

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN SAD CONDITION

BISHOP HUGHES (Methodist), of California, recently spoke in Boston. He complimented the Catholic Church and berated his own denomination and, incidentally, called attention to the sad state of God's Kingdom. In its report of the address the Boston Transcript says: "Praise for the Roman Catholic Church and what it does for its children, was given by Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, of California, before a large congregation at the Bromfield Street Methodist Church last evening at the final session of the Sunday School Institute. Bishop Hughes said: –

"You talk about the *wonderful hold the Roman Catholic Church has upon its people*. You ask, how does it do it? I will tell you how it does it. *They instruct their children*. It is borne in upon the consciousness of every child in every good Roman Catholic home, as soon as it comes to any sort of understanding, that the Church is the instrument of his salvation, and he is held right to that idea. They establish their catechetical classes, they run their parochial schools with a religious purpose, and they lay an enormous emphasis upon taking care of their children. *"I say to you, if the Roman Catholic Church is willing to pay that price for holding its own, and the Methodist Episcopal Church is not willing to pay that price for holding its own – then I say the Roman Catholic Church deserves to be the coming Church.*

"The Protestant Church that does not see that its future is inevitably bound up with the religious instruction is just as certainly doomed to failure as I am standing here tonight. If the members of the Roman Catholic Church are more willing, under the instructions of their priests, to obey the laws of God with reference to the children of the Church than our people are, under our instruction, then I say that the Roman Catholic Church is entitled to the credit of the whole business. *"When God Almighty puts into the arms of any earthly parents a new life, then I say that God Almighty pays those parents*

*the biggest compliment that he can possibly pay.* That child is God's child ere he is our child, and *he is to be held as a member of the Kingdom of God. We of the Methodist Church hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the Kingdom of God.* If this is so, then the biggest task we have is *to keep them members of that Kingdom.* I believe the greatest church on earth is the Christian home; the finest sanctuary to be found anywhere is the Christian home."

## **THE SUNDAY SCHOOL EFFECT**

The Bishop used the above words in connection with an address on Sunday School Work. His words endorse our presentations of the subject. In *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Vol. VI., we call attention to the fact that Sunday Schools are an innovation little more than one century old. We point out that they are the expression of human wisdom merely – that neither to the Jews nor to Christians did God give directions respecting Sunday School organizations. The Divine arrangement is that each family should complete a unit and that the parents should be the instructors of the children in religious things. In disregarding this Divine arrangement two evils have ensued: –

(1) The parents have felt relieved of the responsibility of teaching their children and thus have lost a great blessing and source of personal instruction. **[R4776 : page 72]**

(2) The children have been taught to look elsewhere for the highest information, and correspondingly to disrespect their parents as unqualified to be their instructors. As a result, disrespect and disobedience to parents have increased and parental interest in and control over their children have diminished.

We urge upon all parents everywhere within the range of our influence to weigh the responsibility resting upon them in respect to their children. Whoever brings into the world a child, should feel the responsibility toward it for food and raiment and reasonable comfort,

and particularly for moral and religious instruction. Regardless of what others do or do not, all of the Lord's consecrated people should be faithful to this great trust. No service to the Lord could possibly be acceptable as a sacrifice if it meant the neglect of duty to one's children.

## **ATONEMENT AND THE KINGDOM**

We are glad to note that Bishop Hughes recognizes the unconditional benefits of the Atonement in respect to *all children*. His reference to the Kingdom of God, however, clearly shows that his understanding respecting it is quite vague. There are at this moment at least eight hundred millions of children under ten years of age. If these all be members of the Kingdom of God, our Savior was quite in error when he declared: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Eight hundred millions could hardly be called a little flock. And besides, Jesus said the Kingdom had not yet been given. On the contrary, did he not teach us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven"?

