experienced almost in equal degree when one reads Dr. C. A. Briggs on Messianic Prophecy. His name is not in good repute with us because of his too liberal concessions to the radical higher critics; but his scholarship is not only respected but admired by all who can lay any just claim to liberal culture, especially in the sphere of Old Testament literature. Whenever the Premillennialists of the Scofield type produce a scholar that can give the world a commentary on the prophetic books which will command an equal measure of respect from those who know what real

learning is then we will listen with more patience to their boast of having unsealed the treasures of the ancient prophets.

4. Literalism violates a prime law of interpreting prophecy. That law is that history furnishes both the occasion and the mould of prophecy. For illustration, take Gen. 3: 15. Here the history has to do with the temptation and fall of our first parents. This history furnished the occasion of the prophecy. It also furnished the mould. A woman is in the history; a woman is also in the prophecy. A serpent is in the history; a serpent is also in the prophecy. Do we give this a literal interpretation? The seed of the woman was Christ. Did a snake, a literal serpent bite Him in the heel? Did He in turn take up a rock or stick and bruise its head? Surely we have no record of such an encounter as this taking place at the first advent. Then, according to our Premillennarians, the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, for Dr. Pettingill says that "not one word of prophecy has ever been fulfilled otherwise than with strict literalness." Presumably this prophecy awaits fulfillment at the second advent.

What was the history that gave rise to Messianic prophecy, and prophecies respecting the Kingdom of heaven? It was the history which records the disruption of the Davidic dynasty, the destruction of the theocratic kingdom and the captivity of the

Jews. It was their doleful state that furnished the fitting occasion for these prophecies which paint a glowing future. It was God's gracious design to prevent the faithful remnant from sinking into despair. The factors in the history will furnish the material, or mould of the prophecies. These factors were the Jews, their Davidic dynasty and the Kingdom. The prophecies addressed to Jews could not accomplish their immediate purpose unless they were cast in a Jewish form. But there is no more reason for giving them a literal interpretation than in the case of the prophecy that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head. When the time for their fulfillment arrives, circumstances have altogether changed. It is the time for the fulfillment of all the types of the Old dispensation. The sacrificial worship has culminated in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God; the priestly office of Aaron has culminated in the one everliving High Priest; and in like manner the Kingly office of David has found its culmination in the Prince of Peace, and the theocratic Kingdom has given place to that "Kingdom which cannot be moved." The Levitical sacrifices were typical and provisional; the Aaronic priests were typical and provisional. Both served their purpose and passed away forever. It is just as preposterous to expect a reversal to those weak and beggarly elements of the

world as to expect to see the steam engine give place to the old stage coach, or the ocean liner to the ancient Greek trireme. Revolutions never go backwards, especially in the onward march of God's scheme of redemption. What is true of Aaronic priest, and Levitical sacrifice, is equally true of David's kingship and kingdom. These were as truly typical as those. They reached their culmination when God raised up Jesus, and seated Him "upon the throne of David and upon his Kingdom to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from henceforth even forever." We are witnessing and enjoying the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies. So far were the prophets from skipping this dispensation, they devoted their whole attention to it. So Peter told the multitudes at Pentecost. First quoting from Moses he then adds: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers." Peter had a hard time getting those conceptions of a gorgeous Millennial Kingdom out of the minds of his fellow countrymen, but he did all that a faithful preacher of the gospel could do to make them see that the true glory of Christ was His spiritual reign over the souls of redeemed sinners, and that His highest throne, and

the one of which David's was the faint-type, was the throne of which He took possession when He was exalted to the right hand of God, there to remain until all his enemies shall be made the footstool of His feet.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE ANSWER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Here is the place to seek for information. We get first-hand information from the highest authority. Here we sit at the feet of the King Himself. He knows, for the Kingdom about which we inquire is His. He is not only willing but glad to be our teacher. A large part of His mission was to give instruction on this very subject. The phrase "Kingdom of heaven" occurs forty-five times in the Gospel of Matthew, and the corresponding phrase, "Kingdom of God," with like frequency in the Gospel of Mark and Luke. Dr. Scofield and his followers make a broad distinction between the two phrases. We shall notice this at another time. We shall treat the phrases as equivalent, following in this the whole current of Biblical interpretation down to recent times. Taking the two phrases as meaning identically the same thing, we may safely say that the Kingdom of God was the main theme of the teaching of Jesus. He evidently wished His followers to have clear ideas on this subject. He has ever challenged the admiration of competent judges by His wonderful skill in making truth clear to the humblest under-



standing. The things which He taught may be hidden from the wise and prudent, but they are revealed unto babes. The child-like unsophisticated mind can easily understand what Jesus has been at pains to teach it. That He has been at pains to teach plainly the meaning of the phrase Kingdom of God is indicated not alone by the frequency with which He recurs to the subject but by His method of teaching. He expressed His desire that His disciples should understand His meaning, and He gave parabolic pictures for the very purpose of clearing up all mysteries. The leaders of the Jewish nation were obsessed with the idea of a great worldly Messianic Kingdom, and were in no mood to hear of any other. So Jesus left them in judicial blindness, and said to His disciples "it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Mystery in the sense of Scripture, means secret. Jesus deliberately undertook to put His disciples in possession of all the secrets of the Kingdom. In His parables He said the Kingdom of heaven is like this, that, and the other thing, each parable throwing light in a different phase of the subject. It is a vast subject. He walked around about Zion with His disciples, and bade them "number the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces." He had them look at the Kingdom's majestic proportions from many different view points. He wanted

them to be scribes thoroughly instructed in the Kingdom that they might bring forth things new and old. They were thoroughly instructed, and if we come and sit at the feet of Jesus with minds free from presuppositions, we can also be thoroughly instructed.

**The Kingdom Introduced.** Let us look a moment at the forerunner of the King. John the Baptist was the subject of prophecy, and the child of miracle. Among those born of women there hath not arisen a greater. He burst on the people in a sudden and startling manner, creating a great sensation. The people flocked to him in throngs. How does he set about his work of introducing the Kingdom? "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." This was called preparing the way of the Lord, filling the valleys, bringing low the mountains, straightening the paths, and making the rough places smooth. Never before nor since did a forerunner prepare after this fashion for the coming of a King. No braying of trumpets, no flying of flags, no holiday processions of the people. The one demand is clean hearts, followed by clean lives. "Repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance." It looks as if the King meant to sway His sceptre over the hearts, the inner lives of the people.

What had John to say about the King? He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor." This seems a strange mission for a King, baptizing them with the Holy Ghost, purifying them with fire. More remarkable still is John's announcement: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" He introduces the Messianic King as the Lamb of God whose mission is to take away the sin of the world. It still looks as if the King were concerned chiefly with the inner life of His subjects. He must renovate that by removing their sin, and baptizing them with the Holy Ghost. Indeed Matthew tells us that His very name indicates that He was coming to "save His people from their sins."

This explains the madness of the Pharisees. They wanted deliverance from the power of the Romans, and their Messiah wants to deliver them from the power of Satan.

Turning now from the forerunner to the King, let us sit at His feet and learn of Him about His own Kingdom.

1. **It is a Spiritual Kingdom.** We were led to expect this from what the forerunner said, and our expectation is not disappointed. The Kingdom which both John and Jesus announced as "at hand" was a spiritual kingdom. All the qualifications for citizenship were spiritual. It could be entered only by regeneration. "Except a man be born again he

cannot see the Kingdom of God." In answer to the question of the Pharisees, as to when the Kingdom should come, Jesus said "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here, or lo there, for behold the Kingdom of God is within you." Paul was an inspired expounder of the teachings of Jesus, and he said the Kingdom of God is not eating or drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Dr. A. B. Bruce, from a study of Christ's words, deduces the definition: "It is the reign of divine love exercised by God in His grace over human hearts believing in His love, and constrained thereby to yield Him grateful affection and devoted service." Dr. A. T. Robertson, prince of modern exegetes, finds the Kingdom to be "composed of all the saved who are ruled by Christ the Lord, and who serve Him."

**2. It is a Present Kingdom.** Not only was it declared to be near at hand, but it was actually established. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." All the poor in spirit, all the persecuted for righteousness sake, in the days of our Lord, and in all the days since then are in the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is in them. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." This is the solemn injunction of Jesus laid on the hearts

of all who hear His voice. How could they seek the Kingdom if it were not here? "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven." Obviously those whose righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees can and do enter. "Whosoever therefore, shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven." "Giving thanks unto the Father, who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love." Every redeemed child of God is delivered out of the power of darkness, and the kingdom into which he is translated is the Messianic Kingdom, over which the Son of God's love reigns here and now.

3. **A Coming Kingdom.** While present, it is ever coming. It is a growing Kingdom, developing from small beginnings to large consummation. It is like seed which a man casts into the ground, and while he sleeps and wakes, through night and day, it grows, "first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." It is like the mustard seed, smallest of all seeds, yet it bursts into life and becomes a great tree, giving shade, and shelter to the fowls of the air. It is like the small amount of leaven which was hid in the three measures of meal till the whole was leavened. Thus the Kingdom, while here is always coming in ever enlarging.

dimensions, in ever widening sweep of its influence and power. It was prefigured by the stone, cut out without hands, that broke down all opposition and became a great mountain, filling the whole earth. It was pictured in the stream of Ezekiel's vision which flowed out of the sanctuary, becoming deeper and broader the further it flowed, till it came to be a great river that could not be crossed over, carrying life and health into the regions of desolation and death. We are taught by our Lord to pray: "Thy Kingdom come" because it shall not cease to come till "the heathen are given to Christ for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession."

