

The Teaching of CHRIST

By

G. Campbell Morgan, D. D.

Copyright © 1913

edited for 3BSB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

PART III

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE EXISTING ANARCHY

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:4-10).

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:25-28).

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

“But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance” (Matthew 21:38).

“For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” (Matthew 23:4).

“Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:60).

“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace” (Luke 11:21).

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first” (Luke 11:24-26).

“But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

“And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (John 9:40-41).

OUR Lord's references to the Kingdom of GOD reveal it to four ways.

- First He spoke of it as existing. The fact of the Divine government was ever present to His mind; He always spoke in the evident consciousness of the throne of GOD, and of the fact that GOD is Ruler in the universe.
- He also spoke of the Kingdom of GOD as come to men in some new and special way, as the result of His own coming; and so indicated the redemptive nature of His mission.
- He also referred to the Kingdom of GOD as having to be established by processes, and by that reference revealed the responsibility of the Church in the interest of the Kingdom of GOD.
- He Finally spoke of the Kingdom as yet to come, and in so doing foretold the consummating activity; and so revealed the way of the ultimate realization of His ideals in human history and upon this earth.

The implicate of each of the last three of these conceptions is that of existing anarchy.

- The Kingdom nigh is the Kingdom unrealized.
- The Kingdom in process is the Kingdom postponed.
- The Kingdom to come is the Kingdom not come.

It is perfectly evident, from all these references of our Lord, that His outlook upon the world was first, fundamentally, and always, that of the whole universe as under the government of GOD, and that in certain senses it cannot escape therefrom. But His outlook was also clearly that of One Who saw anarchy instead of order; a Kingdom not recognized, not yielded to; unrealized therefore as to its benefits and its glories.

To the eyes of our Lord all men were in the grasp of the Divine authority, but not willingly so. Consequently He saw that their experience of the Divine authority was not according to the first intention of GOD for men.

Our present theme, then, is that of the existing anarchy as He saw it.

While He clearly saw the ultimate, He as clearly saw the immediate; and His references, and His specific teachings, will show us what He saw, and what He thought concerning the anarchy in the midst of which He lived and wrought and taught. We shall attempt to group our examination of this teaching of JESUS concerning the existing anarchy under three headings.

- First, its manifestations as He described them;
- Secondly, its reasons as He revealed them; and
- Finally its appeal as He was conscious thereof.

First, then, as to the manifestations of anarchy in the midst of which our Lord lived. I will first summarize, and then refer to some of His sayings, which will help us in this matter. It is evident that our Lord, looking out upon men, saw that they were actuated by false ideals concerning the Kingdom of GOD.

As has been seen in an earlier meditation, the phrase was no new phrase. They were quite familiar with it in the Rabbinical teachings of that time, and it was also incorporated in the Scriptures of the Old Covenant. He was in the midst of men who had some idea of the Kingdom of GOD; or even though they had no idea of that Kingdom, they had ideas concerning kingdoms and governments and authorities; and the teachings of JESUS clearly reveal that these were false ideas.

His teaching also reveals men as living under false rule.

Finally, He saw men not merely holding false ideals, and living under false rule, but characterized by persistent perversity, in spite of the light He came to bring.

As to the false ideals. The first revelation of His teaching in the matter is to be discovered in the account of His temptation, especially in the form in which that account is given to us in the Gospel according to Matthew. Not that here we have specific teaching, but that in the account of our Lord's own temptation, and in the process of that temptation, as we watch Him and listen to

Him, we have a revelation of what He thought concerning human ideals as He found them in the world.

It is necessary that we should first be reminded of the place of the temptation, and its relation to this whole subject of the Kingdom of GOD.

The Gospel according to Matthew is preeminently the Gospel of the Kingdom of GOD. The keynote of the ministry of John as it is recorded in that Gospel was, **“Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”** (Matthew 3:2).

He foretold the coming of the King; One **"mightier than I"** (Matthew 3:11) said he, is coming after me, whose shoe latchets I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. He also described the ministry of the coming King as that of One Who would come with the fan and the fire to destroy the things of evil, and to realize the things of goodness.

Following this story of the ministry of the Baptist we have the account of the first appearance of the King.

He came to John, submitted to his baptism, and was immediately attested of Heaven, and anointed by the Spirit for His mission in the world. The first event following that anointing was that of His temptation. Thus it is seen that the temptation had its relation, not merely to the personal life of JESUS, but also to His mission in the interest of the Kingdom of GOD. That becomes patent when we consider the ultimate goal of the adversary's attack.

