

SERMON BY ELDER J. S. ROTH,

At Lamoni, Iowa, April 12, 1894.

Subject, The Kingdom of God. What is it? and How to Find it.

THE only apology I have to make for speaking to-night is that it is not of choice, but of duty. I always aim to be subject to the authorities that be, and if any have anticipated something new to-night I am afraid that you will be disappointed. I learned a lesson about twenty-five or thirty years ago. One day when I was in the city of Washington I went down to the Potomac and got into the water deeper than I expected to, and I was likely to not get out again; and ever since that time I have always aimed to stay near the shore as well as I knew how. Therefore I shall try to keep close to the shore to-night that I may not be drowned.

I have been requested to speak upon the subject, The Kingdom of God, and I do not know but I am glad that some person told me what to speak on, because there have been a number of sermons delivered here since this conference began that I have not heard, so I might have taken up some subject which has been discussed here; but if I had, I presume we would have agreed upon the points at issue, at least.

There are a great many ideas advanced in the world concerning the kingdom of God; but I have selected a part of the thirty-third verse of the sixth chapter of Matthew as a starting point, and it reads like this: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

We want to examine first whether God had a kingdom on the face of the earth, and if he had, what that kingdom was composed of, and whether that kingdom was to continue, or whether a time was to come when it would end. I know the position is taken by some, and I have heard it taken myself, that Jesus Christ

never had a kingdom on the earth while he was here; and I once heard a man say that he would not have one till he came the second time; that all the organizations known as kingdoms or churches were organized by men for their own convenience. I was rather surprised at the statement. Then there are others who claim that the kingdom is not an organization but that the kingdom can exist in the heart of an individual. These are points which I shall examine as we pass along this evening.

But first we want to learn what the kingdom is, or whether Christ had a kingdom. It seems to me if he had no kingdom the words of the text are superfluous and misleading, because Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." If he had no kingdom, I don't see why any man or woman should possibly seek for it or how anyone could find it. It would be just as absurd for me to make the claim or the request of some of you to point me out the track of a bird that flew through the air yesterday, or to show me the furrow which the great steamer plowed through the Atlantic two weeks ago when there is no such a thing in existence. But when we start out to seek for this kingdom we certainly comprehend, or should at least, that there is such a thing, or such an organization in existence. Some of you ladies or gentlemen, before you came across the great deep you first heard there was a country known as the United States; you made yourselves acquainted with the laws, and with many things concerning or pertaining to the government of the United States. So after you had satisfied your minds that there was a country known as

the United States of America, you then started to seek for that country. Before you started, however, you informed yourself concerning the law, the government, the officers, the location, perhaps, and all pertaining to that kingdom. Well, when you took the ship to sail for America, perhaps you landed somewhere along the British coast and you began to inquire, "Where is the government of the United States? I have heard of such a government, I have come to locate there; to become a citizen of the government known as the United States." Some one will tell you, "Why, right across the country here is the country known as the United States of America." You pass along till you get up there perhaps to Quebec or somewhere in that part of the country, and you begin to inquire, "Where is the United States of America?" Some one will tell you, why, right here; you are right in the United States now." And you begin to inquire, "Where is the President's house? Where is Congress? Where is the Capitol?" Well, some one will tell you, "Here is the Capitol. But then, for the President's house, we've got no President here. This dominion is ruled by a queen." "Well," says you, "then it's not the United States of America." "O," says the objector, "there is a country down south here, a little patch of country, known as the United States of America; but then this is just as good." But you have started to find the United States, and when you get into the United States you will know that you are there by the government which you have learned or studied before you came across the water; you have learned that the chief magistrate of this country is called the President, and that he has a Congress, and that the country is divided up into States; that States have heads or authorities which are known as the governors of the States, and so on down until you get down to the school board of the government of the United States.

You examine your record, and you find that that agrees exactly with what you have learned before you started to seek for these United States of America. You are satisfied that you have found that for which you started to seek.

Now we are starting out to seek for a government to-night. We are starting out to seek for a kingdom; and I take the position that this kingdom referred to here (I know another translation that gives it a little different, but I shall use the one we have here to-night, that of King James), is the church. The words, "kingdom," "church," "body," and "bride," "the Lamb's wife," and such terms as these are all synonyms referring to the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ. I will admit that sometimes the word "kingdom" is used for that government beyond, or where God is. But we are not seeking for that to-night; we are seeking for the government upon the face of the earth, the Church of Jesus Christ, as was established, as was put into motion when Christ was here.

Well, in the first place, what does it take to constitute a kingdom? We want to seek first what it takes for a kingdom, and then we shall examine further along whether we can find that kingdom. I take the position that there is no kingdom upon the face of the earth or in heaven either, without proper parts, or organization and laws. I claim that it takes five parts to constitute a properly organized kingdom; it takes a country, it takes laws, it takes officers, and it takes a king, a head, or a ruler, I don't care which you may call it, before we have a properly organized kingdom. And I expect to find to-night that this very kind of a kingdom was upon the face of the earth when Jesus was here, or at least set in motion about that time. And we want to go on, now, and see first whether we can find this. We turn to Matthew, the eleventh chapter and read; about the eleventh

verse, to prove that Christ had a kingdom or church on the earth:—

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” Here we have the present tense used. “Well, but,” sometimes the objector says, “we go right back here and find in the prophecies of the Old Bible where the prophet prophesied in the present tense and it wasn’t fulfilled for years afterwards.” Well, perhaps that is true. We will take the next verse, then: “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent,”—and I presume there is not one who will take the position that the days of John the Baptist were in the future when Christ made his declaration; therefore I hold that the eleventh verse refers to the past, to the present, and to the future, as well as the twelfth verse: “And from the days . . . [the time that Jesus made the declaration], the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”

The kingdom suffered at the hands of the wicked or the violent from the days of John the Baptist, and that was before Jesus Christ made this declaration; therefore I hold that there must have been a kingdom in existence or it could not have suffered violence from the days of John the Baptist until that time. And the violent took it by force. We can find that illustrated by following the history of Christ and his church: Christ, the king of that kingdom, was nailed to the cross, the officers of that kingdom were murdered, and therefore the wicked, the violent, took the kingdom by force. Then there must have been one, or they could not have taken it by force.