4. **A Kingdom For All Races.** The Jewish people were hoping for a restoration of their national theocracy. They had no vision of blessings for Gentile dogs. But the very presence of Jesus meant that "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," and He had no vision less restricted than the love of His Father. "Many shall come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, but the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out." "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall

be one flock, one shepherd." The beloved John, the door of heaven open and the glorious vistas of a conquering church stretching out before him, saw a "Great multitude whom no man can number, out of every nation and of all tribes and people and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands: and they cry with a great voice saying salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

5. **An Unworldly Kingdom.** When the multitudes, filled with enthusiasm because of His beneficent acts, would have taken Jesus and forced him to accept a worldly crown and throne, He thwarted their purpose. The accredited guides of the people were "angry with him for not being a temporal King, and so accused him before Pilate with making Himself a King as a rival of Caesar, the very thing they were angry with Him for not doing." Being examined by Pilate on the subject, He confessed Himself a King, but added "my Kingdom is not of this world." Pilate was soon convinced that he had nothing to fear from Jesus, and was ready to turn Him loose. He saw that the Kingdom of which Jesus spake lay in a realm where it would not collide with his authority, or disturb his interests. Christ's Kingdom is unworldly in spirit, methods and aims. It has no means of defense, or of aggression like world powers; no aims of tem-

poral prosperity, or material grandeur like world powers. Its King rules solely in the realm of the Spirit, and relies for protection and propaganda on the proclamation of the truth. It can, therefore, exist along with any and all forms of civil government without the slightest friction or jar.

6. **A Kingdom with a Visible Form.** While essentially spiritual, and demanding spiritual qualifications, it must manifest itself in a tangible and visible form. As Dr. Snowden says: "The soul must have a body, ideas must have hands and feet. A pure spirit cannot go naked through the world. The Kingdom of God, while not an outward form, must yet use outward means." We see Jesus gathering His disciples, members of His Kingdom, into a visible brotherhood, teaching them mutual duties, and laying the basis for public, social worship. He gives them a mission in common, a mission demanding co-operation. It is a mission of such magnitude that it will require the joint labors of successive generations. This necessitates that the spiritual Kingdom shall form for itself a visible organization. Very naturally this visible organization is called in the Scriptures, the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus was speaking about this Kingdom—this visible organization—in many of the parables in which He compared the Kingdom to objects that are plainly manifest to our eyes. For example, in the 13th Chapter of Matthew, where He was ex-



plaining to His disciples the mysteries of the Kingdom, unveiling its secrets, so they could fully understand it in all of its phases, He gave them pictures of this aspect of it. In the first of these seven parables, the parable of the sower and the seed, He shows how this visible Kingdom is called into existence. The word of the Kingdom is sown—the gospel is preached—and some of it is wasted on hearts too hard for it to penetrate; some of it meets with a joyful reception by shallow natures that only half perceive its meaning, and it too is lost; some of it finds a soil in which to germinate, but thorns spring up and choke it, and so it also is lost; some of it falls into good ground and yields a harvest. This harvest is the visible outcome of the seed-sowing. The next parable, that of the wheat and the tares, shows how this visible Kingdom comes to be a mixture of good and bad. Tares are sown among the wheat. The children of the wicked ones are mingled with the true children of the Kingdom. They cannot be separated without too great hurt, and are permitted to remain together, not in the world, but in the Kingdom until the end of the age, when the angels will gather out of the Kingdom all that offend. The same mixed condition is pictured by the parable of the dragnet. Like that dragnet which encloses both good and bad fish, the Kingdom of heaven gathers into its enclosure good and bad men.

7. **A Universal Kingdom.** "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world." This was the great commission, given after His resurrection. Later still, He said "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world." The love of the Father, the death of the Son, the language of both command and promise are universal in their sweep.

8. **A Victorious Kingdom.** "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." A handful of sheep to tame and bring into subjection a worldful of wolves. Nothing seemed more hopeless. All the worldly power of earth's mightiest empire was arrayed against them, the learning, the laws, the sword, the fagot—all against them. They had but one weapon, the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. In three hundred years they had won the victory, and seated a Christian emperor on the throne.

"Not by might, nor by an army, but by my Spirit saith the Lord." This accounts for the victory. Behind the word is the Omnipotent Spirit of God. "All power in heaven and earth is given unto me, go ye, therefore, and lo I am with you all

the days." Here is the pledge of victory. The King's servants armed with only the one weapon, the word of God, can make disciples of all nations, can subdue them to the obedience of faith, because the King wielding all power in heaven and earth, is ever with them. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Never will Jesus have more power than He now has—never will there be a mightier agent for converting all nations than the agent now at work. They can be counted on to accomplish the design of the Father's world-wide love, and to bring on the day when the Kingdom of the world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

9. **An Everlasting Kingdom.** Such was the character of the Kingdom as announced by Isaiah, 9: 6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace; Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his Kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever." We have the same kind of Kingdom predicted in Dan. 2: 44: "And in the days of these Kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the

kingdom be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Also, in Dan. 7: 14: "And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The announcement was renewed by the Angel Gabriel to Mary: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Such is the Kingdom of heaven, briefly outlined from the New Testament, mostly from the words of the King. Had we no other source of information, this is the conception of the Kingdom which we should form. We should think of it as a Spiritual Kingdom, the reign of God over willing hearts; as a present Kingdom, existing here and now, a Kingdom into which we can enter, and share in its privileges and blessings; as a coming Kingdom—in the sense that it is ever expanding, growing in power and influence; as a cosmopolitan Kingdom, not confined to the Jews, but reaching out and taking in members of all races; as an unworldly Kingdom, not to be defended, nor propagated by worldly weapons, not to be ruled from a worldly capitol, nor by a visible King; as a Kingdom having a vis-

ible form, an organization whose growth we can see, as we can see the growing corn or mustard plant, and whose growth and prosperity we can help and hinder; as a universal Kingdom, designed by the King to take in all nations and extend to the uttermost parts of the earth; as a victorious Kingdom, subduing peoples and nations in its progress until it shall dominate all the kingdoms of the world; and finally as an everlasting Kingdom—a Kingdom which is not to perish—against it the gates of hell shall not prevail, neither is it to be superseded by another.

If Jesus Christ established any Kingdom at all, it can hardly be questioned that it was substantially such as has been outlined. And is not this the highest order of kingdoms—a rule over the souls of men? Such was the judgment of Napoleon; “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself,” said he, “founded empires; but upon what foundations did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love, and at this hour, millions of men would die for him. What an abyss between my misery and the eternal Kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved and adored, and which is extending over the whole earth.” If Napoleon was right in his judgment, then those who are looking for an earthly Messianic Kingdom, established and maintained by force, are closing their eyes to the

greater glory and looking forward to a reign of diminished splendor. Jesus from His exalted throne at the right hand of the Majesty on high, far above all might and dominion, and above every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, is even now wielding his sceptre over the souls of millions of devoted subjects, and his Kingdom is enlarging with all the passing years. While here it is always coming. In the eloquent language of Dr. A. A. Hodge, "it is coming in every event, even the least significant, which has advanced the interests of the human family either in respect to their bodies or their souls; in all the breaking of fetters; in all the bringing in of light; in the noiseless triumphs of peace; in the dying out of barbarisms; and in the colonization of great continents with new populations and free states. Above all, in the multiplication of the myriad hosts of Christian workers, each in the Spirit of the King seeking the very lowest and most degraded, everywhere lifting upward what Satan's kingdom has borne down, the kingdom is coming." Yes, the red letter day is surely coming, though no man knoweth the time of its dawning, the day for which all other days were made, when all the redeemed shall join in singing the new song, saying: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy

blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Rev. 5: 9-13.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE ANSWER OF HISTORY

“The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants,” said the great Chillingworth. We do not go to history for any of the doctrines of our faith. Still the history of doctrine is instructive and interesting.

I. The history of a millennial kingdom of God antedates the Christian era. The common Jewish belief was that when the Messiah came he would deliver them from all their oppressors, restore their national independence, and with his capitol in Jerusalem build up a kingdom of world-wide dominion. “It was assumed at first,” says Harnack, “that the Messianic Kingdom would endure forever, and this seems always to have been the most widely accepted view.” (Jno. 12: 34). Along with this view there grew up another in the first century before Christ, that the kingdom would last a thousand years. They derived this idea from the account of creation: “In six days God created the world, and rested the seventh. But a day of God, as taught in the 90th Psalm is equal to a thousand years. Hence the world will last for six thousand years of toil and labor; there will come a thousand years of Sabbath



rest for the people of God in the Kingdom of the Messiah."

2. This view passed over into the Christian church, and was cherished especially by the Jewish contingent of the church. As long as they formed any considerable part of the membership, the expectation that Christ would speedily appear from heaven and establish an earthly Kingdom was widespread. It was taken up by others. It is found in the writings of some of the apostolic fathers. The influence of Papias was especially strong in giving currency to this view. He was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, and was credited with being a disciple of John, though his own words are against this. He claims in the preface to his writings to have inquired of those who were disciples of the apostles, thus getting his ideas at second hand. It was his close relation to the apostles, however, which gave such weight to his authority. Eusebius says that "he was the cause why most of the ecclesiastical writers, urging the antiquity of the man, were carried away by this opinion; as for instance, Irenaeus, or any other that adopted such sentiments." Irenaeus was a younger contemporary of Papias, and he swallows his statements whole. Irenaeus says of the Millennium: "The days will come when vines will grow, each having ten thousand branches; each branch having ten thousand shoots; each shoot ten thousand clusters; each cluster ten thousand

grapes; and each grape yielding twenty-five measures of wine. In like manner, a grain of wheat will produce ten thousand heads; each head having ten thousand grains; and each grain producing ten thousand pounds of flour." Five hundred million tons from one grain! The original of this picture is found in the Apocalypse of Baruch, a Jewish book antedating the advent of Christ. Irenaeus took the liberty, however, of multiplying by ten. In each case when Baruch says a thousand, Irenaeus says ten thousand. He may well have reasoned that while this slight difference would make the story more interesting it would detract nothing from its truthfulness.

Tertullian, a younger contemporary of Irenaeus, was equally committed to the views of Papias. Dr. Shedd, in his *History of Doctrine*, writes as follows: "Irenaeus and Tertullian give glowing descriptions of the Millennial reign. Anti-Christ together with all the nations that side with him will be destroyed. All earthly empires, and the Roman in particular, will be overthrown. Christ will again appear, and will reign a thousand years, in corporeal presence on earth, in Jerusalem, which will be rebuilt and made the capital of His Kingdom. The patriarchs, prophets and all the pious, will be raised from the dead, and share in the felicity of the Kingdom. The new Jerusalem is depicted in the most splendid colors. The metaphors of Isa. 54:

11, 12, are treated as proper terms. Irenaeus describes the foundations of the rebuilt Jerusalem as literally carbuncle and sapphire, and its bulwarks as crystal; and regards it as actually let down from heaven, according to Rev. 21: 2. Tertullian puts the same interpretation on this text, and for confirmation refers to the report that in the Parthian war, in Judea a city was observed to be lowered down from the sky every morning, and to disappear as the day advanced."

