

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, AND THE BAPTISTS TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

The following is an extract from *Dialogues on Prophecy*, a work published in England in 1828, and forwarded to me recently by the kindness of a beloved friend in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It appears to be written by a clerical student of prophecy, belonging to the Established Church of that country, which sufficiently accounts for many unscriptural traditions found scattered over its pages; nevertheless, it contains many good things, and of these not few in strict accordance with interpretations which the readers of *ELPIS ISRAEL*, *Anatolia*, and the *Herald*, must be by this time tolerably familiar. The work was sent to me for examination, because of the striking similarity between much of the *Dialogues* and the things set forth in the writing aforesaid. But this is not surprising when it is remembered that the author and myself are both independent students of the Spirit's testimony for Christ through Moses and the Prophets. The teaching of God is *Amen* --the same in all ages and countries, working the same convictions at the north, as at the antarctic poles. But to the extract:

"*Philalethes*. Have you any positive proof the Dissenting Churches have ever held scriptural views respecting the Second Coming of Christ, and his reign upon earth?

"*Anastasius*.--Yes: they all held them in their best times.

The following extract of the Confession of Faith of the English Baptists, extracted from Crosby, may suffice for them all:

"We believe that there will be an order in the Resurrection. Christ is the Firstfruits, and then, next or after, they that are Christ's at his coming: then, or afterwards, cometh the end.

"Concerning the Kingdom and Reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we do believe that he is now in heaven at his Father's right hand, so we do believe, that, at the time appointed of the Father, he shall come again in power and great glory; and that at, or after, his coming the second time, he will not only raise the dead, judge and restore the world, but will also take to himself his Kingdom, and will, according to the Scriptures, reign on the throne of his father David, on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, for ever.

"We believe that this kingdom of our Lord will be an universal kingdom, and that in this kingdom *the Lord Jesus Christ himself will be the alone visible supreme Lord and King of the whole earth*.

"We believe that as this kingdom will be universal, so it will also be an everlasting kingdom that shall have no end, nor cannot be shaken; *in which kingdom the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls; where the Lord is, they shall be also*

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"We believe that the New Jerusalem that shall come down

from God out of heaven, when the tabernacle of God shall be with them, and he shall dwell among them, will be the metropolitan city of this kingdom, and will be the glorious place of residence of both Christ and his saints for ever, and will be so situated, as that the kingly palace will be on Mount Zion, the holy hill of David, where his throne was."

Thus far the "Dialogues." The following additional is also from Crosby, Vol. 2, Appendix p. 85.

"We believe that the same Lord Jesus who showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, Acts 1:3, who was taken from his disciples and carried up into heaven, Luke 24:57, shall so come in like manner as he was seen go into heaven. Acts 1:9-11. "And when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory--Col.3:4. For then shall he be King of kings, and Lord of lords--Rev. 19:15.

For the kingdom is his, and He is the governor among the nations--Psa. 22:28; and King over all the earth--Zech. 14:9; and we shall reign with him upon the earth--Rev. 5:10. The kingdoms of this world, which men so mightily strive after how to enjoy, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ--Rev. 11:15. For all is yours, ye that overcome this world, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's--1 Cor. 3:22,23. For unto the saints shall be given the kingdoms, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven--Dan. 7:27.

Though, alas! many men be scarce content that the saints should have so much as a being among them; but when Christ shall appear THEN shall be their day; THEN shall be given them power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron--Rev. 2:26,27. THEN shall they receive a crown of life which no man shall take from them, nor they by any means turned, or overturned, from it; for the oppressor shall be broken in pieces--Psa. 72:4; and their vain rejoicing turned into mourning and bitter lamentations, as it is written--Job. 20:5-7. "For which" (confession), say they, "we are not only resolved to suffer persecution to the loss of our goods, but also life itself, rather than decline from the same."

This Baptist declaration presented to Charles II., March 1660, was "subscribed by certain elders, deacons, and brethren, met in London, in behalf of themselves and many others, unto whom they belong in London, and in several countries of this nation, who are of the same faith with us." Then follow forty-one names, after which is written, "owned and approved by more than 20,000."

Such was "the Gospel of the Kingdom" believed by the Baptists in Britain 200 years ago; in addition to which they believed also, the "things concerning the Name of Jesus the Anointed." If the 20,000 whose faith is here confessed, were to arise and stand upon their feet in 1855, and to visit the "Regular Baptists" and all other churches calling themselves Baptists, would they be able to find a trace of that gospel from which they declared, 200 years ago, they would suffer death: rather than decline from the same?" Nay: the glory of the Baptist Denomination, which was THE TRUTH, has departed,

and taken refuge among a despised and persecuted people, who find few pulpits open to them for the proclamation of it. Protestantism and Campbellism have completed the apostasy of the Baptists from the faith of the crucified King; and immersed them into the philosophy and vain deceit of Geneva, Wittenburgh, and Rome. The act of immersion constitutes the only difference that prevents their formal and complete amalgamation with the ecclesiastical progeny of the Western Babylon. Suppress this, and they will pass current among the most popular faction of Antichrist's domain.