Luke, telling the story, places the temptations in another order, for which he had a special reason. Personally I have no doubt that Matthew gives us the actual order. That goal is reached in the third temptation, in which he showed to the anointed King all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said: These will I give Thee for one moment's homage rendered to me.

Beginning with the Man upon the physical side of His being, he offered Him bread as the sole necessary sustenance of life; proceeding to the spiritual essential, he suggested that He should traffic with His relationship and tempt GOD; until reaching the ultimate purpose of the being of the Man, His vocation, he suggested that He should obtain the end, reach the goal, possess the Kingdoms, by the method of yielding a moment's homage to himself.

Now, in that movement we have the Master's conception of the false ideals of evil, concerning a world kingdom, revealed. The first temptation was an appeal to the material, and the answer of JESUS was: **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”** (Matthew 4:4).

The second temptation was to the spiritual, and to spiritual selfishness, and the answer of JESUS was: **"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"** (Matthew 4:7).

The final temptation was directed against the vocational position of JESUS, and suggested the gathering of the kingdoms of the world into one by political intrigue; and the answer of JESUS

was, **“Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”** (Matthew 4:10).

In contrast to these affirmations of CHRIST, which constituted the bed-rock of His own strength, and the very fortress of His victory, we find His conception of the false ideals concerning the Kingdom which men entertained.

The first revelation is that of the materialistic ideal which declares that all man needs is bread; which makes bread a basis for a kingdom. Men were acting as though a kingdom depended upon things material alone. Of course this is the reduction of the philosophy to its simplest formula.

Nearer the end of His ministry there came a day when multitudes would fain have made Him King, because He had fed them; and He declined to be crowned King upon that basis.

Secondly, the false ideal of selfishness is exposed; the ideal that within the Kingdom, if you recognize spiritual things, they are to be recognized in order to the enrichment and the comfort of those who receive them. That was the central thought.

Finally the ideal of political intrigue, the suggestion that by diplomatic arrangement and compromise kingdoms may be federated into a kingdom.

Turning from that very brief glance at the temptation, to the Manifesto of the King uttered in Galilee, we recognize how entirely opposed it is to the conceptions which men held at that time; and indeed, how entirely opposed it is to the conceptions which men still have, as to what a world kingdom ought to be.

From that Manifesto I take three very familiar sayings.

First the key-note, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 5:3).

When dealing with law He declared that law is spiritual, and that there is no morality which is final and sufficient, other than the morality inspired by religion. Concerning anxiety He bade His subjects not to be anxious what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or how they shall be clothed; but to be anxious about the Kingdom of GOD and His righteousness.

To examine these ideals is at once to discover how false are the ideals of men. **“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 5:3).

Do men even yet believe that the Kingdom of GOD is to be possessed and established by poverty of spirit in the sense in which our Lord used the word? Morality must be spiritual. There is no challenge to immorality other than religion. Men endeavor to challenge immorality by all sorts of traditions, rules, and regulations; and to check vulgarities by legislation. Men are overwhelmingly anxious about the things of to-morrow, and about the material necessities of to-day.

As JESUS looked out upon His age He saw these false ideals mastering men, holding them in their grasp, conditioning their attitudes and their activities. The persistent opposition to His teaching from the commencement of His public ministry until the tragedy of Calvary, is a revelation of the accuracy of His measurement of these ideals.

Why did they crucify our Lord? Asking the question, - not as within that determinate counsel and foreknowledge of GOD, to which we shall have to make reference again ere we have done with the subject of the Kingdom; - but purely as within the experiences and the doings of the hour in which He lived, we have to reply, simply because they would not accept His ideals.

He was a Teacher contradicting all the conceptions upon which they were basing conduct; saying to them, Repent, change your mind; your deeds are wrong because your outlook is wrong, and your conceptions are wrong. They would not hear and obey; and the only alternative from their standpoint was that of silencing His voice, and putting Him away.

He revealed in His teaching, not only that men were actuated by false ideals, but that they were living under a false rule.

It is never to be lost sight of that every stern word of JESUS, and all His rebukes were reserved for the rulers; and all the way through His ministry we discover, not their opposition alone, but also His criticism of their position. He was perpetually, in direct word and in parable, unmasking them, attempting to show the men of His age wherein the rulers failed; and how they were all under false rule, the rulers themselves being under the rule of their own false ideals.