These early church fathers were literalists with a vengeance; and yet I do not find that any of them went so far as to hold that the temple would be rebuilt, the Levitical sacrifices re-established, and Jerusalem made the center of the world's worship.

Justyn Martyr in the middle of the 2nd century, testifies that the view prevailed throughout the church that Christ would soon return and establish an earthly kingdom. He intimates that only the Gnostics and other heretics held any other view. It would seem, however, from the statements of other early writers that this was an exaggeration. While the view was common, it was not universal, nor did it remain long without strong opposition. The eminent teachers in the school at Alexandria, Clement, Origen and their successor, Didymus strenuously opposed it in the interest of more spiritual views of Christ's mission and reign. By the beginning of the fourth century, it had come to be

generally discredited. Eusebius describing the writings of Papias, remarks that they contain "matters rather too fabulous." Among these matters, he mentions the opinion of Papias that "there would be a certain millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth; which things he appears to have imagined, as if they were authorized by the apostolic narratives, not understanding correctly those matters which they propounded mystically in their representations. For he was very limited in his comprehension, as is evident from his discourses. Yet he was the cause why most of the ecclesiastical writers, urging the antiquity of the man, were carried away by a similar opinion." Eusebius is concerned to have it appear that the millennial views of the kingdom, so gross and materialistic, had no very worthy origin. "Augustine adopted the theory in his earlier days, but rejected it afterwards." He sounded its death knell by his great work, **De Civitate Dei**, in which he identifies the church, which he calls the city of God, with the Kingdom of Christ, and the Kingdom of heaven; and asserts that Christians are even now reigning with Christ.

3. The doctrine of a millennial reign was practically unknown during the middle ages. The church of Rome was dominant in Western Europe, and claimed, as a visible organization to be the King-

dom of God on earth. The Pope was reigning as Christ's vicegerent, and boldly asserted his right to exercise supreme dominion over the earth. The theory of the Holy Roman Empire was that the State and Church coalesced to form this Empire, with the Pope as head of spiritual interests, and the Emperor head of secular interests. The Pope, however, would not admit that they were co-ordinate rulers. When the disciples said to Jesus, here are two swords, he said "it is enough." "That means," said the Pope, "that there is a spiritual sword, and a secular sword. But both belong to the Church—the spiritual to be used by the Church, and the secular for the Church. Both are under control of the head of the Church." This was the conception of the Kingdom of God for some centuries, and still is the conception entertained by the Roman Catholic Church. The visible organization, presided over by the bishop of Rome, is the Kingdom of heaven, which John proclaimed at hand, and which Jesus established. No one can enter this Kingdom except by being born of water and the Spirit. This new birth is effected by baptism. No one can be saved except he enter this Kingdom, i. e., except he be a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

4. With the Reformation came new views of the Kingdom of God. Those who identified it with the Church, made a distinction between the visible and

invisible Church, and identified Christ's spiritual reign with the latter. The leading Reformers were utterly hostile to the Premillennial views of the early Church. By some strange vicissitude of fortune, it seems that Calvin has been claimed by certain Premillennialists as belonging to their ranks. Nothing could be further from the truth. Ins. Vol. II, Book III, Chap. 25, he says: "Not long after the days of Paul arose the Millenarians who limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years. Their fiction is too puerile to require or deserve refutation."

Unfortunately for the doctrine it found a ready acceptance with the Anabaptists of the Reformation period. Some of them, under the pressure of persecution, developed a wild fanaticism. This reached its climax in the "Kingdom of Munster." Certain of these fanatics took possession of the City of Munster, and proclaimed the Millennial Kingdom at hand, and that the saints should henceforth under the dominion of Christ lead a blessed life, with community of goods, without law and without magistracy. Soon all the goods of the city were in the hands of fanatics, and all who opposed them were either banished or slain. Before the movement was suppressed, such excesses and atrocities were committed as to bring great odium on the doctrine of an earthly millennium. A similar movement arose in England in the middle of

the 17th Century. During the Protectorate of Cromwell, certain persons known as "Fifth Monarchy men" taught that Christ was setting up a Fifth Monarchy on earth, claimed the gift of prophecy, and wished to destroy all anti-Christian forms of government.

In the 16th and 17th Centuries the doctrine found no hospitable reception in the evangelical churches. It was championed by individuals, or small erratic sects. Indeed such has been its fate in all the centuries, if we except the century from 150 to 250. Says Dr. Snowden, "The Coming of the Lord," p. 23: "Several millenarian leaders have appeared who have founded churches, or organizations which are still in existence. One of the earliest of these was Ann Lee, who came from England to this country in 1774, and her followers are the Shakers who now number about 1700. They believe the second coming of Christ is past, and that they constitute the true Church. The Plymouth Brethren arose at Plymouth in England about 1827, and they now have four branches in this country with 6,000 communicants. They look for the personal Premillennial coming of Christ. William Miller, a converted deist, began to lecture in New York in 1831, and fixed the date of Christ's advent in 1843. His followers known as "Millerites," were thrown into great excitement and put on white robes in which to meet Christ as the day approached. When it

came and passed, Miller wrote a letter acknowledging his error and announced the next year as the correct date, and said that if Christ did not appear he should feel twice the disappointment he had already felt. Out of this movement came the Adventist Churches of which there are now in this country six branches with about 60,000 communicants. The Mormons are Premillenarians, and 'Pastor Russell' founded his successful financial enterprise on the basis of his doctrine of 'Millennial Dawn,' fixing the end of the world in 1914."

This brief sketch is sufficient to show that the doctrine of a millennial kingdom of Christ on earth, to be introduced at His second advent is as old as the Christian Church—that it was indeed taken over by early Christian teachers from the Jews who were expecting such a kingdom at the first advent. The history further shows that it was never the ecumenical faith of the Church, never having been admitted to any of the accepted creeds. It finds no place in the four great creeds of the early church, the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, Athenasian Creed, the Creed of Chalcedon. It was distinctly condemned by several of the creeds of the Reformation period, in especially strong terms by the Augsburg Confession, and the English Confession of Edward VI. The best that can be said for Millenarianism in the light of history, is that it has been the opinion of individuals and of parties only.



Some of whom have stood in agreement with the Catholic faith and some in opposition to it.

One very noticeable fact is brought to light by the history of the doctrine, and that is that it springs up and flourishes in times of great distress and upheavals. It was when the early Church was passing through the fires of persecution that the disciples were easily persuaded that Jesus would speedily appear for their relief and would destroy their powerful and cruel oppressors. The belief faded away when the persecution of the State gave way to State favor. The Anabaptists of the 16th Century, and the Fifth Monarchy men of the 17th Century found great comfort in this doctrine in the trials through which they passed. They cherished the hope of a speedy and sudden ending.

The belief in the doctrine is greatly stimulated by political ferment, wars, earthquakes and all kinds of disasters. Men are sighing for relief, and grow impatient. This doctrine offers a happy solution of all problems and perplexities. The recent world war, with its varied and unparalleled sufferings, is largely responsible for the flourishing state of the doctrine at the present time. The following statement was issued to the churches of England in 1917, about the time the war had reached its worst stage, and the evils attending it were almost intolerable: "The undersigned, under a profound

impression of the momentous nature of the present crisis, issue the accompanying statement:

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOUR

1. That the present crisis points toward the close of the times of the Gentiles.

2. That the revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment, when He will be manifested as evidently to His disciples as on the evening of His resurrection.

3. That the completed Church will be translated to be "Forever with the Lord."

4. That Israel will be restored to its own land in unbelief, and be afterwards converted by the appearance of Christ on its behalf.

5. That all human schemes of reconstruction must be subsidiary to the second coming of our Lord, because all nations will then be subject to His rule.

6. That under the reign of Christ there will be a further great effusion of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh.

7. That the truths embodied in this statement are of the utmost practical value in determining Christian character and action with reference to the pressing problems of the hour.

(Signed): J. Campbell Morgan, A. C. Dixon, W. Fuller Gooch, J. Stuart Holden, H. Webb-Peploe, F. S. Webster, Dinsdale T. Young, Alfred Bird, J. S. Harrison, F. B. Myer.

Some of these names are well known throughout the Christian world. They are great preachers and earnest disciples of the Lord. But Jesus himself has warned us against such predictions: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold He is in the desert, go not forth. Behold He is in the secret chambers; believe it not." That such devout men should venture predictions in the face of the Master's own warning, and in face of the fact that He professed himself ignorant of the day, shows the inevitable tendency of the theory. If all do not go as far as the Millerites, and get their ascension robes ready, they go quite a distance in that direction.

6. On which side lies the preponderating weight of scholarship? The answer to this question depends on who gives it. Naturally both sides claim it, and they make good their claims by each side deciding for itself what is "scholarship," and who are scholars. The Premillenarians rule out all the professors in theological seminaries. One of their number said: "The Pharisees of old made void the word of God by their traditions, and at present a majority of our theological professors are

doing the same thing in our seminary class-rooms." This is an easy and short method of getting rid of a troublesome lot of hostile critics. The speaker is clearly right as to the majority being on the other side from him. Dr. Snowden in his recent book, *The Coming of the Lord*, says, p. 32: "In order to find out the present attitude of Biblical scholarship on this question as represented by the professors in our theological seminaries, we applied for and received official information on this point from twenty-seven leading institutes in eight denominations, with the result that out of the 236 members of the faculties of these theological seminaries only eight are premillenarians." Two hundred and twenty-eight as against eight is a significant showing. These are men who have been chosen and set apart by their respective churches to devote their lives to all branches of Biblical study. If this fact disqualifies them for witnessing to what the Bible teaches, then is it true that "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

The Premillenarians in their Prophetic conferences are accustomed to bring out quite an array of names, many of them distinguished persons who champion their views. They seem not to be very careful as they have included quite a number, as for example John Calvin, John Wesley, and C. A. Briggs, who notoriously did not belong to them. Many who may be classed as Premillenarians, like

Dean Alford and Archbishop Trench, do not belong to those with whom we are dealing. These both identify the Church with the Kingdom of God, and interpret the New Testament teachings about the Kingdom of God, in the most orthodox manner. Nothing could show more clearly their antipodes to Dr. Scofield and those who think with him than their different interpretation of the parable of the leaven. All these modern Premillennialists that I have read insist that leaven is uniformly in the Scriptures used as the type of putrefaction, or corruption. Hence they make this parable to mean that corrupt, and corrupting doctrines have crept into the Church, and the evil leaven will continue to work till the Church completely apostatizes. They see this leaven at work in all that mars the Church's purity, and they see so much of this that they feel justified in prophesying the near approach of the end of this age. They have practiced painting dark pictures of the Church till they have about become perfect. They now draw a picture so dark that it casts its ever deepening shadow down the future to a speedily approaching night, moonless and starless.

