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## Notes Editorial and Critical

### Alacrity in Consigning Old Things to the "Scrap-Heap"

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In an editorial of wide-reaching significance, the New York "Nation" recently called attention to an illustration of the adage that "a little learning is a dangerous thing", in "the readiness with which the mass of easy-going up-to-date people accept as a finality, what they are given to understand is the latest word of science, history, etc., as to the worthlessness or error of the results obtained by the great men of former days".

In his address at the opening of the Palmer Physical Laboratory at Princeton, printed in the current issue of "Science", Dr. Elihu Thomas "lays down the law in one such case". The instance was the lightning-rod, of which Dr. Thomas said:

"There seems to be a tendency among the uninformed to regard it as an old-fashioned and useless if not a dangerous contrivance"; whereas "the Franklin rod when properly installed undoubtedly secures practical immunity from lightning damage".

The editorial continues:

"There are a hundred directions in which there is altogether too much of a tendency, among the uninformed—and among the well-informed—to accept with cheerful alacrity the verdict that this or that achievement of the

past must be thrown into the scrap heap".

But the great illustration of the deplorable tendency, which is here so forcefully and justly condemned, is to be seen in the cheerful alacrity with which the solid Biblical scholarship of the past generation, not to say of the past ages, is consigned to the scrap-heap. Many regard the Bible, taken as it stands with its own account of itself, as an "old-fashioned, useless, if not dangerous" book. The results in this instance are bound to be overwhelmingly disastrous. To despise the protection of the lightning-rod is merely to dishonor a great philosopher and jeopard property; but to discredit the Scriptures on the basis of the same pseudo-science is to dishonor God and imperil the soul.

The familiar lines,

"We think our fathers fools so wise we  
grow,

No doubt our wiser sons will think us so",

may prove painfully true for the present generation, in a slightly different sense from that intended by the poet. The boasted wisdom of the present, with its supercilious condescension towards the past, may be exploited by a future generation as the merest folly, and the true wisdom sought in our despised forefathers.

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tain the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who was among you, and, in the presence of the then living, accurately and firmly taught the word of truth, who also, in his absence, wrote you an epistle, from which ye may edify yourselves in the faith given to you, which is the mother of us all, hope following after, and love to God and to Christ and to neighbors leading further".

Besides the evidential value of his Epistle that appears in the foregoing, the life and history of Polycarp have great eviden-

tial value also. He lived near the time of Christ. He was personally acquainted with those who were personally acquainted with Christ. He knew the trustworthiness of the alleged facts of Christ's career. He knew the truths of Christianity which we have to-day. He knew that He and they were worth dying for; and he died for them. His intelligent faith may well serve as a broad basis, a firm foundation, and a powerful buttress to our own.

## The Present and the Future Kingdom\*

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### I. The Old View and the New, and Their Resemblance and Difference

We have already seen that our Lord makes a sharp distinction between the Old Testament order of things and the kingdom of God, and in doing this conforms to that side of the Old Testament representation which itself looks upon the kingdom as future. Now the very important question arises: How did he conceive of the coming of this kingdom both as to time and manner?

Until not long ago the view quite generally prevailed and was thought to be in harmony with Jesus' own teaching, that the coming referred to might be conceived of as a lengthy process covering ages and reaching its consummation by a sudden crisis at the end coinciding with the second coming of Christ and the end of the present world. And this prolonged process, in distinction from the final crisis, was supposed to consist in our Lord's view of essentially inward, spiritual, invisible changes. The kingdom, it was believed, comes when the gospel is spread, hearts are changed, sin and error overcome, righteousness cultivated, a living communion with God established. In this sense the kingdom began its coming when Jesus entered upon his public ministry, his work upon earth, including his death, was part of its realization, the disciples were in it, the whole

subsequent history of the church is the history of its gradual extension, we ourselves can act our part in its onward movement and are members of it as a present organization.