In one of His final parables uttered to the rulers He revealed the principle of all false authority as He said, "**Let us . . . seize on his inheritance**" (Matthew 21:38).

So said the rulers according to JESUS; and the false principle of all false authority was that of self-centered consideration. In this view the Lord's teaching harmonized perfectly with the prophetic denunciations in the Old Testament Scriptures. "**Woe be to the shepherds of Israel!**" (Ezekiel 34:2).

Why? Because when they should feed the sheep, they are feeding themselves. When they should shepherd and guard the sheep, they are seeking to be guarded themselves. It was Homer who said all kings are shepherds of the people. One wonders sometimes if it would not have been more true to human history if Homer had said all kings ought to be shepherds of the people. But men seek positions of authority, not in the interests of the governed, but in their own interest.

Consequently the method was a false method.

Yet a little later in His ministry, in that final hour of conflict with the rulers, He exposed these methods when He said, "**For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers**" (Matthew 23:4).

I go back to Isaiah for illustration of the difference between the rule of GOD and the false reign

of idols. A man takes and cuts down a tree, and uses part for purposes of his own need, and with the residue he maketh him an idol; and then he carries his idol. The Lord GOD carries men who serve Him. That is the difference. They, the false rulers, bind burdens on others. The GOD Who is the one Ruler bids men roll their burden on Him.

So that our Lord revealed the fact that according to His conception, when lawmakers make laws that are burdens that men have to carry, it is entirely contrary to the first principles of law within the Kingdom of GOD. And to go back to an earlier passage in Matthew, according to the teaching of JESUS, what was the issue of this false ruler whose principle was selfishness, whose method was that of binding burdens? When He beheld the multitude as sheep without a shepherd He saw those multitudes "**distressed . . . scattered**" (Matthew 9:36); fainting, harried by wolves, fleeced and homeless, none to care for them, or to bind their wounds.

The issue of false rule is the distress and the scattering of the people.

Only remember that while the picture as our Lord saw it must ever appeal to our compassion also, yet no one else saw the people in that condition. The people then were as satisfied as are the people of to-day. The people were just as sure they were doing well, as are the people in our own times, who are independent of the Kingdom of GOD. It was only the King, Who saw the Kingdom of GOD as it ought to be, Who also understood the real ruin and degradation of men.

The final manifestation of anarchy to which our Lord referred was not merely that men had false ideals, and that they were living under a false rule, and exercising a false rule, but that they were perverse.

In the parable of the pounds we discover our Lord's central conception of existing anarchy. The reason of the parable is given in the words, "**And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him,**

Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me” (Luke 19:11-27).

At the heart of the parable we find these words: **“But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him.”** His disciples and others thought that the Kingdom of GOD would immediately appear. He said to them in effect: The Kingdom of GOD cannot appear. Behold the anarchy. Look at the condition of affairs. The citizens of the Kingdom will not have the King; they will reject the King; they will cast the King out. That was His outlook upon the supreme difficulty, that of the perversity of the human heart, having its own false ideal, exercising and submitting to its own false rule, and perverse.

Until this hour that is the difficulty. It is the final difficulty. False ideals are still governing men. False rule is still being exercised and submitted to. Ideals entirely at variance with the ideals of the Kingdom of GOD as our Lord revealed them; a rule entirely out of harmony with the rule of GOD as made clear to us in the person of our Lord. But the supreme difficulty is that men are perverse; that they are still saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. We shall never be able to establish the Kingdom of GOD until that perversity is dealt with. Until that perversity in some way is overcome; until the will of man is turned into harmony with the will of GOD; we shall never establish the Kingdom of GOD in the world.

Now rapidly let me gather up His teaching concerning the reasons of this anarchy . We may summarize them thus: Blindness; spiritual slavery; and spiritual death.

Blindness. His very first reference to the Kingdom is recorded in these words, **“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3).**

He explicitly declared the fact of this blindness to the disciples, when upon one occasion referring to the rulers He said, **“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14).**

And again in holy satire, when in conflict with the Pharisees, He said to them, **“If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (John 9:40-41);** a revelation of the fact that whereas there was blindness, it had become willful blindness in the presence of the light that He had brought to men on the subject of the Kingdom of GOD. Men, do not see the Kingdom of GOD, and blind guides are leading blind people, with the result that all fall into the pit. And wherever the light of His revelation has come, men are willfully blind; not all, of course, for there were those around the Lord who were walking in the light, and were obedient thereto, and had healing, and their sight came.