We ask the Bishop, and as many as this article shall reach, to consider the improbability of the Bishop's view of matters being true – the incorrectness of the Methodist view. If earthly parents have a responsibility for their children, how about the heavenly Creator or Parent, "In whom all live and move and have their being?" Has God no responsibility for all the children born into the world? Would he neglect his duty, if earthly parents [R4776 : page 73] did neglect theirs? Are the thousands of millions of heathendom and Christendom going to a burning hell because of neglect of their education by the great Life-Giver or Father?

Let us reason a little on the Bishop's statement of Methodist views. If Christ made an atonement for the sins of all mankind, of what purpose or value has it been as yet to any but the handful, the "little flock," whom our Lord declares will receive the Kingdom of God by and by – the Kingdom prayed for?

We look all about us for God's Kingdom quite in vain. The heathen three-fourths of humanity are surely not God's Kingdom, nor any credit to any Kingdom or government. The one-fourth of humanity known as Christendom (Christ's Kingdom) does not appear to be the genuine article. It is full of jarring creeds, selfish antagonisms, bitterness, envy, hatred, strife, "works of the flesh and of the Devil." Its most civilized nations are spending thousands of millions of dollars on war preparations – and this after more than eighteen hundred years of the reign of Messiah, as Bishop Hughes and the Methodist friends think.

### **ALL A GREAT MISTAKE**

Our Methodist friends and many others have, according to the Bible, made a great mistake in their theology on this point. God's Kingdom is not here. It has not yet come. We are still, in the language of the Apostle, "waiting for the Kingdom of God's dear Son." The promise is still more sure that the faithful, saintly overcomers of this Gospel Age will sit with Messiah in his Throne of spirit control during his Messianic Kingdom. We are still waiting for it. Neither the heathen children nor the heathen parents, nor the Christian children, nor the Christian parents are yet in the Kingdom which has not yet come.

We are glad that the Bishop sees that the Atonement of Christ is universal – for all mankind. We ask him to look again at the subject and to note that in the present Age, during the past eighteen centuries, God has been merely selecting the saintly followers of Jesus to constitute with him the Kingdom or ruling class. These are the little children, or humble children of God. "Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

God has not only arranged that the Atonement work of the Savior shall be for the sins of the whole world, but he has also provided that there shall be a time and an opportunity in which the Redeemer will make his atonement work available to all mankind – heathen and

Christian, old and young. To them he will give the opportunity of Restitution to all that was lost in Adam and provided for at Calvary. This will be at the Second Coming of Christ, as St. Peter explains in Acts 3:19-23.

Then Messiah will set up, establish, his Kingdom – a thousand years' reign of righteousness. Satan will then be bound and the darkness which belongs to his reign of sin and death will give place to the glorious light of the knowledge of God. Under those favorable conditions humanity will not have an opportunity of becoming kings and priests unto God, members of the "little flock"; but they will all have the opportunity of becoming identified with the Kingdom, not as kings, but as subjects. They will all have the opportunity of attaining everlasting life as human beings in this world, which will then gradually be transformed – Paradise regained. Meantime the unwilling, rebellious, disobedient, as St. Peter says, will be "destroyed from amongst the people" – Second Death.

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIAN PARENTS**

The fact that God has not neglected his responsibilities, but is working out his glorious purposes to fulfil them, must not make Christian parents negligent. On the contrary, the example should make them all the more careful by showing them a parent's obligations. Some of the children may so respond as to become eligible to a share in the Kingdom proper, as members of the Royal Priesthood, who shall sit upon the Throne; but to the others, parents also have a duty. Such should be taught, not that all transgressions will be punished alike, in eternal torment, but that every transgression, great and small, will receive eventually a just recompense of reward. They should be taught that whatsoever is sown will be reaped, and that advancements under the blessings of the Kingdom may be promoted or retarded by their present conduct, by obedience or disobedience to the Divine law. Such rational teaching will appeal much more quickly to the children than will any amount of falsification and misrepresentation concerning

eternal torment, fire, etc., in which no reasonable person longer believes, and which came not from the Bible, but from the "Dark Ages."

