The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church Geerhardus Vos The Princeton Theological Review 2:335-336. [1904]

This little book is the second published in a series of volumes being issued on the Teachings of Jesus by the American Tract Society, under the editorship of its Publishing Secretary, Dr. John H. Kerr. The aim of the series is to furnish a popular and untechnical yet not too elementary discussion of the principal aspects of our Lord's teaching. In view of the numerous recent attempts to popularize the results of the so-called liberal interpretation of Jesus' life and teaching, this is surely a timely and laudable undertaking for which the Society deserves the thanks of all conservative Christians.

In the present volume our Lord's doctrine of the kingdom is presented from a biblico-theological point of view, so as to define its place in the larger field of revelation as well as in the field of Jesus' teaching historically considered. The attempt is made throughout to reproduce our Lord's own point of view and keep the discussion in close touch with this. After an introductory chapter pointing out the prominence of the conception of the kingdom in the discourses of Jesus, its relation to the Old Testament is discussed. Next, the meaning of the distinction between "kingship" and "kingdom," and between "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of heaven," is set forth in chapter 3. The fourth chapter deals with the view which has been recently gaining vogue, that Jesus held a purely eschatological conception of the kingdom, and did not look upon the spiritual results of his labor on earth as in any sense a realization of the same. The author here seeks to show that the idea of an internal, spiritual kingdom realized gradually cannot, without doing critical or exegetical violence to the record, be eliminated from our Lord's teaching. In the next chapter certain current misconceptions regarding the present and future kingdom are corrected. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 deal with the essence of the kingdom as consisting in the supremacy of God in the sphere of saving power and of righteousness, and in the state of human blessedness resulting from this. A separate chapter is devoted to the delicate and eminently practical question of the relation between the church and the kingdom, and the modern tendency to separate the two is shown to find only a very partial and qualified warrant in the utterances of Jesus. The tenth chapter treats of the entrance into the kingdom through repentance and faith. A concluding chapter recapitulates the important doctrinal principles embodied in our Lord's kingdom teaching. An index of subjects and one of texts are appended. The book is printed from large type, and this, as well as its general make-up, gives it an attractive external appearance.