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## THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

OUR knowledge of the Church and the Kingdom of God, and of the relation between them, must be derived from the Scriptures—not the New Testament alone but the Old Testament as well. The New Testament is steeped in the Old Testament and we shall never interpret the one without the other.

### I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

An examination of the Scriptural references to the terms shows that it is sometimes called the Kingdom of God, sometimes the Kingdom of Heaven and sometimes the Kingdom. In the first Gospel we find all three terms: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (iii. 2); "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" (vi. 33); "The Gospel of the Kingdom" (iv. 23). C. H. Dodd in *The Parables of the Kingdom*<sup>1</sup> writes: "The two expressions, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven . . . are synonymous." They are also, he says, in our English translation and understanding of them, ambiguous.

The term Kingdom is in English somewhat ambiguous, but it naturally suggests a territory or community. The Greek term βασιλεία which it translates is also ambiguous. But there can be no doubt that the term before us represents an Aramaic phrase well-established in Jewish usage, "The *malkuth* of heaven". *Malkuth*, like other substantives of the same formation, is properly an abstract noun meaning "kingship", "kingly rule", "reign" or "sovereignty". The expression "the *malkuth* of God" connotes the fact that God reigns as King. In sense, though not in grammatical form, the substantive conception in the phrase "the Kingdom of God" is the idea of God, and the term "kingdom" indicates the specific aspect, attribute or activity of God, in which He is revealed as King or Sovereign Lord of His people or of the universe which He created.

We shall never understand the scriptural interpretation of the Kingdom until we have grasped this distinction. It would not only clarify our thinking but also save us from error. Let me illustrate what I mean from Sydney Cave.<sup>2</sup> He states the debt we owe to the "rediscovery" of the term in the nineteenth century and then says:

For the most part they saw in the phrase a meaning which was at once congenial and intelligible to modern men. It was the realm in which God is

<sup>1</sup> *The Parables of the Kingdom* (1935), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ* (1925), p. 11; cf. R. N. Flew, *Jesus and His Church* (1938), p. 30.

trusted as Father, and obeyed as King, and those parables were emphasised which seemed to speak of its gradual extension through the slow but certain victory of those religious and ethical ideals expressed in our Lord's gracious message of the Fatherhood of God and the infinite worth to Him of every human soul. Such a teaching harmonised with the modern belief in the sure progress of the race due to the upward trend of evolution. . . . To-day this interpretation is very confidently rejected by some of our most distinguished scholars. Jesus, they remind us, belonged to His age, not ours. The Kingdom of God as He preached it cannot be modernised.

Let us take one step further with a terse comment from H. Wheeler Robinson: "We are no longer sure that history spells progress."<sup>1</sup> Precisely! But some have wandered far before learning this. Now let us return to Dodd,<sup>2</sup> who has ample support for his contention that the Kingdom of God is the Rule of God. He states two important propositions. (1) He quotes Dalman. "There can be no doubt that in the Old Testament, as in Jewish literature, *malkuth* as related to God always means 'kingly rule' and never 'kingdom'." (2) "There is no hint that the Kingdom of God is Utopia." The very opposite may be the truth. The rule of God may be judgment and rejection as was the case with Israel.

While the Kingdom may in a sense said to be present it is also future. We cannot evade this unless we avoid plain meanings. Yet this is attempted to-day. Edwin Lewis and C. H. Dodd struggle hard against the facts in attempting to prove this viewpoint. Dodd makes some striking admissions. "The Kingdom of God is a present fact . . . but in another sense, the Kingdom of God is something yet to be revealed." Having selected what he claims to be the earliest teachings of Jesus, "The twofold usage of the expression the Kingdom of God is reflected in the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the earliest traditions". This is satisfactory but for the fact that he insists in attempting to disprove what he is admitting! On p. 174 we read: "It seems possible to give to all these eschatological parables an application within the context of the ministry of Jesus." He not only fails to prove this but he acknowledges the fact that the early Christians did not agree, for "when the crisis had passed they [the parables of the Kingdom] were used by the Church to enforce its appeal to men to prepare for the second and final world crisis which it believed to be approaching". Even such an able scholar as Dodd cannot have it every way!