But we will turn to Matthew, the twenty-first chapter, and there we have another reference made to the kingdom

of God, where Jesus says in the forty-third verse:—

“The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” Was Jesus going to take the kingdom from a people that had no kingdom among them when he said, “The kingdom shall be taken from you”? I hold that there must have been something to take. You cannot take a thousand dollars from me for the reason that I haven’t got them. So you could not take the kingdom of Jesus Christ from a people and give it to another nation if there was no kingdom.

But we will pass along from that and turn to Colossians, the first chapter, and get the connections now concerning this kingdom,—that is, the church, or body,—and show you further that there was a kingdom. In Colossians the first chapter and twelfth verse we read:—

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated, [is that in the future?] and *hath translated* us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

If the position be correct that Jesus had no kingdom, and will not have till he comes again, then Paul was wrong. Sometimes people are liable to be wrong; I have been wrong myself a good many times. But I believe Paul was correct in making the statement that he was translated, changed, set apart from the position or condition in which he was, into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

I go a little further, and I read in the eighteenth verse: “And he is the head of the *body*, the *church*.” Then we have twice at least in this place where the body is the church. I want you to remember that, kind friends, because I am going to use that several times in proving how many churches there were, or how many kingdoms:—

“And he is the head of *the body*, *the*

church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence."

And I might pass along to the twenty-fourth verse. I shall read again:—

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his *body's* sake, which is *the church*." Then we have the "body" to be the "church," haven't we? So I think that is sufficient upon that point, that the body is the Church of Jesus Christ; and we will show you by and by that the body is the church.

But I know the objector comes in here again and says, "Yes, I believe that you can prove that point very clearly, because that Bible is just like an old fiddle; that you can play any kind of a tune upon it, and of course you can prove anything you have a mind to." I had that to meet just two weeks ago—a week ago last Sunday. But, I don't believe that at all. I don't believe that you can play any kind of a tune on that Bible, or prove anything, the same as playing a tune on a fiddle. I do not know whether I *dare* say "fiddle" or not in the church; I guess I can, though. I call it fiddle for the fiddler's sake. Now if there is a fiddler here I want to appeal to you on this very proposition to prove that that is certainly false. I don't care how expert a player you may be, just lay that fiddle down on top of that organ and take your bow and seesaw there from June till eternity, and what have you got? You have but one sound, haven't you? "There," the fiddler says, "I'm right." Well, then, how do you play the tune? Ah, you take up that fiddle in your arms or your hands, and you begin to touch and cover, and pinch and press the strings, and you make that fiddle talk and play anything from Old Hundred down to the Devil's Dream. But how? By putting your construction on the strings that are on there. You make the

strings talk, and that's just the way you play, or prove all things out of the Bible. You lay that Bible down on that desk, and I don't care who reads out of it, whether it is the preacher on the stand, whether it is the little schoolboy in school, whether it is the professor, the lawyer, or the doctor, I don't care who reads it, it reads just the same. But when we come to play our tune upon it—I once heard a man try to play a tune on it—he was preaching upon the third chapter of St. John, and the fifth verse; and he read, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And he played his tune like this: "Friends, that don't mean what it says. That should be, 'You must be born of truth and the Spirit, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'" Well, to my mind that man took that Bible up in his hands and he put his finger on that string—*water*—and he squeezed the very last drop of water out of it and made it say "truth." This is how he played his own tune upon it. When I read it, it reads "water," and I believe every schoolboy in this house would say w-a-t-e-r spells water, and not truth. It spelled that when Christ was here; it spells it to-day. A man may say it spells truth if he has a couple of titles to his name, such as D. D. and LL. D.; but as far as that is concerned, if those D. D.'s have to be added, (I suppose you understand that D. D. means doctor of divinity, and I have never learned the necessity of divinity having any need for doctors), when they doctor they doctor the word to suit themselves. And I will tell you, kind friends, when a man comes to doctor that word and doctors it differently from what it reads, I don't care if he has got as many D. D.'s as there are spikes in the Pacific Railroad, it does not change the word at all, only in his opinion: it is just the same after all. So it's just here the fiddle and the Bible are alike; you cannot play but one tune upon it until

you change and pervert. Therefore I hold to the position that Jesus Christ had a church or kingdom, and all the conjuring and doctoring will not change that, for the Bible says so.