But the revelation that our Lord in His teaching made of the reason of the anarchy goes deeper still. He declared, in symbol and parable and by explicit word, that men are in spiritual slavery. In answer to the charge of complicity with Beelzebub which they made against Him, He said, **“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace” (Luke 11:21).**

That was His picture of the times. The strong man fully armed was Satan; guarding his own court, his goods were in peace. But when a stronger than he comes, he dispossesses the strong man. That was our Lord's claim for Himself, that He was stronger than Satan. He looked at the Pharisees, the rulers, and the people, and He said, Here is the reason of your blindness. You are under the dominion of Satan; a strong man armed holds you fast and safely; and there is no breaking away from that bondage unless a stronger than he come to deliver you.

In continuation of that parable He spoke another, that weird parable of the empty house, the house from which the evil spirit had been dislodged, but which finding no new tenant, the evil spirit returned with seven other spirits, and whose last state was worse than the first (Luke 11:24-26).

That gives us our Lord's view of men as under the mastery of evil spirits.

At last He said to the men who were opposing Him, in terms so explicit as to be full of terror until this time, "**Ye are of your father the devil, "a murderer from the beginning, "a liar and the father of it"** (John 8:44); therefore you murder and you lie.

JESUS looked out, and He saw false ideals, false rule, perversity, and why? Because men were blind, and could not see. And why? Because they were mastered by evil, by evil spirits, by spiritual antagonisms. That teaching was revolutionary in His day, and it is still; and it is because we have lost sight of it, that we do not understand how to deal with the problems that confront the Christian Church.

Finally our Lord taught that men are blind and in spiritual slavery.

They are spiritually dead. One word is enough, that startling word of JESUS, so easily read, but so searching, how when a man said to Him under a holy impulse, "**Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God**" (Luke 9:59-60).

That father was not physically dead. That was not a request to remain to a funeral. It was a request to remain for years, perhaps, to take care of his father. CHRIST's outlook upon men is that they are spiritually dead, because severed from the life and from the virtue that come from fellowship with GOD; in anarchy, because under a spiritual domination which is evil.

And so Finally what appeal did anarchy make to Him?

He saw it clearly, and He had come to establish the Kingdom of GOD. In order to do that, what were the things needed in view of the anarchy? First that there should be a clear revelation of true authority. All we have said as to blindness reveals this. Read once more in the eleventh chapter of Matthew the paragraph on John in prison; and immediately following it, on the unreasonableness of the generation; and immediately following it, on the unrepentant cities.

It moves on until CHRIST said, "**I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.**

Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:25-28).

In that general survey we discover that CHRIST claimed to be able to reveal to men the true authority, in order that they might be led back to submission thereto.

But that was not enough. Not merely does anarchy ask for the revelation of the true authority; it asks for power to dispossess, and to repossess. It asks for the Stronger than the strong man armed, in order that the strong man armed may be despoiled. It asks for a tenant to indwell the house; for it is not enough to cast the evil spirit out, and leave the house swept and garnished. There must be an Indweller, Who shall hold and possess it; or else seven other evil spirits may enter in, and make the last case worse than the first. Anarchy is asking for some One mighty enough to master the strong man armed, and dwell in the house, and hold it as against his power.

Consequently anarchy demands spiritual renewal.

Men cannot see the Kingdom. Then they must have life, be born from above, in which life shall come new vision. They cannot enter it. Then they need new life, in order that in the power of that life they may enter in, and abide.

The Lord saw the rule of GOD, and the realm over which that rule might be exercised, and the glorious results that would follow therein; but He also saw the rule disobeyed, because another rule was obeyed; He saw the realm desolate over which GOD should reign; and consequently all the gracious results absent in human life individually, socially, nationally, and racially. Therefore He knew that in order to establish the rule, the anarchy must be dealt with, not superficially, but radically.

How far is all this true to-day? How far is it true today that there is an existing anarchy, whose manifestations are false ideals, false rule, perversity, whose reasons are human blindness, the dominion of evil spiritual forces, and consequently spiritual death?

In the measure in which these things abide, they are still making their appeal to the King, asking for authority, asking for a power that operates towards the Kingdom of GOD, and asking for life that men may see and enter in.

~ end of chapter 14 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