In recent years, however, this view has been subjected to severe criticism by a certain group of writers and rejected as unhistorical. It is claimed, that Jesus took an entirely different view of the matter than that outlined above. Jesus did not for a moment think that by his prophetic activity or by any spiritual changes thus wrought among Israel, the kingdom would come. All that he meant to accomplish by his labors was merely preparatory to its coming: the people had to be made ready for its appearance. To introduce the kingdom was God's work, not his. No man could do anything towards either hastening or delaying it. And when it came it would come at one single stroke, by a sudden supernatural interposition of God, in a great world-crisis, consequently not for a part but with its whole content all at once, fulfilling all the promises, giving the signal by its arrival for the end of the present world. And this stupendous event Jesus expected to happen in his lifetime, or, after he had attained to the certainty of his intervening death, at least within the time of the then living generation.

Before endeavoring to test which of these two opposing views is in accord with our

\*This is drawn from Professor Vos's book, "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church", published by the American Tract Society.

Lord's teaching, we must carefully note *the real point of divergence* between them and must also make clear to ourselves *what issues are at stake* in our decision in favor of the one or the other.

The two views have this in common, that they both recognize the coming of the kingdom in its final absolute sense to have been associated by Jesus with the end of the world. The older view therefore is inclusive of the more recent one, and the difference arises from the fact that the former affirms something more which the latter denies. The sole point in dispute concerns our right to ascribe to Jesus such a conception of the kingdom that he could also find the beginning of its arrival in the purely spiritual results of his labors and accordingly extend this gradual coming of it over an indefinite period of time.

But this sole point at issue is fraught with the gravest consequences as it is decided one way or the other.

For, *first of all* it involves the question of the infallibility of our Lord as a religious teacher. If he expected and announced only one coming of the kingdom and that to happen shortly within his lifetime or the lifetime of that generation—then there is no escape from the conclusion that the outcome has proved him mistaken.

*Secondly*, the distribution of emphasis in our Lord's teaching becomes essentially different if we adopt the most modern view on this matter. By common consent the center of gravity in his preaching, that to which he attaches supreme importance, is the kingdom. Now, if we may believe that this kingdom was to him in part identical with the existence of certain spiritual states, such as righteousness and communion with God, then these receive with the kingdom the highest place in our Lord's estimation of values. If, on the other hand, these lie outside of the kingdom and are mere preparatory states, then they lose their central position and become means to an ulterior end consisting in the kingdom.

*In the third place*, the controversy affects the character of our Lord's ethics. The advocates of the recent view believe that Jesus' conviction with reference to the rapidly approaching end of the world largely colored his ethical views, in that it pre-

vented him from developing a positive interest for the duties which pertain to this present life.

*Finally*, the conception of our Lord's character itself may be said to be involved. Some at least who ascribe to him such high-strung expectations seek to explain this on the theory that he was an ecstatic visionary person, rather than a man of calm, equable spiritual temper. It thus appears that the aspect of our Lord's kingdom-doctrine now under discussion is interlinked with the gravest problems touching the value and authority of his character and work in general.

It must be admitted that the Old Testament does not distinguish between several stages or phases in the fulfilment of the promises regarding the kingdom, but looks upon its coming as *an undivided whole*. John the Baptist also seems to have still occupied this Old Testament standpoint. That, however, was due to the peculiar character of prophecy in general, in which there is a certain lack of perspective, a vision of things separated in time on one plane. We may not argue from this, that Jesus, who was more than a prophet and stood face to face with the reality, must have been subject to the same limitations. Nor are we justified in saying, that because contemporary Judaism took such a view of the matter, Jesus likewise must have held this. For, on the one hand, Judaism was no norm for him; on the other hand, within Judaism itself a distinction between successive stages in the fulfilment of the Messianic promises had already arisen.

We have seen that the Jews were accustomed to look forward not so much to an entirely new and first arrival of the kingdom, but rather to a manifestation of God's rule in a higher form. And even within the limits of this future manifestation of the kingdom stages had begun to be distinguished. The idea of a preliminary Messianic kingdom on earth lasting for a definite number of years, to be followed by the consummation of the world and an eternal kingdom under totally new conditions may possibly have been developed as early as our Lord's day. In the later teaching of the New Testament a somewhat similar distinction certainly exists, as when

Paul distinguishes between the present reign of Christ, dating from the resurrection, and the final state after he shall have delivered the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 23-28).