I know that some claim this is heresy, and there is a sermon circulating over the country now in a paper which says that doctrine is dangerous "heresy," if I have the term right; it states something similar to that, at least. Well, we'll see if it's heresy; if it is it's some of Paul's kind, and I am satisfied that Paul will answer for the heresy which he preached. So we will turn a little farther and find another objection. We turn here to the seventeenth chapter of Luke; I am going to examine several objections to-night and see whether they are made of solid material, or whether they are a little gassy. We turn here to the seventeenth chapter of Luke and find in examination of the twentieth verse that Jesus was demanded of the apostles (that is what a preacher said once, and that he told them and tried to teach them that the kingdom of heaven would not come, but was within them then, in their hearts). Well, let us see, then, how it reads: "And when he was demanded of the apostles, when the kingdom of God should come"—O no; that is not the way it reads, but,—"When he was demanded of the *Pharisees* [not the apostles at all, but another class of people; we will see who they are before we leave this subject], when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and 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." The objector says, "You had better not have read that." Well, I will try another translation, which is still stronger than that. It reads like this: "*Dos Himmel-riche is inwendich in iche.*" And when I translate that into the English we have these words: "The kingdom of heaven is inside in you." That's plain enough, I guess, for you and I to stand on; and I might as well try to tell my Lutheran brethren that the sun never rose as to tell them that that was a mistranslation, because they would say it was impossible for Luther to make a mistake in translating. I was right there myself once. Well, we'll see the inconsistency of the declaration. A kingdom is composed of

a country, is composed of subjects, of laws, of officers, and a ruler; and for the human family to get all of that into their hearts—I am afraid they would be in a bad condition; they would feel worse than when they had the grippe. I heard a man say in Chicago, last fall, that it didn't make any difference whether a man got the kingdom of heaven into him or whether he got into the kingdom of heaven. Now so far as I am concerned, it would make considerable difference to me whether I got into Iowa, or got Iowa into me. Then let us examine the consideration here of Jesus' words. He says: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold the kingdom of God is *among* you." That is what it says in the margin of my Bible here. He was demanded of the Pharisees. They looked forward to the time when Jesus Christ should come as a king and a conqueror, as a mighty emperor at the head of a great army to throw off the Roman bondage from the Jewish nation; therefore they thought it would come in that kind of a manner. But Jesus says they shall not say, lo here, or lo there; for he shall not come as a mighty monarch or warrior: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within [or among] you." And when we examine that as I have stated, what it takes to constitute a kingdom, it is impossible to apply the declaration that it could be in the heart of anybody. And it was the Pharisees at best that demanded when it should come.

But perhaps some one might still think that Jesus meant that it should be in the hearts of these Pharisees; so to see who these Pharisees are we will turn to Matthew the twenty-third chapter and learn there what Jesus had to say about the Pharisees and then let you judge whether or not he meant the kingdom should be within them. From the thirteenth verse of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew we will read: "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven" in your hearts and won't let anybody else in."—Does it so read? No; that is not the way it reads, but as follows:—

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye

neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

Why, it seems that there was some organization here; that there was a possibility of those Pharisees closing the door against the people that tried to get in. They would not enter themselves, neither would they allow those who were desirous to enter in. We read further: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" for ye have the kingdom in your heart? No, "for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

The idea that that class of people should have the kingdom of heaven in their hearts, and Jesus tell men to seek for it! If there be but one kingdom of heaven, and that in the heart of somebody, and we are told to seek for it, it will take a long hunt to know whose heart to examine to find it! "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves," And these people, we are told by some, had the kingdom of heaven in their hearts! Well, it looks to me rather farfetched, so I pass from that and go on to the thirteenth chapter of Matthew and see the parable that Jesus gives concerning the kingdom of heaven.

In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew and about the thirty-first verse, I read:—

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed." Ah! why? It looks to me as if here is something tangible. Here Jesus conveys the idea that the kingdom of heaven came forth from a small beginning, just like a grain of mustard seed. But it springs forth as a very tender plant, and it grows up and its branches extend east and west, north and south, and the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. So with the kingdom of heaven; it sprang up slowly and spread out east and west, north and south, and we find there were branches at Philadelphia, and at Corinth, and at Ephesus, and all over that country. So we have the kingdom of heaven to-day spread out over the world; with branches at Lamoni, and at Independence, and Des Moines, and Boone, and Clinton, and

Davenport; and the birds of the air, the nationalities of all climes, coming and lodging in the branches of the kingdom. So I think the parable is very applicable to the church of Christ; that it grew up unobserved the same as the little mustard tree right among them. They didn't know the difference between the little tree and any other tree until it grew up and became a large tree and became a habitation for the birds of the air of every clime. So these branches of the kingdom of Jesus Christ spring up all over the land as a resting place for the different birds of the air, or the different nationalities of the world. Just so. Then we find this beautiful parable illustrates that there is something tangible, and that it is like the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It would be very strange to me if God, the creator of the universe, the God of order, should have chaos and disorder in his kingdom here on earth, and yet be the great God of order in the heavens; it looks to me that it would not be godlike to have everything in chaos here without organization, head, or governing officers, and so on, when he is a God of order.

Let us go a little further, now, and see how many of those kingdoms Jesus Christ had. We will turn to Acts second chapter, or rather, we will first turn to First Corinthians the twelfth chapter and about the twelfth verse, and I read there, the record of Paul, as he says in the first chapter of Galatians that he received this doctrine not of man, neither was he taught it by man, "but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Then let us see what Paul received here from Christ. He says, in the eleventh verse of the record cited:—

"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Now for the kingdom or the body:—

"For as the body is *one*, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."

Does that mean more than *one* when it says one—*one body*? I turn to the first chapter of Colossians, the eighteenth verse, and Paul says that that body is the church, the church of Christ, the kingdom that we are seeking for. Then Paul says there is one church. Now let us

read it: "For as the church is *one*, and hath many members, and all the members of that *one* body, being many, are *one* body: so also is Christ." "Ah," says one, "you are perverting that." Perhaps I am. Let us see whether Paul does not say so. Colossians, the first chapter and eighteenth verse:—

"And he is the head of the body, the church." The *body* is the church. Now if there is anybody going to fight over that, let him and Paul have it, and I will stand back. Fourteenth verse:—

"For the body is not one member, but many."