<sup>1</sup> *Redemption and Revelation* (1943), p. xxv.

<sup>2</sup> *The Parables of the Kingdom*, pp. 34-6, 174, 206.

Though there is a tendency towards what is called a crisis theology that denies the future manifestation of the Kingdom, this is quite plainly out of step with the general and obvious trend of Scripture. Thus we find Otto, Niebuhr, Burkitt, H. H. Rowley and others directing attention to this twofold aspect. "The Kingdom of God was for Christ always the future Kingdom of the New Age," wrote Otto.<sup>1</sup> "The Biblical conception of the Kingdom of God is of an ultimate triumph in, or at least at the end of history," states Niebuhr.<sup>2</sup> Actually we cannot escape the conviction that there is a future establishment of the Kingdom taught throughout Scripture. Whether we think of it in terms of what Paul states in 1 Cor. xv. 24, "then cometh the end (*telos*) when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even the Father . . .", or in any other Scriptural terms, the fact is inescapable and cannot be explained away. Take a simple example from the Gospels. In Matthew we read of the Gospel of the Kingdom three times: iv. 23 and ix. 35, "Jesus . . . preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom"; xxiv. 14, "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached . . . then shall the end (*telos*) come". We note that the Gospel of the Kingdom relates itself to the *telos* and it is not too much to say that it attaches itself to Paul's use of the term and idea in 1 Cor. xv. 24, and indeed that the idea is common to Scripture. Now observe the same phrase in Luke: "I must preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God . . ." (iv. 43); "He spake to them of the Kingdom of God" (ix. 11). And this last passage leads us to the eschatological statement regarding what was to follow His death and therefore could not be present, namely the Coming of the Son of Man in glory. The point is that if we study the Gospel of the Kingdom in any of the Gospels it always comes to eschatology and indicates a future aspect of the Kingdom.

Thus we may think of the Kingdom as the eternal rule of God with past, present and future aspects, for "the Kingdom of God is God Himself in His kingly activity". The present aspect finds its consummation in certain events that culminate in the establishment of the Kingdom after those who are "fit" for the Kingdom have been redeemed. Among these events we may see the consummation of the Age, the reconciliation of all things, the return of the King, resurrection and judgment. This undoubtedly is an authentic expression of the belief and teaching

<sup>1</sup> *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* (1938), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> *Beyond Tragedy* (1941), p. 280.

of the apostles and the early Church. "Primitive Christianity was therefore right to live wholly in the future."<sup>1</sup> This end of the age, this new heaven and new earth, is the result of divine intervention. Jesus is coming as King! Interpret this as we may, it is fundamental and integral to the Gospel message. Furthermore, it seems impossible to find satisfaction in explaining it away. "It is hard to see that we are likely to come any nearer to the truth if in order to emphasise those elements in the Gospel records which are least intelligible to us to-day we ignore those elements which are certainly integral to the Lord's teaching, for they could not possibly have been invented by evangelists, who themselves shared in the fervid hope that swiftly and suddenly Christ would manifest Himself with splendour and power."<sup>2</sup> And another writes: "The Church believed that the Lord had said, 'You will see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven'."<sup>3</sup>

A partial explanation of our confusion may be found in the paradoxical nature of Scriptural expressions and in the finiteness of all our thinking. Edwin Lewis<sup>4</sup> reminds us that "it is impossible to compress into a simple brief statement all that is meant in the New Testament by the Kingdom of God. What we can do is to recognise its many-sidedness." And Otto<sup>5</sup> adds: "The expression the Kingdom of God does not cover a strictly unified concept, but rather a complex of connotations." Nevertheless our determination must be to try and appreciate the whole subject rather than surrender any part of it because we cannot understand it or think it is irrelevant.