The view, therefore, that the kingdom might be present in one sense, and yet have to come in another, did not lie beyond the doctrinal horizon of Judaism even, and we must *a priori* reckon with the possibility that in some form or other this view may appear also in the teaching of Jesus. In point of fact certain statements of Jesus concerning the kingdom as an inward spiritual state strongly resemble the Jewish representation, e. g., the words in Mark x. 15 about "receiving the kingdom of God" sound like an adaptation of the Jewish figure which speaks of "taking up the yoke of the kingdom of heaven". Cf. also Matt. xiii. 52.

The difference between this Jewish representation and Jesus' idea of the preliminary kingdom lies in this, that according to the Jewish views the kingdom is *always there*, it being only a question whether man will take it upon himself; whereas according to Jesus, who thought less of human efforts, but had a deeper insight into the sinfulness of man and a higher conception of what the true reign of God involves, even this partial kingdom must first come through an act of God before man can be invited to receive it.

As to the other point of contact in the Jewish expectation, it should be remembered that the intermediate kingdom was

to begin with the appearance of the Messiah. If then Jesus regarded himself even while on earth as the Messiah and as engaged in Messianic work, which we have no reason to doubt, he must also have looked upon the stage of this earthly Messianic labor as a provisional stage of realization of the kingdom. Of course here again he transformed the Jewish conception by his spiritualizing touch into something entirely different and infinitely higher than what it was before.

Coming to the facts themselves, we observe that no one denies the presence of the idea of a spiritual provisional kingdom in the gospel record of Jesus' teaching as it lies before us. The view that Jesus did not entertain this idea, of necessity involves ascribing to the Evangelists an unhistorical representation of what our Lord actually taught. It is alleged that the gospel-tradition on this point was colored by the later development of things, which showed that a long time had to intervene between the first and second coming of the Lord and therefore compelled the assuming of a provisional kingdom of protracted duration. Upon this critical phase of the question our present limits and purposes forbid us to enter. We only note it to remark that for those who hold to the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels no doubt can here exist. The present spiritual kingdom is by common consent plainly recognized in such sayings as Matt. xi. 11; xiii. 41; xvi. 19.

## II. Exegetical Study of the Teachings on the Kingdom

Apart, however, from critical attempts to eliminate this element from Jesus' teaching efforts have been made to attain the same object *by means of exegesis*, and into these we must briefly look while examining the available evidence.

Clearest of all seem the words spoken by our Lord in answer to the Pharisees who had accused him of being in league with Beelzebub:

"If I by the Spirit (Lk. finger) of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you".

The underlying supposition of this argument is, that, where the kingdom of Satan

is destroyed, there of necessity the kingdom of God begins. If the former already took place at that time, then the latter also had become a present reality. Now it has been urged, that this saying proves nothing in favor of the usual conception of a spiritual kingdom to be gradually realized, because our Lord might look upon the casting out of demons and other miracles as *signals of the rapidly approaching final coming of the kingdom*, the beginning as it were of the end.

In answer to this we observe that, even if this were a correct interpretation, the presence of a certain element of *gradual-*

ness in our Lord's conception of the matter would thereby be in principle admitted. The coming would not be entirely abrupt, there would be not only premonitions but actual anticipations.

But it is impossible to interpret the words in the above sense, because at an early point of his career our Lord looked forward to his death as something that had to intervene *before all things could be fulfilled*; so that he could not have regarded his conquest over the demons as immediately preceding and heralding the end. His meaning must be, that when Satan's power ceases, a new order of things begins, which *in itself* is equivalent to the rule of God. In one respect only it will have to be conceded that the saying under discussion *does not embody the full idea of the spiritual kingdom of God*. It proves the actual presence of the kingdom at the time of our Lord's ministry, but does not directly affirm that this kingdom has its reality in inward, invisible states. The casting out of demons like other miracles belongs rather to the outward, visible sphere.

