

Meyer's Support for Weiss's Eschatology*

GEORGE WESLEY BUCHANAN, Ph.D., Litt.D.

B. F. Meyer recently attempted to clarify some of the eschatological confusion he recognized in scholarly circles today.¹ His first point was to prove that Johannes Weiss was correct in his analysis of Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of God. That is the only point to which this essay is a response. After five pages of argument, Meyer wrote:

In the light of the above briefly presented and yet relatively massive and convergent evidence, one wonders on what grounds (other than preference) an historical investigation might conclude that, unlike the Baptist and unlike his own disciples and other early Christians, Jesus did *not* expect the consummation of history in the near future.²

Since Meyer nowhere demonstrated that John the Baptist, the disciples of Jesus, or other early Christians expected the consummation of history, no attempt will be made here to show that Jesus differed from these. In fact, scholars might be expected to assume, unless shown otherwise, that Jesus shared many of the same ideas as his disciples, John the Baptist, early Christians and contemporary Jews. The attempt here will be

- 1) to examine the evidence Meyer made for his claims in relationship to the works of Dalman and Carmignac,
- 2) to point out some overlooked biblical evidence necessary for a fair analysis of the Kingdom of God and the ends expected, and
- 3) to relate this evidence to later Christian and Jewish interpretation of the Kingdom of God.

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¹B. F. Meyer, "Jesus' Scenario of the Future," *The Downside Review*, January, 1991.

²Meyer, "Scenario," 6.

I. MEYER'S EVIDENCE

First Meyer selected some Gospel texts which he claimed "made thematic the imminent consummation of time and history." Some of these were passages that pictured Jesus proclaiming "the fulfillment of God's promises and Israel's hope."³ It is true, of course, that the Gospels report Jesus announcing that the Kingdom of heaven was near. As Meyer pointed out, Jesus told of the fulfillment of God's promises and Israel's hope. What he has not shown here is that this fulfillment meant the consummation of time and history. How can anyone derive that from these passages? Meyer has given no clue. Meyer concluded that Jesus' parables left the impression that his was the "last generation of history." Again, he failed to explain how this was demonstrated. Just as he took "the fulfillment of God's promises and of Israel's hope" to mean "the imminent consummation of time and history,"⁴ so Meyer equated "the restoration of Israel coming to realization in those who responded to Jesus' proclamation, symbolic acts and teaching with a 'Yes!'" with "globally conceived consummation, e.g. 'the reign of God.'"⁵

From the parables he held that the reign of God was like a wedding (Matt. 25:1), a distribution of wages (Matt. 20:1), a harvest (Matt. 13:24), the settlement of accounts (Matt. 18:23), but he did not show how any of these dealt with the end of time and history. To be sure, he noted that the harvest is the end-time; the settlement of accounts was intended to evoke the judgment day; and he claimed that "it is important to recall, there is only one judgment of the world," but he did not demonstrate that.⁶ An end-time can mean the end of a day's work, the end of a week, the end of a year, or many other possibilities besides the end of time and its history. The reader has a right to expect some basis for saying that an end-time automatically has to be "the globally conceived consummation, e.g., 'the reign of God.'"⁷

³Meyer, "Scenario," 2.

⁴Some scholars have taken Revelation 10:6 as proof that time would come to an end, but there are very few scholars today who accept that. "There will be no more time [to wait]" is the correct meaning. The three and a half years prophesied in Daniel was already over, so there would be no more time to wait until the old Gentile age came to an end.

⁵Meyer, "Scenario," 3.

⁶Meyer, "Scenario," 3.

⁷Meyer, "Scenario," 3.

Meyer said the eschaton was absolute because the term, “the coming one,” was transcendent. Proof for that was the claim that “the coming one” would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Transcendence is not the only possible interpretation of that passage. Meyer said Jesus’ followers spoke Aramaic. Also without proof he said the Hellenists had a different eschatology from the Hebrews but both “envisaged the early end of the world.”⁸ He correctly said that “Israel recognized no distant end to history,” but he was mistaken in thinking that “In the light of the evidence that we have reviewed above, there is little doubt (I would say) that the prophecy of Jesus belonged to absolute eschatology.” He concluded his case by accusing other scholars who rejected Weiss’s analysis of refusing to treat the matter in terms of evidence.⁹

Since Meyer has made many claims that Jesus taught and proclaimed the consummation of history, the end of history, the end of time, and the globally conceived consummation, one might have expected some evidence that he would have addressed precisely to that question. He apparently thought he had given all the evidence needed to prove what he took for granted. Therefore the next step in this study will be to address some of the questions he took for granted: What evidence is available for learning what the expression “the Kingdom of God” or “the reign of God” means? When Jews and early Christians expected the end to come, what kind of an end did they have in mind?