Neither Alford nor Trench has any patience with this interpretation of the parable. For example, Trench says if that had been our Lord's meaning "He would have announced that the gates of hell should prevail against it; He would have written

failure upon His whole future work; there would, in that case, be no re-active energy, by which it could ever have been unleavened again." Alford is equally pronounced. We should be perfectly willing for our Premillennial friends to claim these distinguished scholars, if only they would follow them.

Calling over a list of names does not settle the question. If it did, it would be an easy matter to get up a list that would drive the Premillennialists forever from the field. Perhaps we may as well conclude this survey with a statement from Wm. Adams Brown in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible: "Premillenarian views have been revived from time to time, now in grosser, now in more spiritual forms, and have never been without advocates in the Church; but they have failed to win general acceptance. The Church as a whole, Protestant as well as Catholic, has either adopted Augustine's identification of the Millennium with the Church militant, or else look for a future period of prosperity preceding the second advent of Christ."



## CHAPTER VI.

## ANSWER OF OUR STANDARDS

Our standards consist of the Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Book of Church Order. The same doctrine of the Kingdom runs through them all.

**1. The Shorter Catechism.** This is the choicest bit of theological literature that has ever been given to the world. It is the combined and concentrated wisdom of the most eminent and godly men of the 17th Century. It represents their painstaking labor stretching over a period of five years. Ques. 26 asks: "How does Christ execute the office of a King?" and the Answer is: "Christ executeth the office of a King, in subduing us unto Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining all His and our enemies." Christ is now a King, executing royal functions, not merely an heir apparent. His sway is not confined to the Church, but extends to all His enemies, whether men or devils. Some persons think that the devil is exercising supreme and independent control over this world during the present dispensation. But that at the second advent, Christ will bind him in the bottomless pit. The more rational and Scriptural view is



that he is now under the restraint symbolized by the binding with a chain. We recall how that the demons could not enter the herd of swine, could not even hurt a hog without permission of Jesus. Christ is "head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all things." "All power in heaven and earth is given into his hands." If this does not constitute Kingship, what does? Must we see the King with the crown and sceptre and body guard and army? Are we so wedded to material and sensuous things that we can see no glory, no regal splendor in spiritual lordship?

Is not God a great King? And yet "no man hath seen God at any time." Is not His throne high and lifted up? Jesus occupies the same throne and wields the same power. He calls it "my throne." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne."

Look at the 102nd Question: "What do we pray for in the second petition?" Ans.: "We pray that Satan's Kingdom may be destroyed, and that the Kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and that the Kingdom of glory may be hastened." This Kingdom of grace is a very different Kingdom from the Jewish theocracy, the Davidic Kingdom, which we are told is to be re-established and maintained by force. It is a Kingdom in which mercy and not justice holds

sway. Justice has been satisfied, and the door into the Kingdom has been thrown wide open, and the invitation is to "whosoever will." This is the Kingdom pictured in the parable of the great supper, and even more vividly in the parable of the marriage of the King's son. The servants were sent to the intersection of the highways, to intercept all travelers, good and bad, and to bid them in the King's name to the marriage. They need not wait to change their clothing. The King provides the wedding garment. Was ever King so gracious! A welcome for all, ample provision for all, and wedding garments for all. This Kingdom is here now, even while we are praying for its coming. The invitation is sounding in our ears. We can enter and bring others. It is advancing towards the Kingdom of glory and is to me ultimately merged into that. It is the same Kingdom in different stages. It is not to change its essential character. Grace will not give place to law, nor mercy surrender the sceptre to justice. The Lord will give grace and glory, grace now, glory hereafter. And those now in shall go no more out.

2. Turning to the Confession of Faith, chap. 8 par. 5: "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of the Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inherit-

ance in the Kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." This means that every soul saved by the blood of Christ is in the mind and purpose of God a member of the Kingdom of heaven, the Kingdom which John proclaimed "at hand," and about which gathers so much of the teachings of Jesus. This Kingdom includes all living and all glorified children of God, all those who have crossed the flood, who are crossing now, and who shall cross hereafter. This is an invisible Kingdom, for the reason that it is defined by character, and only God can see the heart.

Chapter 25, on the Church: "The catholic, or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head." Note that the limits of the invisible Church are exactly coterminous with the limits of the invisible Kingdom, and that the subjects or members of both are the same. The Kingdom and the Church are convertible terms, interchangeable names for the same organization.

Par. 2: "The visible Church, which is also catholic, or universal under the gospel, consists of all throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." Note that the Confession identi-

fies the visible Church, and the visible Kingdom after the same manner in which it identified the invisible Church and the invisible Kingdom. The point of difference between the visible and invisible is that one includes all who profess the true religion, while the other includes all those, and only those, who possess the true religion.

3. Turning to our Book of Church Order, chapter 1, par. 2: "The Church which the Lord Jesus has erected in this world for the gathering and perfecting of the saints is His visible Kingdom of grace and is one and the same in all ages." This is our official definition of the Kingdom of God, or Kingdom of heaven. This is what we publish to the world, as our understanding of the teachings of the Bible on this subject. It is in exact accord with the teachings of the Catechisms and Confession of Faith. The Church and the Kingdom of God are one and the same, and have been in all ages. God has had a Church ever since He has had a people, a redeemed people, on earth, and consequently He has had a Kingdom of heaven throughout the same period. This Kingdom has had new starting points, new designations, and new methods of administration, but from the first, it has been an everlasting Kingdom, a Kingdom prepared for His children from the foundation of the world. Jesus is as truly King now as He ever will be. "It belongs to His Majesty from His throne of glory, to

rule and teach the Church, through His Word and Spirit, by the ministry of man; thus mediately exercising His own authority, and enforcing His own laws, unto the edification and establishment of His Kingdom.”

Such, in brief, are the teachings of our standards. They unquestionably teach a present Kingdom of heaven on earth; at the same time it is a coming Kingdom, ever coming both in expansive and intensive power; also a Kingdom destined to be triumphant, and to endure forever.

Time will not permit us to show the wealth of Scripture that supports these views. Much Scripture proof has already been given in discussing the answer which the New Testament gives to the question, what is the Kingdom of God? All the Scriptures which teach that Jesus is now a King, and is at present in possession of a Kingdom go to prove that the Christian Church and the Kingdom of God are identical. For if Jesus is now exercising the functions of a King, and reigning over a distinctive Kingdom on earth, we must find this Kingdom in the Church. While all authority in heaven and earth has been entrusted to Him, and while He exercises this authority in a providential way over all the earth, yet it is in the Church, and there alone that His authority is acknowledged. It is the sole function of the Church to declare, to administer and to enforce His laws. It is said that

He is never called King of the Church, and from this it is argued that He is not its King, and the Church is not a Kingdom. But this is merely stickling for words. When it is declared that Christ is Head over all things to the Church which in His body, all the functions of kingship are asserted as strongly as language can assert them. When He gives laws to the Church, and demands obedience even at the cost of life, and makes such obedience the condition of His favor, could royal absolutism go any further? He that hateth not father and mother, wife and children, yea, and his own life also cannot be my disciple. Did any King ever demand a loyalty superior to that?

But we must look at some Scriptures which unmistakably identify the Church and the Kingdom.

1. Note the parables of Matt. 13. In the parable of the sower, we have the manner of the establishment of the Kingdom. It is by sowing the word of truth—by the preaching of the gospel. Much of the seed is lost on unfruitful soil, but some find good ground, and yield a harvest. Is not that precisely the way the Church is established? What is the harvest, resulting from the seed in good ground, if not the Church?

The next parable tells us that the Kingdom of heaven is like a field of mingled wheat and tares. It is an organization made up of the children of God, but along with them are found children of

the wicked one. Is not that a true picture of the Church? Again the Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, the least of all seeds, but grows to be a great tree. Is not the Church like that? Has it not grown from a very small beginning to be a considerable tree? The Kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened. Here we have a hidden power that permeates and assimilates and expands. Is not that like the invisible spiritual power in the Church, permeating the whole body of believers, assimilating them to a common type, and spreading from one heart to another?

So we might go on and show how one and all the parables liken the Kingdom of heaven to that which has its perfect counterpart in the Church. The Kingdom of heaven and the Church have the same origin, in the proclamation of the Word of God; they have the same visible, external unfolding; and the same internal characteristics. They sustain precisely the same relation to Christ—the purchase of His blood, the creation of His spirit and word, and are the objects of His love and care.

2. There are other Scriptures which identify them: Matt. 16: 18, 19: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee

the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." We are told by Dr. Scofield that this is the first mention of the church, and the implication is that we are in contact with an entirely new thing. It would be just as proper to say that Christ was unknown to the Old Testament because His name does not occur in it. The Hebrew word Kahal is translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word *ecclesia*, the word here translated church. So that the word meaning church occurs over and over again in the Old Testament. The thing is there if the name is not. Just as Christ is there though the title is not there. Of course, our Premillennialists will not identify the Church of the 18th v. with the Kingdom of the 19th. But the history does. Peter was given the keys of the Kingdom of heaven. He was appointed door keeper. Did Peter ever discharge the office of door keeper? It has generally been supposed that he did on the day of Pentecost. But Dr. Scofield says that on the day of Pentecost Peter "opened the door of Christian opportunity to Israel." How did the keys happen to fit? He had no keys but the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and yet when he used these he opened the door of Christian opportunity. Later on Dr. Scofield evidently forgot himself. In a foot note under Acts



2:4, he says: "When Peter opened the door of the Kingdom to the Gentiles," etc., and refers to Acts 10. This is certainly novel teaching. Peter opened "the door of Christian opportunity" to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and the door of the Kingdom to Cornelius and his household. Obviously he used the same key, and it was later found that Cornelius was in the same organization with the Jews who were admitted at Pentecost. I think a man with no prepossessions, no theory to maintain would say that Peter on the day of Pentecost opened the door of the Kingdom of heaven and admitted three thousand souls to the Christian Church.

