

Born into the Kingdom.*

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ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD TO BE DESIRED.

Since the earliest days it has been recognized that God has a kingdom upon earth. The prophets spoke enthusiastically of its coming; the Jews of Christ's time considered it as soon to be established; Christ Himself taught and His followers believed that in His coming it was set up and was winning its way to universal supremacy.

Men, as we find them, are bent on having their own way, and hence are in rebellion against God and are not in His kingdom. Christ's effort is to make them God's loyal subjects, "Be ye reconciled to God." It is a marvellous thing—this silent and unseen kingdom steadily extending itself over the world, conquering heart after heart, modifying character, infusing its influence into nations, developing a new civilization and so changing the face of the world. The Jews thought of this kingdom as a mere temporal government breaking down others and securing to Jewish favorites place and power. In subsequent centuries Christians who succeeded them possibly swung to the opposite extreme and thought of the kingdom only as a matter of the hereafter. We of to-day are seeking a middle ground. Canon Fremantle has ably taught us that the kingdom of God is in the living present, and vitally related to all the questions of modern sociology.

To be in this kingdom is evidently a privilege. This was implied in Christ's language, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is a blessing in the kingdom. What blessing? Why, the peace that results from being in harmony with God. Created for a life under divine laws, we cannot be happy or successful while resisting God.

ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM ONLY THROUGH THE NEW BIRTH.

But how do men come into a harmonious relation to God as His loyal subjects? The law of heredity and the law of habit both touch us here. We have been in the habit of living in defiance of the Government of God. The great fundamental laws of His kingdom have been constantly disregarded. And so strong is the law of heredity upon us that we insensibly and naturally do as others have done before us in placing self before the will of God. How shall these influences be overcome? One force only can do it; we must be born anew. A supernatural divine influence must give us a new life. This thought was continually set forth in Christ's teachings; it profoundly impressed the mind of John, the mystic philosopher, and he brings it out repeatedly and in varying forms in reporting Christ's words. The Holy Spirit enters the soul of man, turns his mind in a new direction, changes his whole purpose, gives him new desires and motives, and makes him a new man. Jerry McAuley, the river thief, was but one of many who have undergone this amazing transformation. And more—whole nations have been lifted out of barbarism and made cultured, humane and self-denying. No human force has wrought this change or is adequate to it. The new birth, or the sudden and complete change of purpose and character and often of outward conduct that takes place on accepting Christ, is the standing miracle of the present day, the one thing that is manifestly wrought by the direct interposition of divine power. This is a new life so complete and wonderful that it may well be called a new birth. When we enter a kingdom, we are ordinarily born into it. Paul was fortunate that he could say that he was a Roman born. By an unhappy heredity we were not born into the kingdom of God. How, then, shall we have unquestioned right there as citizens? By a new birth.

KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THESE MYSTERIES COMES THROUGH CHRIST.

Here are great mysteries. How shall we comprehend them? We cannot comprehend them in full. We may know the results of the Spirit's influence on the

soul of man, but we cannot tell His methods. His work is like the movement of the wind,—"Thou knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth." Here we are dependent on testimony. Christ asked Nicodemus "Art thou the teacher of Israel and understandest not these things?" This was probably not so much a rebuke for not understanding as it was a suggestion that he could not know by his own learning. No earthly training or position could give the knowledge. It could come only through divine revelation. We must humbly accept these doctrines from Christ. They are not to be wrought out of human reason. They cannot be forged in the white heat of philosophic thought. Christ who has seen these truths in practice, Christ who Himself lives the divine life, Christ who has come down from heaven as the Messianic Son of Man, as it was prophesied He should, Christ who is Himself divine and therefore represents the kingdom and receives all who enter it,—this Christ bears testimony concerning the terms of our admission and says "Ye must be born anew." Mysterious words, but words not to be questioned.

And not only must this knowledge be revealed by Christ, but we, to understand it even, must have been born anew. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"—not only cannot enter it, but cannot even see it. The humble Christian alone is sufficiently docile to see the truth. He alone stands at the right angle to catch the distant gleam of sunlight.

This view of divine truth is made practical and comparatively clear as we see it in its earthly applications. "If I told you earthly things," said Christ, "and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" Every phase of divine truth has its illustrations in the affairs of earth. The kingdom of God is unquestionably set up among men and is showing its power and worth in modifying the conditions of our daily life. If, then, we would know what that kingdom is, we must study it in its present applications. If we fail to do this, we can know little of the life hereafter.

Bishop Schereschewsky and his Chinese Bible

A man of medium stature, thickset but not stout, with iron-gray hair and mustache and beard, still in the early sixties, paralyzed in his lower limbs and in his hands, so that he can neither walk nor hold a pen except with difficulty to sign his name, but capable with unwearied fingers to operate the typewriter; a quiet modest, gentle, soft-speaking scholar—such is the Rt. Rev. Dr. S. I. J. Schereschewsky, the retired Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in China, as seen and sketched by *The Literary World*, Boston, which adds, "and as you, reader, might have seen him in the stateroom of the Pullman sleeper on the night train out of the Union Station, Boston, for Montreal." The writer says:

"He carried with him in manuscript the translation of the Bible into classic Chinese, upon which he has been engaged for many years, and the typewriter cabinet upon which it was made. Thus nears conclusion one of the stupendous literary works of the present century. The performance of it is an honour to Christian America, and the sight of this patient and devoted scholar in the midst of it has been an inspiration.

"Bishop Schereschewsky (pronounced *Sherreshevsky*) is a Russian Luthuanian. He was educated partly in his native town of Tanroggen, partly in Krazi, partly in Zhitomer, partly at Breslau. He was a convert from the Hebrew religion to the Christian, and he is one of the accomplished linguists of the age. In his youth he memorized the entire Hebrew Bible. In twenty-one years of residence at Peking he became a Chinese scholar. The New Testament brought him to Christianity, and Christianity brought him to the United States, and the Church in the United States educated him for the ministry and sent him back to China as a missionary, and in 1877 made him a bishop for that vast empire. His first great literary work was a translation of the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures into Mandarin, which is the spoken language of 200,000,000 of Chinese, and of which some thirty editions have been published. He was also one of the translators of the Greek New Testament into the same tongue. His incidental works have been translations of the prayer-book into Mandarin, and of the gospel of St. Mark into Mongolian, and the beginning of a Mongolian dictionary. His last great work will probably be the translation from the original Hebrew and Greek of the entire Bible into the Wen-li, or classic language of China, which is read by 400,000,000 in China, Japan and Farther India. If there is any other living scholar who can translate from Hebrew directly into Chinese we should be glad to publish his name."

*A Meditation based on Lesson I, "The New Birth" (John iii: 1-13) in the Bible Study Union Course on "The Teachings of Christ."