II. THE KINGDOM

The expressions “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of heaven” nowhere appear in the Hebrew Scripture, but the equivalent is “Kingdom of Yahowah.”¹⁰ Nathan was talking about Palestine when he promised that God would raise up one of David’s sons to establish the Lord’s kingdom (1 Chron. 17:11). This son was Solomon who built the Lord’s house and was confirmed in the Lord’s kingdom for the age (1 Chron. 17:2-4). Nathan said Solomon would be God’s son (1 Chron. 17:13; 22:10) and he would sit on the throne of the Kingdom of Yahowah over Israel (1 Chron.

⁸Meyer, “Scenario,” 5.

⁹Meyer, “Scenario,” 7.

¹⁰For a justification of this pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton see GWB, “Some Unfinished Business with the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Revue de Qumran*, 49-52 13, 1988; *Mémorial Jean Carmignac*, ed. F. Garcia Martinez et E. Puech, Paris, 1988, 411-20.

28:5). The throne of the kingdom was the throne on which Solomon sat when he ruled from Jerusalem. This is not any “reign,” because thrones are not placed in reigns. They are stationed in palaces of kings which are located in kingdoms where kings rule. The relationship of the expression “Kingdom of Yahowah” to Solomon’s reign is the basis from which to begin research on the Kingdom of Yahowah, the Lord, or God. This seems to be a very political term that was applied either to Solomon’s kingdom or to God’s kingdom which functioned only when there was a king ruling over Judah or Israel. In fact Obadiah looked forward to the day of Yahowah when the enemies of Judah would be punished, and Zion would be restored to power (Obad. 15, 21). At that time the kingdom would become the Lord’s (Obad. 21), as if it had not been before that military victory. One medieval document, *The Book of Zerubbabel*, exists in four texts. Two of these, the Wertheimer text and the Bodleian Library text, have an important variant. The Wertheimer text reads: “After this, *and the kingdom will be the Lord’s* (Obad. 21), and *the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom*” (Dan. 7:18), but the Bodleian text is as follows: “. . . *and the kingdom will be Israel’s* (Obad. 21), and *the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom*” (Dan. 7:18). The Bodleian author apparently thought the Kingdom of the Lord was the Kingdom of Israel.¹¹ A letter pseudonymously written and falsely attributed to Moses, son of Maimonides, during the Crusades, falsely quoted Saladin as saying, “It is not for me to rule over the Kingdom of God.” Saladin was reported as saying that he knew that the Jewish king would take the Kingdom of God from him as soon as he captured Jerusalem, but he would gladly give the kingdom to the Jewish king peacefully, hoping to find favour in his eyes.¹² The author thought Saladin and the Christians were fighting over the Kingdom of God. He expected Moslems to win, and he hoped Jews could be the final victors of this war. The author’s dreams, however, did not work out, because Saladin did not have the same goals.

A medieval commentary on the Song of Solomon 2:12 goes like this: “*The time of singing has come. The time of the Israelites has come for redemption. The time of the uncircumcision has come to be cut off. The time of the kingdom of the Cutheans (i.e., Christians) has come to be destroyed. The time of the kingdom of heaven has come that it may be*

¹¹GWB, *Revelation and Redemption*, Dillsboro, c1978; (sold by Mercer U. Press), 381.

¹²GWB, *Revelation*, 198.

revealed as it is said, *the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land*" (Song of Solomon 2:12).¹³ In this context, there is not much question about the meaning of the Kingdom of heaven.

These and other¹⁴ examples all treat the Kingdom of Yahowah as if it were a sacred name given to the land that was also called the promised land or the glorious land. Its capital was called the city of God, the heavenly city, the glorious mountain, and other similar religious titles.¹⁵ These were concepts held hundreds of years before Christ and also used as late as the Crusades. Unless there were strong, direct evidence that Jews and Christians stopped thinking of Palestine in such devoted terms as this at the time of Jesus and then started again later, it would seem reasonable to presume that the Kingdom of God was either another name for the promised land or else it was a code name for God's kingdom that functioned only when a local king ruled over the promised land.

III. DALMAN'S ROLE IN THE STUDY

Meyer called Dalman to his side to prove that the expression *he basileia tou theou*, which was used by Jews, "took on an absolute ('end-of-the-world') sense"¹⁶ when used by Jesus. Dalman's reference to which Meyer referred is as follows:

It cannot be ascertained that any idea of a pre-existence of the divine rule in heaven was contemplated in this connection. That which exists from the first is God as Ruler or Sovereign. The new element, which the future brings, belongs to the sphere of the earthly realisation of His sovereignty. There is here no thought of pre-existent "realities" emerging into the course of the world.¹⁷

The "new element" involved here was not Jesus' innovations but the distinction made between the Hebrew Scripture and the later references found in rabbinic and intertestamental literature. At no place in this entire unit of Dalman's discussion (B. The Jewish Use of the Idea, 96-101) did

¹³GWB, *Revelation*, 329.

¹⁴These are only a few of the examples taken from GWB, *Jesus: The King and his Kingdom*, Macon, 1984, 11-41.

