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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Gospels (English publishers, Cambridge University Press; 5s. net), edited by Dr. Shailer Mathews and Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed. It contains a harmony of the Synoptic Gospels in parallel columns, with the Gospel of John appended, all rendered according to the excellent American translation of Dr. Goodspeed. This makes a very convenient pocket edition.

Messrs. Watts & Co. are issuing a series of small books at sevenpence each under the title of 'The Forum' Series. Two of these include Professor Sir Arthur Keith's Presidential Address to the British Association in August last—*Concerning Man's Origin*, and *The Earth, Its Nature and History*, by Mr. Edward Greenly, D.Sc. These are both scientific, but also popular and authoritative, and well worth having.

The sixth *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Yale University Press, New Haven) contains not a few things of interest to others than scholars. A brief sketch of the history of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem founded in 1900, and that of Baghdad, opened in 1923, is followed by a fascinating essay

by W. F. Albright on 'The Jordan Valley in the Bronze Age,' in the course of which the writer, dealing with the Dead Sea, says, 'it seems perfectly rational to assume the correctness of the traditional view that the Cities of the Plain are now buried under the waters of the Dead Sea.' As against most recent criticism, he further defends the substantial historicity of Gn 14, which he regards as based upon an old poetic saga or epic. This illustrates the growing tendency to lay more stress upon tradition than till lately criticism has been inclined to do. Another essay deals with the private archives of a prominent family, composed in a dialect of Accadian, which throw much curious light on the social conditions of the time, and in parts vividly illustrate the Old Testament. W. H. P. Hatch offers a description, with illustrations, of a visit to the Coptic convents of Nitria, a desolate valley in the Libyan Desert. He is of opinion that the ancient blood of Egypt is far better preserved in 'these people'—the Copts—'than is ancient Greece or Rome in the modern Greeks or Italians.' The volume gives us a fine insight into the varied and valuable work of Oriental research, as conducted by Americans.

Our Lord's Teaching on the Kingdom of Heaven.

BY THE REVEREND W. J. SPARROW SIMPSON, D.D., ILFORD.

It is quite unprofitable to argue whether the Fatherhood of God or the Kingdom of God occupied the principal place in the teaching of our Lord. For whichever of these two great themes is regarded as predominant, the fact remains that tremendous stress is laid by our Lord upon the other. Our concern is with His instructions on the Kingdom of God. That this subject held a conspicuous and habitual place in His teaching is beyond dispute.

It may be said with certainty that the phrase which our Lord employed was Kingdom of Heaven, rather than Kingdom of God. For the habitual custom of the Jewish people was to substitute other expressions for the Holy Name. The Book of Daniel furnishes illustrations of this use, when it speaks of the Highest and the King of Heaven. Similarly, in the New Testament, the High Priest calls God 'the Blessed,' and the Prodigal Son

speaks of having 'sinned against Heaven.' Our Lord would almost certainly follow the Jewish use. Indeed, it is significant that the most Jewish Gospel adopts the phrase the 'Kingdom of Heaven,' whereas the phrase 'Kingdom of God' is adopted in writings designed for the Gentile world, where, as H. J. Holtzmann observes, the latter phrase would be more intelligible. It is clear, therefore, that the two are synonymous.

The phrase 'Kingdom of Heaven' was already in common use and had a history before our Lord adopted it. It is therefore indispensable to know what meaning it possessed for the Jewish people. It is all the more essential to know this because the term is nowhere expressly defined by our Lord in His teaching. The idea is evidently regarded as one quite familiar to all His hearers. What, then, was the conception which the term represented to our Lord's contemporaries? There is

little doubt about the answer. Schürer, in his *History of the Jewish People*, shows that the Kingdom of Heaven represented for Jewish thought a Divine Society, a sphere over which Jehovah was Lord and King, partly political but essentially religious, an external association on earth within which the will of God is fulfilled. This Kingdom of Heaven was to be visible within the world. It would have its headquarters at Jerusalem. It was the Kingdom of the Messiah. Over it the Messiah would preside. Deliverance would be secured to Israel, which would be supreme among the nations. Of course, the qualities of this conception varied with the religious insight and spiritual depth of the individual mind. But, broadly speaking, these were the general ideas associated with the Kingdom. What emerges beyond question is that the conception was essentially and profoundly institutional.

That, indeed, is natural, almost inevitable. For all ancient religion is essentially corporate. The individual acquired his value as a member within the community. And further, it is clear the Kingdom of Heaven in the Jewish view 'was not regarded as a human achievement, either individual or social, but as an institution erected by the sovereign act of God' (Cooley, *The Aim of Jesus Christ*). The Kingdom was from Heaven, but upon earth. Not a Kingdom in Heaven and so to be entered only after death. Still less was it regarded merely as a state of mind or inner condition of religious peace (*ibid.* 52, 53).

We may be absolutely certain that when our Lord adopted the phrase 'Kingdom of Heaven' He transfigured it, as He did all other great historic religious terms, filling them all with immeasurably deeper meaning. 'Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit.' But while He glorified all religious phrases, He did not contradict their essential value. And unless He intended by the phrase 'Kingdom of Heaven' to convey an institutional idea, His use of it could only have been for His contemporaries hopelessly misleading.