If any one asks what the Editor of the Herald believes, and contends for as the faith once for all delivered to the saints by Jesus and the apostles, I reply that he believes all that is contained in the above quotations from the Baptist Confession of Faith. He believes it is all the plain, unvarnished truth, and worthy of all reception by those who would be saved in the Kingdom of God--the great ark of safety for all his house.

The Baptists of Charles II.'s reign looked to that kingdom as the place where they should receive "the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls." But the end of modern credulity (for it is out of the question to talk of "faith" as characteristic of modern professors; theirs is presumption and credulity) is somewhere, they know not where, "beyond the skies." The immersed believers of Charles' reign would have scorned such folly as subversive of the truth. The land promised to Abraham and the kingdom belonging to it, governed by Jesus and his brethren under a heavenly constitution, was heaven enough for them for a thousand years. They were willing to die for this; and gave the king of England to understand, that all his power could not turn them from their full assurance of faith and hope concerning it.

You see, then, reader, that the doctrine taught in these pages is neither so heretical nor novel as some suppose. The heresy and novelty is with Modern Baptism, Methodism, Presbyterianism; in short, with all the Isms from Romanism to Campbellism, Millerism, and Mormonism, the most recent editions of the wisdom from beneath, as substitutes for the gospel of the kingdom of God. The Herald contends for the original faith, which has been so completely corrupted by sectarian tradition, that the Baptists, who formerly professed it, are unable to recognize their own! If this be the case with them, after less than two centuries, is it surprising that, after eighteen, professors should not be able to recognize the doctrine of Jesus and his apostles, and in the plenitude of their ignorance should reject it as heretical and vain? It is not surprising; the wonder is, that with so many conflicting sorts of Christianity in the world, any true faith and practice should be found. The truth, however, would long ago have become extinct, but for such "pestilent publication" as the Herald; whose "mission" is to agitate the waters, that stagnation may not ensue. They are like the great teacher, in that they "come not to bring peace, but a sword." As soon as

they cry "peace," their mission is at an end. They preach peace to the righteous; but for the wicked, who make void the word of God by their pious traditions, they have nothing but torment day and night. This is the philosophy of that cry against them of bitterness, uncharitableness, censoriousness, and severity! It is the outcry of the wicked in torments. They behold their idols demolished by the battle axe of eternal truth, and their most cherished imaginations levelled with the dust; so that, naturally enough, they wail and gnash their teeth with imprecations and reproaches upon the destroyer. But, shall the defender of the oppressed therefore stay his hand? Shall the truth lie weltering in her gore, gasping in the article of death, and her friends tamely sheathe their two-edged sword, because of the cries of her wounded foes? No, no: "Cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show the people their transgressions, and the sons of Belial their sins! I never heard a man yet, thoroughly imbued with the truth and a love of it, cry out against a hearty and uncompromising castigation of error, as bitter and too severe. Were men's faith is weak, and their minds are full of uncertainty, and they are conscious that their own deeds will not bear the light, you find them full of "charity," and sensitively fearful of the truth being too plainly spoken, All their sympathies are with the feeling of the corrupters and transgressors of the word. They don't want their feelings hurt, lest it should do harm! The fact is, they don't want the truth too plainly demonstrated, lest it should make them unpopular; or they should be themselves obliged to defend that of which they were not fully assured. There is always some screw loose in these mealy-mouthed and syren apologists of truth. The spirit of the flesh (which they mistake for the Holy Spirit) works in them a fellow feeling with the children of disobedience; not that they really sympathize with them--they are too selfish for that: but in uttering this hard doctrine of their iniquity, thou condemnest us also. This is the secret of their whining about "bitterness and severity," they re themselves convicted of treachery to the truth.

It is, then, to the "pestilent fellows" and their publications in all past ages, not to canting pietists and sickly sentimentalist, puling from morn to dewy eve about "charity" and a "Christian spirit," that the world is providentially indebted for the preservation of the gospel from entire oblivion. The charitable and pious orthodoxy of "the Four Denomination: fill the pulpits of the land. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian clergy all recognize one another as ambassadors of Christ, and their sects as so many divisions of the true church. But what have they done with the gospel confessed by the Baptists 200 years ago? Crucified and buried it; hence the recognition of the Baptist Denomination as one of the orthodox four! They laid it in a sepulchre and walled it up, and have set to their seal of reprobation. But God has raised it from the dead; and put it into the hearts of certain whom it has freed from

ecclesiastical servitude, to contended for it earnestly and fearless of the authority, power, or denunciation, of scribes, pharisees, hypocrites, or of any other of this generation of vipers new revived. This is our work, and by God's grace we will do it heartily until the hour of his judgment comes, and the Lord Jesus appears to vindicate his own.

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