Perhaps our most serious difficulties are in the sphere of the nature of the Kingdom and the means by which it is to be established. We may say "Thy Kingdom come" with one voice and have numerous ideas as to what the Kingdom is and also how it is to come. After generations of what has been termed "orthodox" thinking there was a revolt in the nineteenth century. It swung too far. There was then a revolt against the revolt. The fashion of applying the theory of inevitable progress gripped theology in the nineteenth century and there were confident assertions that the Kingdom was in the category of things that progress. That was the revolt. To-day,

<sup>1</sup> A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1910), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> S. Cave, *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (1936), p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin Lewis, *A New Heaven and a New Earth* (1941), p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, p. 74.

however, we are equally confident this is not so. "The Kingdom was God's gift and was possible only through God's power."<sup>1</sup> Many have echoed that idea. Lewis<sup>2</sup> expresses it well:

In our own time the Kingdom of God has lost much of its New Testament connotation. Often its association with God is overlooked and men simply speak of "the Kingdom". Nobody would ever speak of "building the Kingdom" who bore in mind the New Testament meaning of the Kingdom of God. . . . It is not a human achievement but a divine gift. . . . Men can never "bring in" the Kingdom, much less "build it". . . . It is under a law not of human evolution but of divine initiative.

Thus within a generation we see the development of widely differing theories as to the nature and means of establishing the Kingdom.

There are at least three distinct theories current about the Kingdom of God:

(1) The Kingdom "grows" on earth and may be "brought in" by individual human effort against evil and on the side of good. This has found in evolution an ideal ally. It has a special affection for any bit of social reform that indicates betterment for man. In theological history it is related to Pelagianism.

(2) The Kingdom is both past, present and future and will be ultimately established after a catastrophic experience such as apocalypticism indicates. Christ is King and will return as Ruler.

(3) The Kingdom is present and has been so since the ministry of Jesus. It cannot be "brought in" by man and is not the subject of an inevitable evolutionary progress. It is transcendent and eternal.

There are many variations and qualifications that ought to accompany these brief outlines. I have merely set them in relief and attempted to summarise their distinctions and essential elements. They may not be as mutually exclusive as their advocates imagine. At the same time there are elements in them that cannot be reconciled.

It seems true to say with Professor Cave:<sup>3</sup>

It seems already clear that the Kingdom as taught by Jesus cannot be identified with a devout philanthropy. It was God, not man, which dominated his thought, and His faith in the future sprang not from the nobility of man nor from the evolutionary process, but from His faith in the transcendent majesty and love of God.

Therefore we conclude that the term, the Kingdom of God, must be explained and understood. When this is done it is seen

<sup>1</sup> *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, p. 15; cf. Otto, *The Kingdom of God*, etc., p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, p. 14.

to be well summarised as the Rule of God. This Rule as to its nature and extent on earth, or should we say as it relates to earth, depends on man's attitude. For example, when the Jews rejected the Kingdom, it still "came", but because of their rejection it was "woe", not "bliss". To those who seek to enter the Kingdom its conditions are altogether different. The Kingdom is not created, established or brought in by man. It is God's gift. This Kingdom is an eternal, transcendent rule and must therefore have a future absolute meaning. This is often referred to in Scripture. Christ will be the Ruler and will deliver the Kingdom to the Father.

So we may say the Kingdom is present *because* God is what He is and also *because* of the Incarnation which in its right context must be seen as a moment in history when the Kingdom "came". This is also true of the ministry and death of Jesus. It is true of Pentecost. This same Kingdom is symbolised in the sacraments. Yet we must also affirm that the absolute establishment of the Kingdom is in the future. God is not yet universally recognised nor is His Rule unchallenged. Evil is rampant. Some day it shall be finally vanquished. H. R. Mackintosh,<sup>1</sup> interpreting Karl Barth, writes: "We are those who wait, we have been reconciled, but we still have to be redeemed"; and "redemption is invisible, inaccessible, impossible, for it meets us only in hope! In the light of Christ the frontier of our existence now is not death but the new promised land".

Already there emerges a distinction between the Church and the Kingdom. Also we may see a task for the Church in relation to the Kingdom in its present and future state.

Kingdom, now, is not royal dignity, royal sovereignty; it is not a district or realm, nor a people or a community, but all these together and intermingled. God's might and holiness and glory, His throne and governing power, His angels and their ordinances, the redeemed holy ones by His throne, the fellowship, the triumphant Church, the new heaven and earth, the transfigured life and the heavenly salvation, the life of eternity and "God all in all"—these belong together here as a unified whole. And this Kingdom is to "come" some day and we are to "enter" it. (Yet, somehow, it is already present in a mysterious way as foretaste and expectation; in faith and regeneration we are, properly speaking, already in it.) All this is meant and for all this a Christian prays when he prays: Thy Kingdom come.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology* (1937), p. 312.