The Apostles in their writings generally use the word church, but not always. Col. 1: 13; "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son." If we are God's children, we have been translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of Christ, which means the same thing as when it is said that we have been baptized by one spirit into His body, which is His Church.

3. Only one point remains. Our standards teach that the Kingdom of God is one and the same in all ages, that the Kingdom which Christ declared to be "at hand" was a new Kingdom only in the sense of a new departure under a new dispensation. It had existed in essence, in a kind of germinal, preparatory stage, shadowed forth largely by types

and symbols that pointed to a future day for a fuller, clearer and final manifestation. That day had its faint dawn when John, the forerunner appeared, and its sun-rise when the King arrived.

Having identified Church and Kingdom, we might use all the Scriptures which show the continuity of the Church under all dispensations, to show the continuity of the Kingdom. We have just seen that the Church existed under the Old Testament dispensation, though the word translated church is usually translated congregation in the Old Testament. But church means nothing more nor less than a congregation of God's people. Paul uses the figure of the olive tree to picture the Church of the Old Testament; and he says the Jews were broken off and the Gentiles grafted in. Another way of saying that the Gentiles were admitted into the same Church from which the Jews were excluded. From proof already adduced of the identity of Church and Kingdom, it would express the same truth to say the Gentiles were admitted to the same Kingdom from which the Jews were excluded.

This is exactly what Jesus did say: "Many shall come from the East and the West, the North and the South and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the Kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness." Matt. 8: 11: "To sit down," to recline,

the position of the Jews at the table. What Jesus says is that many Gentiles shall share with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the feast of blessings in the Kingdom of heaven; but the Jews, the sons of the Kingdom shall be cast out. The old patriarchs feasted in the Kingdom in their day. For many centuries after their day the Kingdom was confined to their children after the flesh. But a new epoch dawned with the coming of Jesus, and when the Roman centurion showed such amazing faith, Jesus took occasion to tell what the immediate future had in store for the Gentiles. The door of the Kingdom will be open to them, and they will take their place in line of succession to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the same old Kingdom for the saints of all ages and races.

What is the Kingdom of God? The answer of our standards is, it is the reign of Christ over the souls of those made willing in the day of His power. This Kingdom is presented to us in two aspects. In the one aspect, the Kingdom consists of all regenerate souls, of all loyal disciples of Christ, and of none others. The only door into the Kingdom, considered under this aspect, is the new birth. Jno. 3:3. The only person who can admit to its privileges is the King himself, who carries the key of David, "who shutteth and no man openeth, and who openeth and no man shutteth." No mere outward profession will answer. "Not every one that

saith unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my father in heaven." This Kingdom cometh not with observation, for "lo, the Kingdom of heaven is within you."

It answers to the invisible church, which, according to our Confession of Faith, consists of "the whole number of the elect that have been, are or shall be gathered into one under Christ."

In the other aspect, the Kingdom is presented as a visible body of professed disciples. Admission to this Kingdom is by a credible profession of faith in Christ. Man looketh on the outward appearance, God looketh on the heart. Man must go by the outward seeming, and this does not always correspond to inward reality. So it comes to pass that tares get mingled with the wheat. Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, got by even when Peter was door keeper. The Kingdom in this aspect corresponds with the visible Church, which "consists of all those who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and submission to His laws."

Such is the teaching of our standards. I believe they are thoroughly loyal to the Scriptures, voicing their teaching not on a text here and there dissociated from the context, but upon the general consensus of Old Testament and New. Nobody claims infallibility for our standards, but all who sign them, and who on that ground are authorized to preach as accredited messengers of our Church,

should not hastily depart from them. They are the product of an age that was given, as few ages have been given, to the careful and prayerful elaboration and systematizing of the doctrines of the Bible. They were loyal, to their hearts core, to the Bible as the infallible word of God. They took time for their work, and they did it with painstaking thoroughness which is characteristic of those and only those who are setting forth statements of truth which they are willing to suffer for, and if needs be die for.

If I mistake not their work is in marked contrast with that of some of our modern leaders who pick out a few words which they call "key words," and then run a rake over the Bible and gather out all the texts containing these words, and cite them as supporting their novel and fanciful views. In doing this, they play havoc with the general drift of Scripture. "No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better." That was true in the olden times, but now old wine has fallen into disfavor, and there be many who prefer grape juice.

There was a type of Premillennialism that was not at serious variance with the standards of our church. It was the type represented by such eminent expounders of the Scriptures as Archbishop Trench and Dean Alford. These men, as we have seen, explained the teachings of the New Testa-

ment according to the plain, and obvious meaning of the language. They found there a Kingdom of God already established, a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom which means the reign of Christ over the souls of His redeemed people. They found there a Kingdom of God, with door wide open, with its feast of blessing already spread, and into which the loving voice of the Divine Savior is inviting all who are passing and repassing in the streets and lanes of the city and all who are traveling on those dusty highways of life that stretch through all the countries of earth.

There was a time when one's views on the subject of the Millennium had little to do with determining his interpretation of the general teachings of Scripture. It was merely a question as to whether the Church of Christ, was to have its consummate flowering and fruitage before the second Advent, or whether the second Advent was to usher in a higher and more glorious development of this same Kingdom. It has been the common opinion that our standards are silent on this question, and that consequently one is equally loyal to our standards no matter which view he held. While not consenting fully to this opinion, yet I would say that the type of Premillennialism described is by no means a grave departure from the standards. Very different, however, is this modern type of Premillennialism which allows

no Kingdom of Christ on earth now, which knows no Messianic Kingdom except the revived Kingdom of David, with the same throne, the same capital, the same methods of administration and the same system of worship; which robs us of all the prophetic books of the Old Testament scriptures, making of them a kind of kaleidoscope through which we look on the many hued splendors of a world lying beyond this present age, and with which the members of Christ's Church are to have nothing to do, and which runs criss-cross furrows through the New Testament, rendering its teachings unintelligible to the ordinary reader. Such Premillennialism is not only unknown to our standards, but is entirely out of harmony with all they have to teach about the Church and the Kingdom, and about the Kingly office of Christ.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE ANSWER OF THE HYMN BOOK

Next to the Bible the Church prizes her hymn book. Well she may. It gathers up and conserves in most attractive form the Christian sentiment, the living faith, the ripe experience, the ardent hopes of the saints of all ages. The true poet is characterized by lively sensibility and penetrating insight. He feels and perceives. What others reason out, he sees by intuition. Hence it is given to him to embody truth in concrete form, and thus make vital and vivid, the truth which to more sluggish natures lies in shadow. The poet more nearly than any one else incarnates the spirit of ancient prophecy. There was an ecstatic element in the experience of the old prophets. They were subject to trances and visions. The divine afflatus lifted them out of the category of common men, and fitted them to see and reveal the spiritual realities that were veiled to the eyes of all others. They came into possession of truth not by logical processes, but by direct mental perception, answering closely to what I have called poetic intuition.

Prophet and poet having the same lively sensibilities, and apprehending truth in the same direct



manner, use the same style of expression. They indulge in figurative language, and picture truth to the eye, rather than expound it to the understanding. Nowhere do we find the splendid images which glow on the pages of the prophets so faithfully reproduced as in our hymn books; and no class of writers has brought home to the hearts of God's children so effectively the kindling hopes inspired by the ancient seers as our hymn writers. Compare Isa. 35 with Thomas Hastings' uplifting hymn: "Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning." How beautifully picture answers to picture! The Church unhesitatingly accepts this as a true interpretation of the evangelical prophet, and rejoices in the assurance that it has entered into the inheritance of the rich blessings which to the prophetic vision lay on the far distant horizon. We may well believe that the Church will never suffer itself to be robbed of this inheritance by those who would lift up such prophecies as this and carry them over to the second advent, to find their fulfillment in the literal going up to Jerusalem, by long and wearisome pilgrimage, of all people to offer sacrifices on the altar in the restored temple.

Many of our hymn writers were not great theologians, but no hymns find permanent place in the worship of the Church that do not embody the settled faith of the Church. It is a familiar fact that one of our most prized hymns, "Nearer my God to

Thee," was furnished us by a Unitarian, Mrs. Sarah F. Adams. Her father was a Unitarian preacher of England, and she was brought up, lived and died in that faith. But there is not the faintest trace of any heretical beliefs in the hymn. As far as it goes, it expresses the faith and experience of evangelical Christendom. It breathes an earnest yearning after fellowship with God, uses the cross as a symbol of sanctifying power, and recognizes that all of God's dealings with us may be made agencies of spiritual good. There is nothing in this to which the heart of any serious Christian does not respond, and the warmth, and urgency and felicitous phrasing make it a most fit medium for pious aspirations.

Some of our most prolific hymn writers were distinguished theologians in their day. Charles Wesley holds the record for the number of hymns that found their way into Church Hymnals, the number being about 7,000. He was a fine scholar, a good preacher, and a saint who had sounded all the depths of Christian experience. "It may be affirmed," says Isaac Taylor, "that there is no principle element of Christianity, no main article of belief as professed by Protestant churches; that there is no moral or ethical sentiment peculiarly characteristic of the gospel; no height or depth of feeling, proper to spiritual life, that does not find itself emphatically and pointedly and clearly conveyed in

some stanza of Charles Wesley's hymns." Of course, Charles Wesley was a little off in his theology in that it was tainted with Arminianism; but that taint did not find its way into his choicest hymns. Arminianism is much better for preaching than for praying, or singing. It will do to talk to man, but not to God. Staughton says: "There are in Charles Wesley's hymns tones of conflict and victory which resemble the voice of a trumpet, and strains of praise like the sound of many waters." As a sample we cite a verse or two of Hymn 201:

"Rejoice the Lord is King,  
Your God and King adore;  
Mortals give thanks and sing,  
And triumph evermore.  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;  
Rejoice aloud, ye saints rejoice.