The same qualification will have to apply to another passage, at least in one of the two renderings of which it is capable. According to Lk. xvii. 21, Jesus answered the question of the Pharisees as to the time of the appearance of the kingdom of God by declaring "behold the kingdom of God is ἐν τῷ ὑμῶν". This may mean: "within you", or it may mean "in your midst". In the former case both the spiritual nature and the present reality are affirmed, in the latter case only the presence of the kingdom in some form at the time of speaking is implied.

Recently it has been asserted that, on the rendering "in your midst", even the last-mentioned inference is not warranted, because our Lord speaks of the future, and means to say: at its final appearance the kingdom of God does not come so as to be subject to observation or calculation; people will not be able to say, "Here or there", lo, all at once it will be in your midst. But this is untenable, because from other sayings we know, that the final coming of the kingdom is preceded by certain signs and in so far is actually subject to observation and calculation.

We must choose between the two renderings given above, and of these, the second, "in your midst", deserves the preference for two reasons: first, because it suits best the purpose of the question of the Pharisees, which was as to the *time* of the coming of the kingdom, not as to its *sphere*, and because of the unbelieving Pharisees it could scarcely be said that the kingdom was "*within*" them. Our Lord means to teach the enquirers that, instead of a *future* thing to be fixed by apocalyptic speculation, the coming of the kingdom is a *present* thing, present in the very midst of those who are curious about the day and the hour of its sometime appearance.

Now this does not directly explain how the kingdom is present. The view remains possible that Jesus referred to miraculous works as one form of the manifestation of God's royal power, in which case this saying would not carry us beyond the foregoing about the casting out of demons. But the view is equally plausible, that he referred to the establishment of God's rule in the midst of Israel through the spiritual results of his labors.

Another statement which clearly teaches both the actual presence of the kingdom and its spiritual form of existence is Matt. xi. 12; Lk. xvi. 16. Here "the law and the prophets" are said to extend until John, that is to say, the prophetic looking-forward dispensation of the old covenant reaches its close in John: from there onward begins a dispensation in which the kingdom of God is the theme no longer of prophecy, but of gospel-preaching, therefore is no longer future but present. John himself is not in this kingdom while others are.

This, of course, can not apply to the final kingdom, for from this Jesus certainly could not have excluded the Baptist. It can only mean, that John does not share in the privileges made available in the new order of things introduced by Jesus' work, because he virtually continued to stand on the basis of the law and the prophets, on the basis of the old covenant. And these privileges to which John had no access certainly consisted not in the mere opportunity to witness the miracles of Jesus as external acts; a participation of inward spiritual blessings must be referred to, for

on account of this our Lord pronounces the smallest or smaller in the kingdom greater than John, and we know from other sayings that Jesus measured true greatness in a different way than by contact with his miracles.

The well known saying from the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things (i. e., food and raiment) shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33), may also be quoted in this connection. Even though the view that righteousness is here *present* righteousness, and as such a closer specification of the kingdom, should be subject to dispute, the fact remains that the kingdom itself appears as a possession obtainable in this life. For food and clothing are here represented as something to be added not to the seeking of the kingdom but to the kingdom itself, and, it goes without saying, that this is applicable only to the kingdom in its present state of existence.

Most clearly, however, both the present reality and the internal nature of the kingdom are taught in some of the great parables, Matt. xiii.; Mk. iv.; Lk. viii.

In the parable of the wheat and the tares the kingdom appears as a state of things in which the good and the bad still intermingle. The same is true of the parable of the fish-net. Here, then, obviously our Lord speaks of the kingdom in a form *different from its final form*, which is represented as beginning with the separation between the two kinds.

Now these two parables, and the interpretation of the second, especially in Matt. xiii. 36-43, are said to betray the influence of later conceptions. But what shall we say about the one of the mustard seed and the leaven? It can not be denied that Jesus here conceives of the kingdom as a growing organism, a leavening power, conceptions which will scarcely apply to anything else than to a spiritual order of things. To interpret these as describing the immense contrast between the small beginning of things in Jesus' miracles and the great world-renewing conclusion of his work soon to be witnessed is, it seems to us, a forced exegesis, which unnecessarily charges Jesus with an artificial use of these figures so exquisitely chosen and

so strikingly applied on the common view.