<sup>2</sup> *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, p. 31.

## II. THE CHURCH

For our present purpose we may deal more briefly with this subject. We recognise three usages of the word in Scripture : (1) a local communion; (2) all living Christians; (3) all Christians alive and dead. "To be a Christian is to be a member of a living organism, whose life derives from Christ," wrote H. R. Mackintosh,<sup>1</sup> interpreting Schleiermacher, with which we note an interesting comparison in what Waterhouse<sup>2</sup> writes about Lotze: "Such communion is needful to fulfil man's religious requirements. The invisible Church, free and spiritual, is the communion of God and man, and man and man in God. The visible Church is a visible institution to supply human needs in the religious life." And we note further a similar essence of agreement in Bishop Moule:<sup>3</sup>

The true unity of the Church is in its inmost essence spiritual. Each true member is in direct and vital contact with the glorious Head, through faith, by the Spirit. The worst and deepest *schism* is that which slights that holy bond. . . . The man may be an Episcopalian, by the maturest results of thought and enquiry, and may consistently wish to see a genuine (not exaggerated) Episcopacy universal; yet he will heartily recognise and honour the Church position of his Presbyterian, or Independent, or Baptist, or Methodist brethren. He will prize the divine blessings of Sacraments, and pray that they may be everywhere revered and used, and yet will see in the saintly "Friend" a true member of the eternal Head, and so of the true Body.

This communion is created by the will of God manifested in the life and death of Jesus Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is entered by faith.

This communion has a special place in the will of God. It has a task to perform. That task relates itself to the Kingdom of God, for it is the expounding of the way into the Kingdom. If, for example, we accept the definition of the Kingdom as the Rule of God and accept the assertion that it may actually be exercised over those who rebel against God and are therefore subject to His kingly judgment and consequent rejection, it is plain that the Church and Kingdom are distinct. But we observe that since the Church has the relation to the Rule of God of those who accept the Rule and "strive to enter in at the strait gate" in order to participate in the Kingdom in its ultimate aspect of eternal bliss, and of those who have been instructed by the King

<sup>1</sup> *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> E. S. Waterhouse, *Modern Theories of Religion* (1910), p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Outlines of Christian Doctrine* (1889), pp. 209-10.



to bid all men to the feast, this distinction is not permanent. In fact we may say that to enter the Church is to enter the Kingdom, indeed that membership in the Church brings us into the Kingdom. The Church has the "keys" of the Kingdom. Anglican scholars, including F. R. Barry, W. R. Matthews, A. E. Taylor, who drew up the recent Anglican statement on Doctrine, were right when they claimed "the Church as the society of those who are to 'inherit' the Kingdom".<sup>1</sup>

And yet we hasten to add that in a sense the believer and unbeliever are already in the Kingdom. That is the meaning of the parable of the tares and wheat. After all, the Kingdom is simply the Sovereign Rule of God. This has been too often forgotten.

Let us try and state this a little more definitely. The Church is the communion of all believers. It has a task to perform, namely, the expounding of a message. This message is about Jesus Christ. It proclaims salvation from sin through the sacrifice of Christ. It offers an adequate provision for every possible need of man. W. P. Paterson<sup>2</sup> says this message might be summed in the one word Conversion. "Christianity undertook the task of remaking souls in accordance with a higher pattern . . . the Son of God took human nature to the end that man might become a partaker in divine nature." This, he says, is the message of the Church, and then he says it originated with Jesus.

The work of Jesus in the remaking of souls began with a call to repentance . . . it was a matter of life and death that he should repent and turn to God. The promise was that he would thus enjoy the favour and friendship of the Father on earth and great would be his reward in heaven (Matt. v. 3, vi. 33). It was also sought to draw men to the Kingdom by the promise that those who took His yoke upon them would have rest of soul.