His Kingdom cannot fail,  
He rules o'er earth and heaven;  
The keys of death and hell  
Are to our Jesus given:  
Lift up the heart, lift up the voice;  
Rejoice aloud, ye saints rejoice."

Charles Wesley was not waiting for a crowning day for his Savior. He was not offering his tribute of praise to the heir apparent. He was calling on the saints to lift their hearts and voices in loud resounding shouts of victory to King Jesus, who even now rules over the earth and heaven, and who

holds the keys of death and hell. The saints responded to his call, and set the stamp of their approval on his doctrine of the Kingdom of God. It is a present Kingdom in the full vigor of its power, and a kingdom that cannot fail.

While Charles Wesley holds the record in numbers, Isaac Watts, an older contemporary, is a close second, and surpassed him in the excellency of his work. He gave to the church more hymns of permanent value. An eminent Baptist minister told me that he had made an extensive examination of the hymn books of various denominations and that Watts was far in the lead of all others in the number of his hymns now in use. He was a very precocious child, and began to compose devotional poetry at seven years of age. He introduced a new class of hymns, "departing so far from all precedents," says James Montgomery, "that few of his compositions resemble those of his forerunners, while he so far established a precedent to all his successors that none have departed to any great extent from it." An interesting episode is connected with one of his hymns. On the last Sunday of Matthew Arnold's life he attended worship in the Presbyterian Church of Liverpool, of which John Watson (Ian McLaren) was pastor. "When I survey the wondrous cross" was sung. Arnold was observed after the service repeating to himself those sacred words, when he was led to speak of

the hymn as the "greatest in the English language." Matthew Arnold was not alone in this estimate of the hymn.

More to our purpose, however, is another hymn, equally familiar and deserving to rank but little if at all inferior:

"Joy to the world! the Lord is come:  
Let earth receive her King:  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love."

Needless to say Watts is speaking of the first advent, and celebrating the praises of a King who is even now reigning over a kingdom here on earth. The same is true of that great missionary hymn:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

On the wings of this hymn, the Church is continually giving expression to its faith and hope that the Kingdom over which Jesus is now ruling from His exalted throne will extend its conquest "till the heathen shall be given to Him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession."

When the Church comes to set apart any of its sons to the gospel ministry, it finds one of Watts' hymns most appropriate for the occasion:

"How beauteous are their feet,  
Who stand on Zion's hill;  
Who bring salvation on their tongues,  
And words of peace reveal!

How charming is their voice;  
How sweet the tidings are!  
Zion, behold thy Savior King,  
He reigns and triumphs here.

How happy are our ears  
That hear this joyful sound,  
Which kings and prophets waited for,  
And sought, but never found."

Isa. 52:7, furnished Dr. Watts the language in which he describes the heralds of the gospel, and he represents the prophet as having his eyes fixed on the glorious times in which our lot is cast. He differs widely from our Premillenarian friends who would have us believe that the prophet was

gazing beyond the bounds of this gospel dispensation, and describing the messengers who shall in some yet distant age stand on the hills of Judea, and announce to the Jews that a Millennial reign is about to begin in Jerusalem. Dr. Watts has pre-empted the ground, and his inspiring hymn has sung his teachings into the heart of the Church too deeply to be easily eradicated.

Isaac Watts' greatest work was in giving us the Psalms, "translated," to use his own words, "in such manner as we have reason to believe David would have composed them if he had lived in our day. What need is there," he goes on to say, "that I should wrap up the shining honors of my Redeemer in the dark and shadowy language of a religion that is now forever abolished, especially when Christians are so vehemently warned, in the epistles of St. Paul, against a Judaizing spirit in their worship as well as doctrine?" Again he says: "I think I may assume this pleasure of being the first who hath brought down the royal author into the common affairs of the Christian life, and led the Psalmist of Israel into the Church of Christ without anything of the Jew about Him." The title of his work when completed was "The Psalms of David, imitated in the language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian state and worship." The author lived to see the work pass through fifteen editions. "They were long used,"

writes Josiah Miller, "alone by many congregations; afterwards for a long period with supplements by other writers; and they still hold their place, though so many competitors have arisen, and they are found distributed through almost all the collections in use." Watts' interpretation means that David and his theocratic kingdom were typical, and have found their fulfillment in the present reign of the Messiah. Here again Watts has pre-empted the ground. The Church has long been expressing its joyous conviction in the correctness of his version of the Psalms. It may safely be asserted that the Church can never be educated out of this conviction and taught to view the Messianic Psalms as having reference to a great worldly kingdom, with capitol at Jerusalem, and whose restored temple will be the center of worship for all the nations of earth.

Philip Doddridge comes next to Isaac Watts. He was many years younger, but his brief life extended only a little beyond the date of Watts' death. They were kindred spirits, and devoted friends. Dr. Doddridge's justly famous book, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, was written at the suggestion of Watts, and partly revised by him. It was also at the solicitation of Dr. Watts and others that Dr. Doddridge opened a school for the training of young ministers. I may mention in passing, as a matter of curious interest,



that John Robert Gregg, inventor of a system of shorthand writing, is quoted in a recent issue of the Literary Digest, as saying that Dr. Doddridge insisted that all students for the ministry should learn shorthand first, that they might easily take down his lectures.

It was Doddridge's custom to write hymns to be sung at the close of his sermons, and they have been compared to "spiritual amber fetched up and floated off from sermons long since lost in the depths of bygone time." Doubtless we owe one of his splendid hymns to a sermon on Isa. 52: 1, 2:

"Triumphant Zion, lift thy head  
From dust and darkness, and the dead;  
Though humbled long, awake at length,  
And gird thee with thy Savior's strength.

Put all thy beauteous garments on,  
And let thy various charms be known:  
The world thy glories shall confess,  
Decked in the robes of righteousness.

No more shall foes unclean invade  
And fill thy hallowed walls with dread;  
No more shall hell's insulting host  
Their victory and thy sorrows boast."

In his view, the Zion to whom the prophet addressed his stirring call was none other than the Christian Church. And the Church is responding to that call when she clothes herself in the beau-

tiful garments of righteousness and goes forth, girded with her Savior's strength to win the world to Him.

We have an ordination hymn from Doddridge as well as from Watts. It was written on the occasion of an ordination, at Floore, in Northamptonshire, Oct. 12, 1736; and was probably based on Ezek. 33:7:

"Let Zion's watchmen all awake,  
And take the alarm they give."

Here he makes God's ancient prophet the mouth-piece through whom God is speaking to all who are set apart by the Church to sound out the warnings of God's word. The Church has long been using his hymn, and has thus been guilty of the awful sin of spiritualizing the language of the prophets, a sin from which it cannot be easily divorced.

John Newton is next in succession to our noble line of hymn writers. His early life of deep degradation, of indescribable hardships, thrilling adventure, of hairbreath escapes from death, followed by his conversion, his abundant and varied Christian labors, and his gradual transformation into a saint glowing with seraphic devotion, form one of the most interesting stories in the whole range of Christian biography.

When he became a settled minister at Olney, he followed the custom of Doddridge and wrote hymns

to be used in connection with his sermons. He and the poet, Cowper, who was one of his parishioners, formed a collection of the hymns of their own composing, known and widely used as the Olney Hymns. Many of these hymns are based on Old Testament texts. One of the finest we have from Newton's pen is an interpretation of Isa. 33: 20:

“Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God;  
He whose word cannot be broken  
Formed thee for His own abode:  
On the Rock of Ages founded,  
What can shake thy sure repose?  
With salvation's walls surrounded,  
Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

See the streams of living waters,  
Springing from eternal Love,  
Well supply thy sons and daughters,  
And all fear of want remove:  
Who can faint while such a river  
Ever flows their thirst to assuage;  
Grace, which, like the Lord the Giver,  
Never fails from age to age?”

The Church has proven itself more than content with this version of the prophet's words; and it would be hard to convince her that these glorious things were not spoken of her, and for her, but were designed for the literal Jerusalem in an age succeeding this, called the Kingdom-age.

We are embarrassed with our riches, so great is the number of hymn writers who have enriched our worship by spiritual interpretations of the language of Old Testament prophecy. They have also familiarized us with the typical meaning which they have put on names and places in Old Testament history. Egypt is bondage; Canaan is rest; Zion is the Church; Jerusalem is the home of the blest. The worshipping assemblies who have used their hymns to waft their praises on high, have been happy in the assurance that the poetic instinct of the hymn writers did not mislead them, but gave them the meaning which the spirit of God breathed into the Old Testament writings. For eight hundred years the hymn that welled from the heart of Bernard, the Monk of Cluny, has been a source of comfort to saints "home sick for heaven":

“Jerusalem the golden,  
With milk and honey blest!  
Beneath thy contemplation  
Sink heart and voice oppressed.  
I know not, O I know not,  
What joys await us there;  
What radiancy of glory,  
What bliss beyond compare.

They stand, those halls of Zion,  
All jubilant with song,  
And bright with many an angel  
And all the martyr throng.  
The Prince is ever in them,

The daylight is serene;  
The pastures of the blessed  
Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;  
And there, from care released,  
The song of them that triumph,  
The shout of them that feast;  
And they who with their Leader  
Have conquered in the fight,  
For ever and for ever  
Are clad in robes of white."

Of course, Bernard was justified in using Jerusalem as the name of the city in which the saints shall make their eternal home. Was he not also justified in placing the throne of David in that city, as the center and source of Messiah's everlasting Kingdom? How much higher and more glorious than any that could be built for him in the earthly Palestine?

We must not stop without mentioning the hymn of Dr. Timothy Dwight which is destined to immortality:

"I love Thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode,  
The Church our blest Redeemer saved  
With His own precious blood."