The *body*, composed of members; the church is composed of members, I make a declaration or quotation from Acts 2: 47. It is necessary to belong to the church from the very fact that the declaration was made that there were added to the *church* daily such as should be *saved*. A man said to me the other day, that it made no difference whether he belonged to the church or not. I asked the individual what the apostle meant when he said, "There were added to the church daily such as should be saved?" and he took the position that it didn't say church. Well, he was right. He had another translation. But that translation said "*gaminda*," and when we get that into the English we have "the congregation." Therefore God added to the "congregation" "such as should be saved." And I would like to know where the difference is, now, between the congregation, and the church, and the kingdom.

So we look along a little further; we turn to Ephesians the fourth chapter and the fourth verse. Remember that this word tells us that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall all things be established, and I read these words:—

"There is *one* body." "Ah," says one, "that does not say church." But remember that Colossians 1: 18 says the body is the church. We read further in Ephesians: "There is *one* body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." And when I come back here again to the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, in the nineteenth and twentieth verses I read: "And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but *one* body"—church. Is that sufficient on that?

What is that church or kingdom composed of? How shall we know when we find the kingdom? I go a little further, and in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians and the twenty-eighth verse I read:—

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps." God set them there.

I read away back here in the beginning of the Bible that God at a certain time set the sun and the moon in the skies, in the heavens, and he set a rainbow there. They are there yet. O, yes; They are there yet. What is the reason? The only reason that I can give is that there is no man large enough to reach up and take them out of their places. They have taken these officers out, and I don't believe they had a right to do it; but if you take man's theory for it they had.

Let us see further what other officers there are. I might cite a whole catalogue of them. "God set in the church," here it is declared, "apostles" and "prophets," and I find by referring to other places quite a number of other officers. They are enumerated like this; not in their proper order, but in the positions which they hold: "Apostles," "prophets," "evangelists," "pastors," "teachers," "deacons," "elders," "bishops," "helps," "governments," and so on. Well, are they there to-day? are those officers in the Church of Jesus Christ to-day? "No, they are not needed there to-day," we are told. I heard a minister make the declaration once when I asked him, "Sir, does your organization have those officers in the church?" "Yes, sir," he says, "we have them." Well I confessed to him I was mistaken, for I thought they did not claim to have them. But I asked him to be so kind as to tell me the names of some of the apostles and prophets in their church, and he turned over and referred me to Luke 6: 14, 15, 16, and read: "Peter, Matthew, Luke, and John," and so on, and he enumerated them. "Well," I said, "I thought those were officers in Christ's church." I said, "Do you have those officers now in your church—to-day?" "O no," he says, "they are not alive to-day; we don't need them alive to-day." I wanted to know why. "Well," he said, "from the simple fact that we have

the teachings of the apostles and prophets in the Bible." "Well," I said, "do you believe that when Jesus Christ set apostles and prophets in his church they were dead men?" "O no; they were live men. But then," he says, "we don't need them now. We have got the teachings of the apostles and prophets, and therefore we don't need *them* to-day." "Well, that's pretty good," I says. "What kind of officers do you have in your church that are alive? Have you got prophets there?" "No sir; we've got their teachings." All right, we will examine that now. Then God set living apostles and prophets in his church eighteen hundred years ago, but we don't need them to-day because we have got the writings of the prophets and apostles. Well, that's good. Do we need any living teachers to-day? I take position that we do not upon the same ground. We have got their teachings. Do we need any elders to-day in the church? "O yes, because we must have them." But I take the position that if a dead apostle is good, and a dead prophet is good, and a dead teacher is good, a dead elder is just as good as they are."

I further asked him, "Do you have dead deacons or living deacons in your church?" "O, living ones sure; we must have a living deacon." Well why? Haven't we got the declaration in that word just what a deacon shall be—the husband of one wife, he shall have *good* children, and so on? (I am afraid if that's followed there'd be a lot of deacons set aside, for their children are not quite as good as they ought to be, for it says they should have obedient families.) But I hold that we don't need a living deacon on the same grounds, because we are told all about them there, more than we are about the apostles, I believe. Then if a dead apostle is good, and a dead prophet is good, a dead deacon and a dead elder, and a dead seventy, why not just as good when they are all dead? Where shall we find the kingdom if the officers are all dead? Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," and I guess when we come to find the kingdom, or seek for it, which Jesus Christ had, if they are all dead, I guess of course they are buried; and in order to find them we must use the spade. "But," says one, "That don't satisfy my mind that we

have a right to expect apostles and prophets to-day, because I turn right over here to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and find that prophecies shall fail. And if the prophecies shall fail, the prophets must cease or they could not fail." And a little further on I read that if they have any knowledge it shall vanish away. Let me read in the thirteenth chapter from the eighth verse: "Charity never faileth." Why does charity never fail? Because it is one of the grand attributes of God. God is charity, or love, and because love never had a beginning, can never have an end; and therefore the apostle truly could say, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." "Now," says the objector, "that does away with the whole idea of the continuation of prophecy and those gifts in the church which you claim." Well, if the book says so I am satisfied. I am ready, as I have made the statement time and again, to come to a unity with all the churches on the face of the earth on a Bible basis, and if the Bible says so,—that they have failed,—I am ready to say amen. But let us read just a little farther:—"Whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." And that book tells me, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "Well," says the objector, "that does not mean this; that just means man and wife alone." I wish they would apply it right closely then, and not separate; but I hold that whatsoever God hath joined together, let not man put asunder; and God has joined together prophecy, and tongues, and knowledge, and where one fails, the other must go. Is there anybody who will take the position that knowledge has failed and vanished from the earth? If not, the other two must stand side by side, as far as God is concerned. If they have failed, it is because man would not cherish them any longer.