The fact is that Institutionalism was the essential character of the Religion of Israel in which our Lord grew up. And there is no sign that He ever rejected this principle. On the contrary, He claimed that He had come 'not to destroy, but to fulfil.' That claim must not be minimized. Our Lord's attitude toward the Institution of Israel was never revolutionary or destructive. He seems to regard the Kingdom, whatever contents that term involves, as the natural consummation of Israel's development, provided always that Israel

is prepared to accomplish its divinely intended mission. Indeed, if the hierarchy of Israel had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, it is quite conceivable that the Institutionalism of Israel would have assumed a Christian form, and that no separation between Judaism and Christianity need have happened.

While our Lord's conception of the Kingdom of Heaven is nowhere defined, it is richly illustrated in the Parables. These illustrations are at first bewildering by their variety. But a number of recent foreign theologians, such as H. J. Holtzmann and Feine, have shown that the Parables unmistakably emphasize certain leading characteristics of the Kingdom.

There are parables which regard the Kingdom as a personal and individual possession. It is a treasure which a man must acquire. It is an inward state. There are other parables which regard the same Kingdom as a social and corporate institution. It is compared to a net which gathers of every kind.

These two aspects of the Kingdom must be united. Neither can be excluded from our Lord's teaching. The Kingdom is individual, in separate hearts and lives. But it is also collective and institutional. The Parable of the Treasure emphasizes the personal side of religion. The Parable of the Net as unmistakably emphasizes the social. The Kingdom of Heaven, in our Lord's conception of it, cannot be adequately represented by calling it the reign of God. It is indeed God's reign. But it is a reign over human beings; and over human beings not contemplated in pure isolation, but as associated within a corporate institution.

A third characteristic of the Kingdom appears in the parables. It is future and yet it is present, *i.e.* 'The kingdom of God is at hand' (Mt 4¹⁷), 'The kingdom of God is come upon you' (Mt 12²⁸). It develops and matures. It is in its beginnings insignificant, but grows to completion. It exists here on earth in a mixed, imperfect state. For it includes the worthy and the worthless. It will exist hereafter in a perfect condition by the exclusion of the unworthy. But it was here in our Lord's time, and some who were then living would see it come with power (Mk 9¹). It is placed in the Lord's Prayer to be perpetually before the minds of His people.

One further characteristic of the Kingdom is that it is essentially Messianic. It is the Kingdom over which the Messiah presides. Accordingly, where Christ and His disciples were assembled, there in principle the Kingdom was already realized.

It is supremely important that the Messianic character of the Kingdom of Heaven should be carefully borne in mind. Christ's teaching about the Kingdom cannot be otherwise understood.

To our Lord's teaching about the Kingdom must be added His teaching about the Church.

The doubts which certain critics have suggested whether our Lord could ever have spoken about the Church are felt by various leading scholars to be destitute of any solid proof. Batiffol's reply in *L'Église Naissante* has fairly set those doubts aside. The term 'the Church' was already familiar in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and no conclusive reason can be given why our Lord should not have spoken some Aramaic equivalent to the word.

More serious is the doubt which some have felt whether our Lord, who is thought, from the discourses in St. Matthew, to have expected the speedy end of the world, could have had any intention to found the Church. This difficulty is real. But it depends upon the exposition of the eschatological discourses, which is itself a problem, and by no means solved. Beside those discourses must be set the passages where our Lord undoubtedly speaks as if the end of human history was distant. For example, in Mt 24, 'Many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet' (vv.^{5, 6}). This passage distinctly suggests a considerable period during which a series of events would happen. See further vv.⁷⁻¹³. The same passage further declares, 'this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come' (v.¹⁴). What makes these statements all the more significant is that they come from the same Gospel which reports the eschatological discourses, and, in fact, form an introduction to them; cf. further Mt 10¹⁸, where our Lord predicts that the disciples will be brought before governors and kings for His sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. That again suggests an extended and world-wide mission. Again, when our Lord warns Israel that the Kingdom of God would be taken away from them and given to another people (Mt 21⁴³), the idea implied

is certainly very different from the immediate end of the world. Moreover, the Parable of the Tares affirms that the separation of evil from good is postponed: 'Let both grow together until the harvest.'

St. Matthew then reports our Lord's intention to build His Church. It is a community of men. Authority in it will be exercised by a man. It will exist on earth, and its official actions will be endorsed in Heaven. It is ensured perpetuity.

The relation between the Church and the Kingdom of Heaven is suggested by the very remarkable fact that our Lord combines the mention of the two in one sentence. He will found His Church: He will give to an official in it the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. The keys of the Kingdom will be employed within the Church. What else than the very intimate connexion of the Church with the Kingdom can be thereby intended? As Loisy says, 'Christ proclaimed the Kingdom, and what appeared was the Church.' Do not the two appear as interchangeable?

Significant also is the fact that whereas our Lord, with only two exceptions, invariably speaks of the Kingdom and not of the Church, St. Paul almost reverses this use of terms. He speaks of the Church four times as often as he does of the Kingdom. Is not the reason plain? The Kingdom of Heaven is a Jewish expression and less intelligible to the Gentile world. The Church became the habitual designation for the reality which our Lord proclaimed.

If, with this teaching of our Lord in view, we study the principal actions of His ministry, the whole Gospel proves that He was engaged in the training of the Twelve, with the result that He formed a community. The Twelve were not only united to Himself, but also to one another. They formed a Body which, with the teaching He had given them, was what our Lord at His Ascension bequeathed to the world. Out of the training and instruction of this group arose the Church. He could look on that insignificant Galilean group and say, 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' The Jerusalem community contained three elements of doctrine, ministry, and sacrament. And all these through the action of our Lord. What Christ did throws light on what Christ taught.