As long as the people of God praise Him in the use of this hymn, so long will they cherish the doc-

trine that the Church of Christ, now flourishing and extending throughout the earth has fallen heir to all the blessings which Psalmist and prophet promised as belonging to the Messianic Kingdom:

“Sure as Thy truth shall last  
To Zion shall be given  
The brightest glories earth can yield,  
And brighter bliss of heaven.”

This brief glimpse into the hymn book reveals the fact that if the modern theory of literalism should be rigidly adhered to, the Church would be deprived of its greatest treasure house of sacred song. It was to the Old Testament that all of our great hymn writers went both for their material and for their inspiration. They found these there, however, only by putting a typical and spiritual meaning on the glowing pictures and glorious promises of the prophetic pages. They have gone no further, however, in this direction than our greatest theologians and commentators. They are assured of a permanent place in the love and gratitude of the Church. For, as Henry Ward Beecher has said: “Hymns are the exponents of the inmost piety of the Church. They are crystalline tears or blossoms of joy, or holy prayers, or incarnated raptures. They are the jewels which the Church has worn; the pearls, the diamonds and precious stones formed into amulets more potent

against sorrow and sadness than the most famous charms of wizard or magician. And he who knows the way hymns flowed, knows where the blood of piety ran and can trace its veins and arteries to the very heart." The Church in nourishing her life on hymns has not only drunk in their pious sentiments, but also their orthodox doctrines, and so these have become a part of her very being, the fibre of her strength, the inspiration of her hopes and joys.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE MILLENNIUM

The word has a mellifluous sound to the ear, and is rich in suggestions to the devout heart. It is composed of two Latin words—mille, a thousand, and annus—a year—literally a thousand years. In usage it means a thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. The difference between Premillenarians, and Postmillenarians is that the one believes that the second Advent will occur before the millennium, while the other believes the millennium will occur before the second Advent. Both parties believe in the second Advent of Christ, and both believe in a millennium. Holding so much in common, these two parties would not seem to be far apart, and the difference separating them would not seem to be great. This may be true with reference to some in both parties. But the rank and file of those who train under these two banners are very far apart in much of their interpretation of Scripture. As a rule the Premillennialists of our day deny that there is any Kingdom of Christ on earth during the present dispensation, that the only Kingdom of Christ is the millennial Kingdom, to be introduced at His second Advent, to be estab-



lished by force, not by persuasion, that this Kingdom will have its capital at Jerusalem, and in its administration will be essentially the same as the theocratic kingdom, ruled over by David and Solomon, that the Jews will have a preferred place in this Kingdom, that it will last a thousand years, to be succeeded by a short period of apostacy, and this to be followed by the judgment of the great white throne. On the other hand Postmillennialists believe that the spiritual forces now at work, the preaching of the gospel, the conversion of sinners, and the building up of the Church, which is the body of Christ, constitute a present reign of Christ on earth—a present Messianic Kingdom. They believe that this Kingdom will continue to increase in extent and power until it brings a period of universal righteousness and peace; this will be followed by the second Advent of Christ, when He will come to judge all nations and to assign to saint and sinner their everlasting destiny. Postmillennialists use the term Millennium merely as a term of convenience, and not in its etymological sense of a thousand years. They do not pretend to assign any limit to the existence of the present reign of Christ on earth. Should Christ make this earth, renovated and purified, the future abode of His risen and glorified people, as some Postmillenarians believe no limit would be assigned to this blessed condition. So then, strictly

speaking, they do not believe in the Millennium, i. e., in any kingdom of Christ which is to last just 1,000 years.

What is the basis of this doctrine of a thousand-year Kingdom? It is most generally based on a passage in the 20th chapter of Revelation. The Jews, however, had a doctrine of the Millennium. They differed as to the time limit. Some say forty years—the wilderness wanderings; one thousand years—one day, Ps. 90: 4; two thousand years—day of vengeance and the year of salvation, Isa. 63: 4; Seven thousand years—the marriage week, Isa. 62: 5. Apart from the time limit, they found their data for a splendid earthly Messianic Kingdom in a literal interpretation of the prophets. True in their Apocalyptic literature, they gave some vein to their imagination: "The city of Jerusalem would be lifted up to a height of some nine miles, and would extend from Joppa to Damascus. The land would spontaneously produce the best dresses and the finest cakes; the wheat would grow as high as palm trees, nay, as high as the mountains, while the wind would miraculously convert the grain into flour, and cast it into the valleys. Every tree would become fruit bearing and would bear fruit every day. All sickness and disease and all that could hurt, would pass away."

The early Christians, many of them being Jews, carried over into the Christian Church this Jewish

conception, some of them as Papias, Irenaeus and Tertullian, rivalling the Apocalyptic writers in picturing the miraculous fertility of the soil. Our modern Premillennialists do not indulge in these fanciful sketches, but willingly allow that they hold in the main the same conception of the Messianic Kingdom as did the Jews. They teach that the Jews had ground to expect a literal fulfillment of their hopes when the Messiah should come. If this be true, I have never seen a satisfactory explanation of why they were disappointed. If Jesus offered them such a kingdom why did they reject it? And if they did reject it because not spiritually prepared for it, why did not Jesus introduce it by force? According to the Premillennialists, the Jews will not be prepared at the second Advent. They are to be gathered together in the home land, but they are not to be converted before Jesus comes. How could they be when this present dispensation is to result in failure? Jesus is not to wait for their conversion, but will set up His kingdom by force, not by persuasion. Why did He not do this at His first Advent? This was predicted by the prophets as what He would do; these predictions had kindled the hopes of the people; and yet for some unexplained reason, Jesus postponed the Kingdom to His second Advent.

Another matter left unexplained is how the Jews are to be converted after Jesus sets up His kingdom

by force. It is not clearly taught that they are to be converted by force, but if not by that, then how? Obviously the only other way is by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Campbell Morgan, and those who joined him in signing the manifesto called "The Significance of the Hour," leave us in some doubt. Proposition No. 4 is, "That Israel will be restored to its own land in unbelief and afterwards converted by the appearance of Christ 'on its behalf.'" This does not tell us what agency, or instrumentality Christ will use. Proposition 6 says: "That under the reign of Christ there will be a further great effusion of the Holy Spirit on all flesh."

If Christ is going to use force to convert the Jews, He is going to do exactly what He refused to do, and forbade His servants to do in the days of His flesh. He will set the seal of His endorsement on Charlemagne's method of converting the Saxons. Charlemagne succeeded after thirteen campaigns, but the remnant of the Saxons that were left after the national conversion hated him with all the ardor of their savage natures. Mohammed has used that method all the while. It has succeeded in making Mohammedans, but not in inspiring love for the conquerors. Will force, even when wielded by Christ produce any better results? I will let Campbell Morgan answer: "That the obedience to the government of Christ during the

Millennium will be feigned is clearly taught in such passages as Psalms 18: 44, and 66: 3, where the Hebrew word translated 'submit' is the same translated elsewhere, 'deceive,' 'deal falsely,' 'dissemble,' 'lie.' All the nations will be under the government of the 'Rod of Iron,' and will be compelled to submit therefore. In heart, however, the great mass will be rebellious to the end, and will eagerly avail themselves of the opportunity to outwardly throw off the yoke and enter upon actual conflict, when it presents itself at the unloosing of Satan." What kind of a Millennium is this? No better than what we now have.

If the Jews are not to be converted by force, then we shall have to fall back on the same spiritual forces that are now at work, but which for some reason our Premillennialist brethren think are not equal to so great an achievement.

The only Scriptural basis for the doctrine of a reign of Christ on earth to last a thousand years is Rev. 20: 7: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." We may well raise the question, whether this one passage is sufficient to furnish a foundation of any solidity for such an important doctrine—a doctrine that finds not one word of support in any of the plain didactic statements of Scripture, but is apparently, not to say, obviously, in the face of many such statements. This passage belongs to the most

difficult book of the Bible. It is an Apocalypse, a class of literature with which our Western mind is not familiar, a literature that teaches by bold figures, by images and symbols, a literature that will not bear and was never intended to bear, a literal interpretation. Has any one ever had the hardihood to interpret verses 1-3 literally? One controversial writer does so in an ironical strain. He says: "According to the Premillennialists an angel takes an iron key and a great chain, a **great** chain, presumably an anchor chain, forged in the Carnegie Steel Mills, and ties Satan up tight with the chain, and then he puts him into an abyss that has a lid on it; he clamps down the lid and then solders it all the way round. Satan is bound so tightly that he cannot even turn over to warm the other side." Of course, no Premillennialist would ever consent to such a literal interpretation. But if we must allow figure down to v. 4, how can we be sure that at that point we can drop the figurative and begin with literal interpretation? Both you and I would grow weary if I should attempt to give even a summary of the many interpretations, put upon this passage by devout and earnest students of God's word. "How literally our author conceived of this reign of martyrs with Christ, who that takes account of the extent to which he poetizes will venture dogmatically to assert?" I find my own views expressed by a writer who says: "In three verses,

(20: 4-6) the basis for a Christian doctrine of an earthly millennium is laid, fateful verses which have produced one of the least useful chapters in the long history of Christian thought."

What about the glowing prophecies of the Old Testament? There is not a word in them about a reign of Christ on earth limited in time to a thousand years, but many words to the contrary. See what Isa. 9: 6, 7, says: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Dr. Scofield, in a foot note, says: "The 'throne of David' is a phrase as definite, historically, as 'throne of the Hohenzollerns,' and as little admits of 'spiritualizing!'" Be it so, then the Messiah is to sit on that throne for ever. If the kingdom, announced in this prophecy, is a splendid worldly kingdom with capital in Jerusalem, and the visible Savior reigning in corporeal form, it is not to terminate at the end of a thousand years in a great and destructive apostasy, but "of the increase of

his government and peace there shall be no end." Dan. 2: 44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Premillennialists set much store by this prophecy. It helps them to fix the date of the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom on earth, but they seem to overlook the fact that it utterly refuses to cut this kingdom short at the expiration of a thousand years. The same might be said of Dan. 7: 13, 14. Our Premillennial brethren never fail to make use of the angel's announcement to Mary, Luke 1: 33; "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end." They tell us that this promise awaits fulfillment. Jesus will not sit on the throne of His father David till His second Advent, and then He will occupy that throne in Jerusalem and reign over restored Israel. If that be true He will continue that reign, not a thousand years, but for ever (*cis tous aionas*) not for an age—the so-called "Kingdom age," but for ages. Leave out that one highly figurative passage in Revelation and there is nowhere in the Old Testament or New a hint that the Messianic Kingdom is to run its course in the brief period of a thousand years.