Finally, it should be noted that in connection with these parables Jesus spoke significantly of "the mysteries" or "the mystery" (Mk.) of the kingdom of heaven. The most plausible explanation of this statement is, that it refers not so much to the parabolic form of teaching as to the principal idea embodied in some of these parables. What else could so suitably have been designated by Jesus "a mystery", in comparison with the Jewish expectations, as the truth that the kingdom comes gradually, imperceptibly, spiritually?

It appears from the foregoing that it is impossible to deny to our Lord the conception of *an internal kingdom* which as such comes not at once but in a lengthy process.

Some writers, recognizing the necessity of this, are yet unwilling to admit that it was *a conception held by Jesus from the beginning of his ministry*. In their opinion his mind underwent a development on the subject; beginning with the expectation of a kingdom to appear suddenly by an immediate act of God, he afterwards became convinced that the opposition offered to his person and work rendered this impossible, that the kingdom of glory could not immediately be realized, and thus was led to believe, that only on its internal, invisible side the rule of God could even now be established. The opposition encountered would lead to his death, but death would be a transition to an exalted state, which would in turn be followed by his coming with the clouds of heaven and the establishment of the kingdom in its full final form.

A single glance at the Gospels, however, will show how impossible it is to distribute the sayings relating to the present and final form of the kingdom in such a way as to make out a period at the beginning of which Jesus knew only the latter. Some of the clearest utterances regarding the spiritual coming of the kingdom belong to a comparatively early stage of his teaching, cf. Matt. xi. 11; Mk. ii. 18-22. Nor do the general arguments adduced in favor of this hypothesis have sufficient force to commend it.

It is true Jesus began with representing

the kingdom as future, but this applied at the beginning equally to its spiritual, and to its visible, final realization. He urged the disciples continually to seek after the kingdom, but this only implies that within them it has to come ever increasingly. He speaks of the eschatological kingdom as "the kingdom" absolutely, but this mode of speech is not confined to the early period of his teaching: it occurs also later, at a time when he is admitted to have been familiar with the idea of an immanent kingdom. He could thus speak because only at the end of time will the kingdom in its ideal completeness appear. This does not exclude that he recognized less complete embodiments of the kingdom-idea as present long before.

Again, it is true that he does not at first announce himself as Messiah, and from this the inference might be drawn that with his Messiahship he put also the coming of the kingdom into the future. This inference would be correct, if restraint in the announcement of himself as Messiah had proceeded from *the conviction that he was not as yet the Messiah, nor his present work Messianic work* in the strict sense of the term. In point of fact Jesus kept his Messianic claims in the background for pedagogical reasons, while perfectly conscious that he was exercising Messianic functions.

The correct view on this point is that he distinguished *two forms of Messianic activity*, one on earth in humility, one from the throne of glory; and, corresponding to this, *two forms of the kingdom*, one invisible now, one visible at the end, and, thus understood, the two-sidedness of his Messianic consciousness affords a striking parallel to the two-sidedness of the kingdom-conception.

On the whole, therefore, we have no reason to believe that in our Lord's subjective apprehension of the truth there was any appreciable progress on this important subject within the limits of his public ministry.

In Jesus' *objective teaching*, on the other hand, as distinguished from his *subjective consciousness*, a certain development in the presentation of truth concerning the kingdom can not be denied.

We are able to affirm this, not so much

from a comparison of the utterances belonging to the earlier or later periods. This would be difficult since the material in our Gospels is not all arranged on the chronological plan. The fact appears rather in this way, that *at two points in our Lord's ministry* a certain phase of the doctrine of the kingdom is introduced with such emphasis as to mark it relatively new. These two points are the occasion on which our Lord uttered the great kingdom-parables and the announcement of his passion near Caesarea Philippi.