Thus the Church's primary task is not social reform or international alliances for the alleviation of the ills of mankind, but the regeneration of mankind through Conversion. Social reform must follow, but first the Church's unique and necessary message must be applied. The Church's primary task is not Sacramentarianism. The one error is as fatal as the other. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." That was the theme and the experience of the early Church. After Conversion the sacraments appear.

<sup>1</sup> *Doctrine in the Church of England* (1938), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> W. P. Paterson, *Conversion* (1939), p. xiii; cf. p. 47.

The elements of the message proclaimed are well set out in recent works on the subject, particularly in *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*.<sup>1</sup> They are the following :

The prophecies are fulfilled and the new age is inaugurated by the Coming of Christ.

He was born of the seed of David.

He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us out of the present evil age.

He was buried.

He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

He is exalted at the right hand of God as Son of God and Lord of quick and dead.

He will come again as Judge and Saviour of men.

That is to say, they taught the correctness of Old Testament prediction, the central place of the Incarnation, the import of the Crucifixion, the fact of Christ's descent into the grave, the triumph of His resurrection, the fullness of his exaltation and His personal return. Now Dodd connects this with the preaching of Jesus in Mark i. 14-15: "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, The Kingdom of God has drawn near: repent and believe the Gospel!" "This summary provides the framework within which the Jerusalem Kerygma is set." Otto writes somewhat tersely: "The ancient parent document summarised Christ's message as a whole, 'Believe in the good news'." That "good news" was not about evolution, or sacraments, or ethical, or social, or national ideals, but about the Sovereign God whose goodness is manifest in all the Scriptures and who sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. This Saviour does not merely forgive sins. He does more. He readjusts the entire creation. The grandeur of the sweep of this message is all-comprehensive.

And thus we are in a position to discuss the relation of the Church and the Kingdom.

### III. THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

Our conception of this relation will depend upon our definition of the terms Church and Kingdom. Roman Catholics and some Anglicans state quite definitely that the Church and Kingdom are one. This most obviously does not fit the plain meaning of Scripture. It is due to a misconception of the nature of the Kingdom, for it regards the Kingdom, if not in the sense

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, p. 28; cf. p. 18.

of being "Utopia", at least in the sense of being solely the sphere of those who are striving to serve and obey God. This is plainly out of keeping with our Lord's own teaching, for He declares that within the Kingdom there are evil, antagonistic elements. Within the Kingdom the tares grow. In the Church this is not so, for it is plainly the sphere of the redeemed. And even if we claim that these are only "being redeemed", nevertheless some day they shall be redeemed, whereas the same is not true of the warring elements within the Kingdom.

If we think of the Kingdom as the Rule of God—which is what Scripture declares it to be—and the Church as the Communion of those who are redeemed, we have an immediate distinction. The Kingdom is wider than the Church.

When A. B. Bruce wrote, "The Church is only a means to an end. It is good only in so far as it is Christian",<sup>1</sup> he was only half right, for whatever else "it" may be, if "it" is not Christian, it is *not* the Church! At the same time there is truth in the assertion that the "Church is only a means to an end". Oman<sup>2</sup> on Ritschl shows how his idea of the Church and the Kingdom and the possibility of apostasy coloured all his theology. This is a commentary on what Bruce is trying to say. A quotation from Ritschl has a twofold interest at this stage: it shows his idea of the Kingdom as being astray if our definition is correct, and it shows his insistence that the apostate Church is not the Church. "The legally constituted Church, a prey to party spirit, is in no way the Kingdom of God [note how this idea of the Kingdom regards it as the ideal Kingdom of 'bliss'], nor is the statutory order of the Church the Christian religion." Let us add to this another note from Oman, this time on Bishop Butler: "The claim of the papacy to interfere with the civil sovereign rests on one fundamental error, the confusion of the present Church with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a real, a material Kingdom to be established here on earth . . . but Christ did not come to establish it . . . only to prepare for it." In each of these we may find a common idea of the Church as a communion with a task. Despite misconceptions of the nature of the Kingdom, that task is seen plainly as the introduction of man to the Kingdom of God. We would only add this. It is the

<sup>1</sup> *The Kingdom of God* (1889), p. 272. An examination of the chapter, "The Kingdom and the Church", is most interesting to a modern student!