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Subject, The Kingdom of God. What is it? and How to Find it.

(Concluded from last number.)

LET us see when prophecies shall fail, etc.: "For we prophesy in part;" the very thing which we are told shall fail. Paul says we prophesy in part, and, he goes on further: "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." We are told by some that that which is perfect has come. Well, if that is true, then these parts shall be done away. What part? Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. Then *that* perfection has not come. When is that perfection? When all shall be restored as it was from the beginning, and I hold that that time has not yet come. You will find it more fully described in the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, also in the eleventh chapter: When that which is perfect cometh, when that which is perfect shall be restored; when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and when the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, when that which is perfect has come; and I hold that that time has not yet come. I know there are people who will object to that position and say that that time has come; that the lion and the lamb do lie down together. I'll admit that, too; but the lamb fails to get up again. "Well," says the objector again, "that isn't to be understood literally; you must spiritualize that." Well, how do you spiritualize it then, my friend? "Well that lamb and that lion spoken of there is the human family. For instance, we have a protracted meeting going on, and of course men and women attend, and by and by the woman,

being more susceptible to the gospel, comes forward and is converted, or rather, she is persuaded of her wickedness and her sins, and she embraces Christ as her Savior, becomes a lamb of God; and the old man, the old stubborn man, he won't do that. He goes home with all his stubbornness, and of course the man, the lion, goes home with the lamb, his wife, and they dwell together." Well, there is one objection to that; if it be true that that means the man and his wife, just show me that lion that eats straw like the ox, and I'll give it up. It says emphatically that the lamb and the lion shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, etc.; yes the lion shall eat straw like the ox. If one is spiritual, the other is too. But perhaps that is spiritual straw he eats.

But we will go a little further with this examination and see when these spiritual blessings shall be done away. They go together; prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. Have tongues been done away? O yes; speaking in tongues in the church is done away because no longer needed, so we are told. Well, where does the Bible say so? I am ready to believe it if the Bible says so. But tongues are not done away. I would like to know how many different tongues there are in this house to-night; how many different languages there are spoken. When that time comes that that which is perfect shall come, then all the different tongues and languages will be one language; the Adamic language will be restored. If that time has not come, then all things have not been restored as they

were at the beginning. When that which is perfect is come, we will have no need for prophecies; then we will have no need for tongues, because there will be but one language, and all will understand that; and I hold that *that* time has not come yet; and therefore it is in the future. It will not come till Jesus comes again.

But let us go a little further. We turn to Ephesians the fourth chapter and there we get another additional witness upon this subject of just how long these prophecies shall continue. We read here in the fourth chapter and about the eleventh verse: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Now remember this is the same writer that we have quoted in Corinthians. He was up yonder with the Corinthian church and he told the people yonder how the church was organized; how it should run; what the officers were; how long it should continue. Now he comes down just the same as we have some of our brethren here and at Independence; they preach a sermon on a certain subject, and they come up here and they preach a sermon on the same subject, but do not use the same identical words. I never heard Latter Day Saint preachers who preached sermons from the same subject just exactly like. They all vary somewhere or other in the presentation, but it does not change the subject. So with Paul here; he was yonder at Corinth, and he told the brethren there (see the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians and the twenty-eighth verse) that God put officers in the church, and he goes on to tell what they were: apostles, and prophets, and pastors, and teachers, and so on. Now he comes down here to the Ephesian branch of the church and he says here, speaking of God, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets." Why, he gets them just in the order that he had them up yonder—apostles and

prophets. But how long shall they be there, Paul? "And some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints." Are they all perfect? (I wish the Saints were all perfect.) For the perfecting of God's children. Will you allow that construction? Are they all perfect? Well, there are some who claim that they are. I am glad to hear it; I am glad to hear them say so, for I never would have found it out by their lives if they hadn't said so. "For the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry." Does the ministry need any work to-day? If it does, then these officers are in the church, or ought to be. "For the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body." *The body?* What is that body? Why, it is the church; for the edifying of the Church of Christ. "Well," says the objector, "we haven't got them, we don't need them." Well, I have no objection to that. I am not examining anybody's church—any man's organization. I am seeking to-night for the kingdom of Jesus Christ—the church. That is what I am examining, without alluding to any man's organization whatever. Paul says further: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." How long, Paul? "Till we"—Who? Well, I will give his own words: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Are we there to-day? I don't believe we are. There are various opinions upon the face of the earth, among the children of men; I don't know how many organizations there are. And this declaration is that there shall be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers in the Church of Christ till we all come to the unity of the faith, to the perfect man, in the fullness of the stature of Christ Jesus; and I hold we are not there.

Then the declaration is, when "that which is perfect is come," then these things shall be done away; and that these officers shall be in the Church of Christ until that time; and when we find the kingdom or the Church of Christ, we will find all those offices in it. We are seeking for that kingdom over this world everywhere.