Doubtless all the prophecies are to have their fulfillment in the sense that God intended. But they are all cast in a Jewish mould, and use Jewish names and institutions as a medium for conveying truth. The Messiah is called David in the following passages: Jere. 30: 9; "But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I shall raise up unto them." Ezke. 34: 23, 24: "And I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David; he shall feed them and he shall be their shepherd. And I, the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it." Ezek. 37: 24, 25: "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob, my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."

His Kingdom centers about Jerusalem, and Zion, and His people are called Israel. But we never identify the Messiah with David; why then should His kingdom be identified with Jerusalem, or His people with the Jews? Especially when we have the plain, didactic statements of the New Testament to guide us to a different interpretation.

Abraham is the father of many nations. That is to say, many Gentile nations have the same right as the Jews to call Abraham father. "If ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Paul in describing the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, says the blessing promised is "of faith that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, (that is, the Jews) but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." And again Paul says: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Thus we can all be Jews, and should all be Jews, in the only sense in which there was ever any spiritual advantage in being a Jew, and that without any marks of the Jewish race in our flesh. "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are the seed." We see from these and like passages of Scripture how completely the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile was broken down. I believe it is forever broken down. Jew though he was to the core, there is a note of exultation in Paul's voice when he says: "Where there is neither

Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free; but Christ is all and in all."

I am sure Paul could not look forward with relish to going back to the sacrificial rites of the Levitical law, to which he refers as "weak and beggarly elements of the world." It would indeed be a revolution backward for those Old Testament prophecies to have a fulfillment in such sense as would again make a racial distinction a passport to God's favor.

When we give up the literal interpretation for the spiritual, as we are simply bound to do, in order to make the old Testament harmonize with the New, then we can properly hold that those prophecies are even now in process of fulfillment. Abraham is rapidly becoming the "father of many nations." The gospel is spreading its conquests around the world. The Redeemer's praises are being sung in nearly all the languages of earth. While such fulfillment as we should like to see may still be far from accomplished, yet progress is being made, and the progress is with ever increasing rapidity. Let us recall Peter's words: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." We may well believe that this is still the Lord's attitude of mind. He is still long-suffering, and by no means in so great

haste as some of His servants are to cut the work short in righteousness and exchange the day of salvation for the day of vengeance.

One gets the impression from much that our Premillennialists say, that they think rather poorly of the present dispensation, and they are impatient to see the end of it, and get to the really great things that God has planned. According to Dr. Scofield, this day of grace is a kind of after thought, or as Dr. Campbell Morgan calls it, an "interpolation,"—it was not in God's plan as that plan stands revealed in prophecy. There was no period of preparation for it in the preceding dispensation—the preparation there was entirely for the introduction of an earthly Messianic Kingdom, or rather for the re-establishment of the old theocratic kingdom in the Davidic line. After Christ's rejection, but not till then God revealed his secret purpose to use an interval, represented Dr. Morgan says by Daniel's lost week, to gather out of the nations a church to be Christ's bride. They see no serious design on God's part to do any great things during this age in which we live. So they are eagerly watching for the Rapture which is to finish the present task. Then we shall see something on a grand scale—a scale so grand as to fill the entire vision of the Old Testament prophets. From the days of Moses to the days of Malachi they saw nothing but this.

It seems to me that one not obsessed with this idea of a Millennium would get an entirely different impression from reading the words of the New Testament writers. Isn't there something sublime and sweeping in that purpose of God announced by Jesus: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Has God ever announced a greater purpose than this? Is a purpose to set up a world kingdom of even more than Solomonic grandeur, of greater breadth and compass than this? And yet this purpose of giving His son as an expression of His love for a lost world is finding its unfoldment in this age. Jesus follows this wonderful announcement by saying that He came "not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." And John says, "He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world." The writer to the Hebrews says that "by the grace of God Jesus tasted death for every man." In his epistle to Titus, Paul says, "the grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to all men." Such words seem to me to have a marvellous scope—world-wide, race embracing. The great commission is in keeping with them: "Go ye, therefore, and make Christians of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever I have commanded you." Jesus was not embarking on any contracted, desultory, or haphazard undertaking. He proposed through His disciples, empowered and sustained by His unremitting presence, to make God's love for a dying race of sinners effective in delivering that race from death. Has God ever disclosed anything greater or more gracious than this? Yet this divine, world-embracing scheme of infinite mercy, this scheme born in the compassionate heart of God, revealed by the lips of His only begotten Son, and made effective through the dying love of that Son is the crowning distinction of this dispensation. Why should we be in a hurry to see this scheme cut short? If it has meant everlasting life to us, and is carrying the same blessings to millions of our fellow-sinners, why should we wish to see an end of God's long-suffering? If we will but give God time enough, He may yet fill the earth with His glory by the slow method of His grace.

But that is just it, we cannot give Him time, say our friends, before the second Advent. That must be imminent for Jesus bade His disciples: "Watch, for ye know not the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." And the apostles taught the Christians to live in a state of expectancy. Perhaps more is made of these Scriptures than a sober interpretation will justify. Did Jesus wish His disciples to live in the expectation that his second

Advent would occur before their death? Is it possible that He believed that Himself? Did He expect the commission which He gave to His disciples to make Christians of all nations to be fulfilled in that brief time? Was He thinking of so short a space when he said, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?" To my mind this is preposterous. But if Jesus was not expecting it, we should be chary of saying that He meant to excite such expectation in His disciples. On the other hand did He know that He would not return for something like two thousand years? If so, and He wished His disciples to live in a state of expectancy, may we not say that He would have us live in a state of expectancy, if He knew that He would not come for another two thousand years? And the same thing in turn with the disciples who live two thousand years hence? In other words, since the lapse of two thousand years is not inconsistent with those Scriptural statements that encourage expectancy, why should four thousand, or eight thousand years be? Is it not obvious on reflection that those Scriptures, stressed so much by Premillennialists, do not afford us any criteria for judging when the second Advent will occur?

It is said that Jesus would not have bidden His disciples watch if He had not intended to return before the Millennium. On the same ground may

it not be said that He would not have bade them watch if he had known that He would not return till after their death. Astronomers tell us that Halley's comet, which some of us saw in 1910 will not return again till 1985. Suppose a wise old astronomer should come to a man ignorant of this fact and say: "Be on the constant lookout for Halley's comet, for it is a sight worth seeing, and you know neither the day nor the hour when it will appear." What would you think of the astronomer's sincerity? True the man does not know the day nor the hour, but the astronomer who bids him watch knows that the man will be as dead as the proverbial door nail before the comet makes its appearance.

Such considerations can hardly be expected to have any weight with those who like Dr. Scofield believe that Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of heaven at hand when he had determined to put it off till after the close of this dispensation. He made the nearness of the Kingdom a ground of appeal for repentance, knowing at the time that the Kingdom would not come for weary centuries after those to whom the appeal was made were dead and eaten of worms.

We may not be able to explain satisfactorily all that Jesus and the apostles say about His coming. But the explanation is found in part by the fact that Jesus comes in more ways than one. He



comes in grace and in judgments many times before He shall finally come visibly in the clouds of heaven. Take one illustration. Christ to comfort His disciples on the night of His betrayal said: "If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am there ye may be also." So far as I know all Premillennialists say that the coming here is the second Advent. He has not yet fulfilled the promise. I can not see much comfort in a promise that waits for thousands of years for fulfillment. I think He did come and receive them to Himself, and that all these centuries they have been where He is. Such was the promise to the penitent thief—such was the expectation of Paul. In each case we must determine for ourselves whether the coming is spiritual or bodily.

After all there is much we cannot understand. Doubtless some of you will still prefer to be Premillennialists. If so, my parting advice is, do not make a hobby out of it. There is much else in the Bible that is good.

"Well then, you do not believe in any millennium?" Frankly, I do not. I do not believe that Jesus is going to establish any political kingdom here on this earth. To my mind for Him to set up a throne in Jerusalem and play the role of a great world-conqueror, would be for Him to make of His second Advent an occasion of humiliation almost

as great as that of His first Advent. The difference between His position as a servant and his position as an earthly king, however splendid His Kingdom, is a negligible difference in comparison with the difference between that kingly position and His present position. He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, far above all principalities and powers. He is clothed with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; before Him stand ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand thousands minister unto Him; and all authority in heaven and earth is committed unto His hands. God the Father hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name. To stoop from that position to a throne in Jerusalem, to be surrounded with a body guard of helmetted soldiers, and to be served by an army of government officials, to carry on the administration of the old Davidic kingdom after the same old methods of law enforcement, would be to shrivel His infinite glory to the dimensions of a tawdry oriental court, and to cut down His boundless kingly functions to the limited sway of a magnified Charlemagne. No, I do not believe in any such degradation of my divine and adorable Savior as that.

But how about a millennial Kingdom of a spiritual character? I do not believe there is any Scriptural basis for a kingdom of any kind that is to last

only a thousand years. I believe that this present Kingdom of God, this present Messianic, Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ, is to last not a thousand years, but for ever. I believe, as our standards teach, that the only change is to be a change in degree of excellence until the Kingdom of grace shall be merged in the Kingdom of glory, the Church Militant into the Church Triumphant. I believe that the second Advent will usher in, not a great worldly kingdom, but the general judgment. This is the teaching of our standards, and plainly the teaching of the Apostles' Creed. "He ascended on high and is seated at the right hand of God, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." It is after the judgment that the kingdom takes on its highest and final form. "Come ye blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." O that prepared Kingdom, prepared by the hand of infinite love, with all the resources of the universe to draw upon! with every tear wiped away, with every fear lulled to rest, with sickness, pain and death forever banished, with every eye kindling with immortal life, and every heart swelling with everlasting love, what must it be to be there? I want us all to know by sweet and blessed experience what it means when our journey here is over. This is better, according to my taste, than any earthly kingdom that any fancy of man has ever pictured.

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