

they shall have the Spirit of God. The Letter to the Hebrews quotes the prophecy relative to the new covenant, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days saith the Lord; *I will put my laws into their mind, and will write them in their hearts*: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." This is then the Biblical conception of the true nature of the kingdom of God.

Thus the kingdom of God is set up in individual hearts; that is not to conclude that the kingdom of God is not manifested by a fellowship between the individual members of the kingdom of God. The very nature of the kingdom implies such a fellowship, Rom. 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*." The primary reference in *righteousness* is to justification, but a righteousness of justification manifests itself in righteous conduct and attitude toward others. This individual surety of the kingdom, is the foundation to service to God and man; Heb. 12:28, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Jesus says that when we serve our fellows, we serve him, Matt. 25:40, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

8. Those who are of the kingdom of God must show themselves steadfast. Thus Jesus says, Luke 9:62, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and *looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*." Only those who are steadfast in faith are of the kingdom. This steadfastness of faith depends upon the full bestowal of our affections or hearts upon the kingdom; thus Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

9. Since the kingdom of God is spiritual, only those who are able to discern spiritual things may know or understand the kingdom of God. Thus Jesus said to his disciples, Matt. 13:11, "Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." The parallel statement in Mark 4:11 adds definiteness to this statement, "And he said unto them, *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God*: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." Pertinent to this principle is the statement of the Apostle Paul, I Cor. 2:12-14, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that ye might know the things which are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The things of the kingdom of God are apprehended only through spiritual discernment.

10. It is for every one who will, not only to enter into the kingdom of God, but to enter in abundantly. This is fairly stated in Jesus saying, Jno. 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In his sermon on the Mount Jesus said, Matt. 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." In the same discourse, Matt. 7:21, he affirms that it is necessary in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven to do the will of God in a proper spirit, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

We will be called upon to endure denials and handships in order to a full entrance into the kingdom of God. We may be called upon to place the kingdom of heaven above relatives and even to forsake them, Luke 18:29, "And he said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Endurance of persecution bestows the blessings of the kingdom, Matt. 5:10, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." We enter into the fulness of the kingdom

through tribulation, Acts 14:22, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Those who enter fully into the kingdom of God must pay the price.

11. Since attainment in the kingdom of God depends upon many things, there are likely to be degrees of attainment; especially under the new dispensation we have a great advantage, Matt. 11:11, "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." By designating certain as least, the idea of degrees is fairly implied.

Jesus more definitely states this idea in Matt. 5:19-20, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." There is an observed prominence to those in the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 13:43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

12. Jesus in his sample prayer for his disciples, has them utter a petition for the coming of the kingdom and making God King, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," and in closing the prayer, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." He tries to make his disciples understand that it is God's will to give them the kingdom, Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The kingdom of which Jesus speaks is no temporal kingdom, but it shall endure eternally. They shall be with him in his kingdom in heaven. Daniel, the prophet, perceived this quality of the kingdom, Dan. 7:27, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions shall serve and obey him." Daniel perceived the kingdom of God as an everlasting kingdom. Thus he seemed to understand its spiritual nature, for no temporal kingdom can be everlasting. Peter has the concept of an everlasting kingdom, II Pet. 1:11, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

13. There comes a time of the consummation of the kingdom of God, when it shall be entirely of heaven. Paul says, I Cor. 15:24, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power." After that the kingdom will be entirely in heaven. Thus sometimes the kingdom is spoken of in this phase of its existence. Thus Jesus said, Luke 22:29-30, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Similar is the reference in Matt. 26:29, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This phase of the kingdom receives much emphasis in parts of the Scriptures.

James mentions the kingdom of God in this same sense in Jas. 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" James appears to almost separate this phase of the kingdom from the kingdom as extant among men in the world. There seems to be a recognition of the fact that one might withdraw from the kingdom as it exists in this world among men, and the heavenly kingdom is anticipated by special preparation and deliverance by the Lord; thus in II Tim. 4:18, "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

(To be continued next issue)