Jesus has commanded that we should seek first the kingdom of God. Now is that the kingdom of God? If it took apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, deacons, elders, bishops, helps, and governments to constitute officers of the Church of Jesus Christ eighteen hundred years ago, does it take anything less to-day to constitute that same church? I don't believe it does. If it does, God has changed; if it does, where does the Bible say so? I cannot find anywhere that that law has ever been repealed. *God* set them in the church. If *God* set them there, where is the man or set of men that had the right to take them out? And if they are not there,—we are told everywhere that they are not there,—then some person must have taken them out. "But," says one, "what is the need of these prophets in the church to-day?" Well, that is very important. We are told that we have all that is necessary to-day, and of course we don't need prophets to-day; but we will ask a question: What was the need for them eighteen hundred years ago? Was there need for prophets in the church then? or did *God* make a mistake when he said he set apostles and prophets in the church? Were they needed then? If they were, what did they do? what was their office work? If we can ascertain what their office work was then, and we have any need for that kind of work to-day, then we hold that they ought to be there to-day just as well as then.

I don't know that I can compare the prophet of the church to anything better than to the headlight of a railroad engine.

When the railroad there was first made, the company put the cars on the track, and the engine ahead of the cars, and on the front of the engine the large headlight. What for, my friends? "Well," says one, "it was to show in the dark night when the cars came along, when the enemy of the company—(and you never saw an institution on the face of the earth that did not have enemies)—when the enemies of the company are trying to destroy that company's property, when they throw some obstruction in the way, the headlight reflects, and the men of the train, the conductor, the fireman, and the engineer, see the obstruction by the headlight that is on the train or on the head of the engine, and they can stop the train and take care that there be no accident and the company suffer no loss." Just so it is with the headlight to-day. But supposing that after that railroad company had run some five, six, or ten years, and they began to imagine within themselves, "Well, we have been over this road, and we know every whistling post, every switch, every turn, crook, and curve, and we don't need a headlight at the head of the engine any more;" and the next time he starts out he puts the engine to the other end of the train; and more than that, he gets the engine hind end foremost, and the headlight reflects to the rear, and some dark night you go out here and you hear the noise of the train coming. Well, that train is far off; for you don't see the headlight yet, but the noise of the train comes closer, and there is no headlight. You say there is something wrong; but by and by you hear the train coming thundering along, and the enemies of the company have discovered what the trouble is: the trainmen have changed the headlight, it is at the rear end of the train now, and the enemies throw some obstruction in the way, and the train is ditched, and the company suffers loss, and the men are killed. Well now, you

see the necessity of the headlight at the head of the train. So we have the headlight of the Church of Jesus Christ. We have the prophets away back yonder at the *head* of the church; apostles and prophets representing the headlight, the Spirit of God reflecting through them what the enemy is going to do. We find that the enemy of the church is the Devil, and he has been throwing obstructions in the way ever since God made Adam; and God, through the headlight of the church, the prophets of the church, warned them of the obstruction the Devil has put in the way, therefore the train is saved, or the church is saved just so long as it has the headlight, or prophets and apostles at the head of the church. But after the church had run along about four hundred and fifty to five hundred and seventy five years, and the people began to think they did not need the prophets in the church any more, they turned the church around, now, and they look back there to the dead prophets; they look back there to the dead apostles, and they have the headlight or the reflection of Jesus Christ by the Spirit of inspiration at the hind end of the train, or church away back yonder, and they are coming along hind end foremost. Yes sir. And the churches are groveling along in darkness because the headlight is at the hind end of the train, looking away back there to Jerusalem for knowledge, and wisdom, and all the spiritual gifts enumerated in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, and the church is running along, and the Devil has thrown obstructions in the way, heresies and apostasies, and that church was wrecked, and the company suffered loss, and the men were destroyed, just because they reversed the headlight and put it to the rear end of the train. They reversed the office of apostles and prophets and put it away back yonder when it was placed at the head of the church by Jesus Christ. We find a prophet named Agabus prophesying and

warning the church that they should prepare, for a great dearth was coming, and a famine; and they did prepare. That is the way that the headlight served the church eighteen hundred years ago. Has the church any enemies to-day? If it has, it is just as essential to have the headlight to-day as it was then. If it was need then it is needed now. If not, why not?

But we go a little further in this examination, and we find here in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians some more work of these officers in the church, and we find here by examining the twelfth chapter that Paul describes the church as a man, and that the hands, and the eyes, and the feet were all essential. But after awhile they begin to look around and they come to the conclusion that they are not essential. Paul says emphatically that the hands cannot say to the feet they are not essential because the feet are not the hands, the eyes, or the ears, therefore they are not essential; but he says that every member in the body is essential; and if they were essential then, where does the Bible say they are not essential now. Suppose I make another illustration here: When God made Adam and Eve we find that he made them perfect in organization; "very good," the record says; they were made very good. Well, after awhile Adam began to look Eve over, and he thought there were more members there than were necessary, and he says to Mother Eve, "God has said you were organized very good; he gave you hands, and eyes, and ears, and feet; but I don't see the necessity of all these members in that body now, for I think they have served their time and purpose, and therefore are no longer needed; and I think I can improve on that." So he takes off an arm, and it don't seem to affect her very much, and he takes off another; and he looks at the two eyes, he says there is no use for two eyes in one head, and he takes out an

eye; and he looks her over again and again, and trims her down till by and by there is nothing left there but just a stump of Mother Eve. And he calls in the two boys, Cain and Abel, and he says, "Boys I want you to have a kind visit with your mother." And the boys come in, and they look around, and say, "Father, where is mother?" "Why, there she is." "No, that isn't mother, that's an old stub. Mother had eyes, ears, hands, and feet, but I don't see any of them. What's the matter?" Why, the man was going to improve on the body which God made. So we have here in the Church of Jesus Christ, apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, deacons, elders, and bishops, helps and governments; but after awhile man began to look that woman, the church, over and began to trim her down; and what have they got left? Why, only two feet, the deacon and the elder. Is that the church we are seeking for tonight? Is that the kingdom of God which Jesus said to seek first? Well, when we find that kingdom will we find anything different from what Jesus left here? If we do, how shall we know that it is the kingdom of God?