From the manner in which the great *parables* draw the distinction between the immanent and eschatological coming of the kingdom, and from the elaborateness with which Jesus here describes the gradual, invisible character of the former as resembling the process of organic growth, we are led to infer that *previously this principle had not been accentuated in his teaching*. This does not mean that he had hitherto abstained from referring to the spiritual side of the subject. We have seen above that the opposite is true. It simply means, that, up to this point, while sometimes predicating of the kingdom things true of it in its purely spiritual stage, sometimes predicating of it things of eschatological character, he did not on purpose formulate the difference and the relation between the two, but treated the kingdom as a unit of which both classes of statements could be equally affirmed.

The *historical explanation of this peculiarity* is probably to be sought in our Lord's desire to keep in close touch during the first period of his ministry with the Old Testament type of teaching, which, as we have seen, did not as yet distinguish between periods and stages in the realization of the kingdom. Thus in condescension to Israel he took up the thread of revelation where the Old Testament had left it, to give a new and richer development to it soon after in his epoch-making parabolic deliverances.

The new element introduced at the *second critical juncture*, in the region of Caesarea Philippi, concerns the relation of the church to the kingdom and will be discussed afterwards in a separate chapter.

It should be observed that our Lord's

teaching relates to two aspects of the same kingdom, not to two separate kingdoms.

The ancient theological distinction between a kingdom of grace and a kingdom of glory is infelicitous for this reason. In the parable the growing of the grain and the harvest belong together as connected parts of the same process. There is one continuous kingdom-forming movement, which first lays hold upon the inward spiritual center of life by itself, and then once more seizes the same in connection with its external visible embodiment. In the second stage the essence of the first is re-included and remains of supreme importance. The immanent kingdom as at first

realized continues to partake of imperfections. Hence the eschatological crisis will not merely supply this soul of the kingdom with its fitting body, but will also bring the ideal perfection of the inner spirit itself. *Our Lord's doctrine of the two-sided kingdom* thus understood is an eloquent witness to the unique energy with which he subordinated the physical to the spiritual, as well as to the sobriety with which he upheld the principle, that the physical is not to be despised, but appreciated in its regenerated form, as the natural and necessary instrument of revelation for the spiritual.

## "The Historical Jesus":---The Rational View versus the Rationalistic\*

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### I. The Rational Belief in the Historical Jesus Rests on a Broad Basis of Testimony

Children love fairy tales, the ancient peoples loved legends and myths, the Middle Ages loved wonder tales. Ours is a scientific era, that has exchanged legends for history. What our age asks for is the exact fact in any case.

This is particularly true with respect to Jesus. Men of a scientific spirit are not interested in the metaphysical speculations of Athanasius, but they are deeply interested in a Jesus who is as historical as Lincoln or Washington and as real as Cicero or Socrates. We believe in Abraham Lincoln's existence. That belief is based upon the testimony of living men. We believe in Washington upon the testimony of men who lived with Washington, the artists who painted his portraits, the statesmen who were in his cabinet, the soldiers who fought under his leadership. Our belief in Cicero and Socrates rests upon evidence of the same nature, but not of the same quality. Unfortunately, the Vandals and Huns

who looted the Mediterranean cities burned many of the libraries. The belief in Socrates and Aristotle was more slender. Only one copy was found of Aristotle's books, while the eighth book has never been recovered, as it was missing from the manuscript. For that reason our faith in the writings of Caesar and Cicero rests on a very slender thread.

#### 1. Overwhelming Testimony to Jesus

By the same methods of historical criticism scholars have scrutinized the Memorabilia of Jesus. But the materials in his case are larger in quantity. When the scholars of the world assembled in Westminster Abbey, about 1870, to revise the New Testament, they had spread before them not one manuscript, as in the case of Aristotle, but nearly seven hundred manuscripts. They did not have to leap a chasm of fourteen centuries from the time that manuscript was written to the year when Aristotle died, for the old vellum testament found by Professor Tischendorf in the monastery at Mount Sinai goes back, it is believed, to Constantine's request that Eusebius prepare fifty copies of the life of

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