<sup>2</sup> *The Problem of Faith and Freedom* (1906), pp. 354, 389.

introduction of men to the Kingdom of God in its ultimate establishment as eternal bliss that is in mind.

Oman insists that we should think of the Church in terms of "the purpose it should serve". That is an important expression. It is fundamental to our subject. It finds its voice in Scripture and has an echo in many theologians. "The purpose it should serve" relates the Church to the Kingdom, for that purpose is to proclaim the message of God about salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of God in the sense of obedience to the will of God and enjoyment of the ultimate establishment of that Kingdom, after the consummation of all things has been accomplished by the sovereign will of God.

A term that appears and reappears may assist us here. Barth writes of a "transition age" as descriptive of this period of preparation for the future. Niebuhr uses the term "interim period", which he probably borrowed from Schweitzer's *Interimsethik*. A note from Newton Flew may be helpful: "The two assumptions of the theory of *Interimsethik* as set forth by Schweitzer are (i) that the apocalyptic outlook, even for Jesus, involved a profound pessimism as to the present age and therefore a world-negating ethic, and (ii) that the apocalyptic outlook, even for Jesus, involved an essential discontinuity between the present age and the age to come."<sup>1</sup> Then he adds: "Both these assumptions are false. The distinction of the teaching of Jesus is that it spans both ages." What I am interested in is not the exact meaning of what Schweitzer says or Newton Flew's correction but the common assumption of an "interim", a "period between the ages", a time of "transition". That period is the Church's peculiar opportunity; within that lies her present task. "Our time is the time between the ascension and the return of Jesus Christ." This fact and her message and her functions, e.g. preaching and the administration of the sacraments, give to the Church a particular significance and each of these relates to the Kingdom of God. This is the period of waiting for the establishment by God of the Kingdom in its final aspect, of the proclamation of the Kerygma, revealing the only way of entering the Kingdom, and of the symbolising of all this in the Church's functions. Even the Communion of the Lord's Supper is itself an indication of these things. It reveals not only our salvation by the sacrifice of Christ and our mystical participation but also it

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus and His Church*, p. 62.

points to His return, for it is "till He come". We can scarcely find anything more apt at this stage than the excellent section in William Manson's *Jesus the Messiah* on "The Institution of the Lord's Supper". The whole must be read to be appreciated. The conclusion will suffice for our purpose:<sup>1</sup>

The objective significance of the bread . . . stands for the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of Man as something not only offered to God on behalf of men, but—in accordance with the true meaning of sacrifice now at last perceived—offered in their stead. The Son of Man came not only to give His life a ransom for men, but to make them sharers of His sacrifice, and so to claim, commit and consecrate them for the kingdom of Heaven.

The saintly Horatius Bonar reminds us:

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by;  
 Yet passing, points to the glad feast above,  
 Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,  
 The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love.

And so we conclude what is not intended as an exhaustive treatise but rather a provocative survey of a most important theme. It is a theme very much in the foreground of theological thought and one that is important if we are to move towards a better understanding of Church Union. We submit for final consideration a note from early Church literature and one from a theologian of the present day. In the *Didaché* we read the following Communion prayer:

Let Thy Church be brought together into Thy Kingdom from the ends of the earth. Redeem it from all evil, complete it in love and gather it a sanctified Church into Thy Kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it.

And A. R. Vidler writes:<sup>2</sup>

This hoping, this looking forward, this waiting and watching—not for a new order on earth, a new social "set-up" in history, but for the consummation of the Kingdom of God at the end of history—is fundamental for the Christian outlook. One of the deplorable features of modern Christianity . . . is its loss of conviction as to the primacy and ultimacy of the eternal order of being, and therefore its natural but pathetic wish to have its hopes and ideals realised in this world. That is just what the Christian man, of all men, ought to know can never be the case. There can be only partial, fragmentary, transitory realisations of the Kingdom of God in history.

We look for the Kingdom of God and we expect it through the sole agency of the Son of God.

JOHN H. WATSON.

*Melbourne, Australia.*

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus the Messiah* (1943), p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Christ's Strange Work* (1944), p. 65.