"But," says one, "you just misapprehend or misunderstand that; you misapply it." We turn over to the fifteenth chapter of John and the fifth verse, and Christ says there: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." I'll admit all that. I know a church in the State of Iowa that has a motto over the stand which says: "We live to love the church that extols our Christ." I am glad of that. I am glad that that church lives to love the church I represent, for we love to live to extol the Christ. That is, the Bible Christ, the Savior, the Redeemer of the world. Let us see what this Christ says here: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "Now," says the objector, "you don't apprehend or understand the idea conveyed here. All these organiza-

tions are branches of the vine." Let us see if that is correct; I will turn to the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians and see whether that is applicable to the position taken, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Now suppose we make a comparison here of the vine. We take a grapevine, for instance, and I don't care how large that grapevine is. I read once that there was one in Kentucky eighty rods long, and I thought it was awful long. Here is a vine, I don't care where you find it. It grows up and has branches east and west, north and south, and when you go for fruit on that vine in due time, what do you expect to find? Why, every little girl will say, "You expect to find grapes there." Isn't that what you expect to find on grapevines? Certainly! Then every child would expect to find grapes on the vine. Well, now, if the vine bears grapes, will the branches bear the same? Most assuredly; nature teaches us so. Well, let us examine that. Here we have a vine, say in a garden down here of some of our brethren, and he goes out in the fall of the year when grapes are ripe, and he finds on the main vine beautiful clusters of grapes, and he looks upon another branch running off east, and he finds raspberries on that; he looks upon another branch, and he finds peaches upon that; he looks upon another branch and he finds apples on that. "Well," says one, "is not that all fruit?" Yes, that is all fruit, and good fruit. I am not objecting to the fruit. I want to see whether they are grapes or not; and if they are not grapes, I claim that the branches have no connection with the vine. Well, the man is puzzled about the affair. He looks around over these branches, and he says, "I cannot understand how that one branch of my vine bears grapes, another bears apples, another this kind of fruit, and another that, and I am going to make an examination." And he follows up this first branch and

he gets up close enough to the old vine to see that there is a little space between the vine and the branch, and the branch gets the shadow of the old vine and not the substance, or the sap, if you please; therefore it is reasonable that that branch could not bear the same kind of fruit that the old vine did, because the branch was not connected and he examines every branch in connection, and he finds every one in the same condition.

Well now we turn to the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, beginning at the first verse, and I am going to give you just a few clusters of the grape from the old vine. I read: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts,"—we will call those the grapes, now, or fruit, there are diversities of gifts. In the fifth verse, "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one" member "is given . . . wisdom." That is one bunch of grapes. "To another the word of knowledge." That's another, "by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he [God] will."

These are the grapes of the old vine; they are the fruits of the old church. Now if the branches or organizations called churches are actually branches of that vine, they will all bear the same kind of fruit. Is that unreasonable? If they do not bear that same kind of fruit, I am forced to the conclusion that they are only under the shadow of the old vine, and do not receive of the sap, or substance, or Spirit of the old vine. For

if they partook of the same Spirit, they of necessity must bear the same fruit the old church did.

"But," says the objector, "we believe in prophets." O yes; I will admit that; a great many believe in prophets. But they are spelled just a little different than what prophets are spelled here in the Bible. They believe in buying a horse for fifty or sixty dollars, and then selling him for one hundred dollars; they believe in *profits* but not in *prophets*. That is the kind of profits they believe in. But here are Bible prophets who foretell future events; but they are done away with, we are told, because no longer needed. Well, does the Bible say so? That is like a great many other points. Perhaps some one will take the position that that ought not to be there. Well, let us read here, right in the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians and the twenty-sixth verse: "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." Edifying of the body. I read back here that these officers were for the edifying of the body, the church. Now let us go a little further; thirty-seventh verse: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." But it is said that we do not need them now. It does not say we do not need them now. "O well," says the objector, "we turn right back there and Paul says he is going to show you a *better* way. Yes sir; that's what he says right here, "I show you a better way." Well, now, we get the better way right here in the fourteenth chapter, thirty-ninth verse: "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, forbid to prophesy, and don't let them speak in tongues?" No, that is not the way it reads; but, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues," that is the better way, you see. I get these things mixed sometimes. My father was a preacher of a popular church and he used to tell me that those things ought not to be read just as they are there; that they were done away, were no longer needed in the church, and ought not to be in the Bible

now. That is like the preacher when he was called to a new congregation. There was a family there—a good old deacon who never missed a meeting from the time he first moved into the neighborhood; and they concluded that the old preacher had been there long enough; that he was getting rather stale, that they ought to have a new man now; they were getting tired of the old man's way of preaching. So they sent and got a new preacher. And when the new preacher came, "Now," says the deacon, "we'll go and hear what this man has got to say." And he preached right on this subject the first night. "Now," he says, "friends, that ought not to be in the Bible there. It is done away, and not for us in these last days. We have got beyond all that, and therefore it ought not to be in there." The good old deacon went home and he looked at it, then said to his wife: "Now I thought that ought not to be in there," and he took his scissors and he scissored that out. The next Sunday the new preacher preached from the third chapter of St. John the fifth verse, and he says, "born of water," that ought not to be in there; it is done away with; it ought to be out of the Bible." So the deacon took his scissors, and he clipped that out. And so every Sunday the preacher showed something that ought not to be in there. So at the end of the year the deacon and his wife concluded that they had done so well in changing preachers that they would change again. But he says to his wife, before he goes we will make him a visit. And he took his good old Bible, that is, what he had left, under his arm, and he started for the preacher's, and he went in and laid the Bible down on the stand and sat down, and the preacher happened to notice it. "Why, my dear brother," he says, "what have you done with your Bible?" It just looked like the stub end of a receipt book; you know how they look; he had just the stubs. "Well," he says, "I have done just what you told me to do." "What did I tell you to do?" "Why in every sermon you preached the whole year you told me that something in there ought not to be there, and I cut it out, and that is all I've got left; and if the new preacher tells us to cut out as much as you did, we will not have anything but the lids of the Bible

left before we get through another year." That's where the trouble is. Therefore Paul said here in plain words in this fourteenth chapter, thirty-ninth and fortieth verses, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy." "O well, all this is done away with, of course." But the *Bible* don't say so, and I don't believe it ought to be cut out of there at all. God put it there. Because Paul says in Galatians that Jesus revealed it to him; and in the eighth and ninth verses he says if an angel or a man preach any other gospel let him be accursed. So I say to you to-day; seek ye first for that kingdom, and you will know that kingdom when you find it, by the pattern which is left on record, the same as the Englishman, or the Norwegian, or any of the foreigners that come to this country; they know the country by that which they have read. So when you find the kingdom of Jesus Christ you will know it by the pattern which is left there. The officers in that kingdom are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and so on, as you have heard them enumerated time and again.

And the way to get into that kingdom is by faith in God; repent of all that is evil; be baptized for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38), and have hands laid upon you to confirm you as a member of the church and for the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:17; 19:6; 9:17.) That was the law to get into that kingdom. Is not that the law now? If it is not, pray tell me when it was changed. When does the Bible say it is changed?

Then again, we find here that this kingdom is called the bride, the church, the Lamb's wife. And I read a little further; Jesus says in the fourteenth chapter of St. John, I think about the second verse, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again."

Now Jesus has gone to prepare a place for somebody. Who is it for? For the kingdom, for the bride, which he left here on the earth; and I believe that when he goes to prepare that place, and he has that place prepared for his bride, he is going to come again. We heard here the other night so beautifully, so

grandly illustrated, that the bride, the church, was going to have a supper by and by; there was going to be a great wedding. Christ is going to come to be wedded to his wife, the bride which he left here. Well, how many brides did he leave here? I find here that Jesus Christ said by the mouth of Paul that he left one bride here; that he left one body here; that he left one church here; and that church is *the* church, I hold; that he will seek for that church when he comes again. It would be very, very strange if the position be true, that it takes all these different organizations to constitute the Church of Jesus Christ; and I learn by that word, and I believe it, that in order to get into the kingdom triumphant we have to be in the kingdom militant here. And if it is true that it takes all the churches or a thousand organizations to make one church, the Church of Jesus Christ, then in order that I may be saved in the church triumphant I must be in the church here; and if that is true, it would be necessary that I would join every one of them before I would be in the Church of Jesus Christ, that is, if it takes them all to constitute the church or kingdom of God. But then I fear that would be a very expensive investment if I had to give each of the preachers ten dollars every time he came around. But I believe that when Jesus comes he will come seeking for but one church. Let us suppose a case. A young man took the notion to get married and settle down, and he hunted up the girl that suited his fancy, and he told her, "Now, you be true to me until I go to prepare a place for you." She would be a hard-hearted girl if she wouldn't promise, even if she did not intend to do so, but she promises she will. And the young man starts away off to prepare a place for his bride. After he has gone, perhaps about ten years, he comes again. Now he comes to seek for his bride. Do you suppose that when he comes to find his bride that about twenty-five or thirty girls will present themselves, and all claim to be his bride, the very girl he left behind? But if so, when he investigates he learns that not one of them is dressed like the girl he left here, and he learns still further that one of them has no eyes, the other has no hands, the other no feet, and in fact not one is

properly organized or developed. But he must make the best of it; he can't find the identical girl he left here. So the best he can do is to gather them all up in his arms and start for his new home, singing, "Hallelujah, I have got them all!" I am afraid he would have a sorrowful time of it. But I am sure he wouldn't do that. No; never. Then how can we expect Jesus to accept so many different churches when he comes? He left a bride here, and that bride was adorned with prophets, apostles, pastors, teachers, deacons, elders, bishops, helps, and governments, with all the gifts and blessings of the gospel which were in the church eighteen hundred years ago. And when he comes for that bride he will expect to have a grand supper or feast, and he will look for the identical bride he left here. And I don't believe he will take one thousand for the one he left here. And I hold that he will not come until he can find that bride, as I understand it. Therefore when he comes he will have the pattern with him, and he will take the pattern around over the world until he finds the bride, the kingdom, the church, the Lamb's wife which he left here.

Then it is essential that we seek for that bride. Remember, not brides, not churches, but "the bride," "the church." We shall know that bride; and when we find that Church of Jesus Christ, when we find the kingdom which Jesus Christ organized, we will know it by the pattern which he has left here. And when you find that kingdom, get into it by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus says in John 7: 17 that you shall know of the doctrine that is taught in that church or kingdom; you will know whether it is the Church of Jesus Christ by the pattern which he left here. Jesus has made the declaration in the seventh of John, the seventeenth verse, that he that doeth the will of the Father, he shall know of the doctrine. He that examines the pattern of the Church of Jesus Christ, he shall know that kingdom when he finds it. May God help you to first seek the kingdom of God, and then give you decision of character to enter in and become a citizen of God's kingdom, and an heir of salvation.

(Reported for the *Herald* with the Edison phonograph by F. E. Cochran.)