¹⁵See further, GWB, *Hebrews*, 222.

¹⁶Meyer, "Scenario," 2.

¹⁷G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, Edinburgh, 1902, 101.

he ever use the word "Jesus," or quote any passage from the New Testament. It is true that Dalman intended to support Weiss in his argument, and it is also true that many scholars have accepted Dalman's conclusions without question, but it is not true that Dalman proved that the expression involved means "the sovereignty of God" rather than the Kingdom of God. He began his discussion on the question showing that "heaven" was a euphemism for God, but the vital word, *malchut*, was bypassed without a question. He concluded his discussion about heaven by saying, "Although *malchuta dishmaya* is thus tantamount to the "sovereignty of God, . . ."¹⁸ Two pages later, as if he had demonstrated his statement, he said, "No doubt can be entertained that both in the Old Testament and in Jewish literature, *malchut*, when applied to God, means always the 'kingly rule,' never the 'kingdom,' as if it were meant to suggest the territory governed by Him."¹⁹ So Dalman began his study with "no doubt," and the rest of his study gives scores of rabbinic examples which he translated "the sovereignty of God," without ever demonstrating his justification for that translation. This required him to translate Jesus' assurance to his apostles that Jesus would not drink from the fruit of the vine until he drank it anew with them "in the sovereignty of God" (Matt. 26:29).²⁰ Jesus was apparently telling his disciples that he would not drink wine until the next Passover, when he and they would again celebrate this feast, at that time in the *basileia* of God, some place where they were not at the time he spoke. If this were rendered "kingdom," the meaning is clear. He expected to be in charge of the Kingdom of God at a future Passover, and they would all drink wine in that kingdom—a kingdom that did not exist when Jesus spoke, but how would they drink wine in God's *sovereignty* that they were not doing at the time of this discussion? Dalman saw no problem with this translation; he just automatically rendered *basileia* by "sovereignty," whether it made sense or not. But according to the Gospels, Jesus said people would come from the East and the West into the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11). The Matthaean text is a midrash on Isa. 49:8, 12, which promises the return of the diaspora Jews to the promised land, and Isa. 59:19, 20 which promised that the Lord would return to Zion as a redeemer for the Jews. When that happened, people would fear the name of the Lord from the

¹⁸Dalman, *Words*, 91, 92.

¹⁹Dalman, *Words*, 94.

²⁰Dalman, *Words*, 110.

West (of Zion) and from the rising of the sun (East of Zion).²¹ Like the texts from Isaiah, the midrash used the terms “East and West” in relationship to a certain geographical territory, identified as “the [promised] land” and Zion. But Jesus reportedly called this land “the Kingdom of heaven.” How would diaspora Jews come from these geographical territories into the “sovereignty” of heaven?

The *basileia* was not just a vague idea or action; it was a place in which people could eat and drink, where they might enter (Matt. 5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23, 24), the way Israelites once entered Canaan. It was also a place from which people could be exported (Matt. 8:11, 12). People might inherit it, just as the Israelites once inherited the promised land (Matt. 25:34; Gen. 28:4; Lev. 25:46; Deut. 2:31; 16:20) or received it (Josh. 13:8; 18:7) or as the saints of the Most High receive the kingdom (Dan. 7:18). Whoever, on the other hand, received or inherited the “reign” or “rule” would become the ruler, the way David inherited the royal throne and became king (1 Mac. 2:57). Whoever inherited or received the “sovereignty” would become the sovereign. This seems to mean anyone who inherited the “sovereignty of God” would have to become God. Some inheritance!

These difficulties were overlooked by Meyer and Weiss. Meyer apparently misunderstood Dalman, but even if he had used Dalman’s work accurately he would not have had a solid source to support his and Weiss’s position.

IV. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL MIRAGE

It was Carmignac who examined all of the terms related to “king” in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and rabbinic literature.²² He noted that the terms *malchut/meluchah/mamlechah* can all be used to mean “rule, royal, or kingdom.” Correspondingly, only *malchu* or *malchuta* in Aramaic is used for all of these meanings. The same is true of the Greek *basileia* which means “rule, royal, or kingdom,” depending on the context. In the works of Josephus, for example, the term occurs twenty-eight times referring to the authority of kings, those who aspired to be

²¹Notice also the number of parables Jesus used that dealt with fields. The Pharisees were like plants in a field (Matt. 15:12, 13); the sower sowed grain in a field (Matt. 13:3-32, 37-43); the treasure was hidden in a field (Matt. 13:44).

²²J. Carmignac, *Le Mirage de l’Eschatologie*, Paris, 1979, 13-22.

kings, or had the honours of kings. “Royalty,” “reign,” or “ruling authority” would seem to be appropriate translations for these. Fourteen others deal with a principality related either to the office or territory of a king. They might be rendered “royal government” or “kingdom.” Forty-seven other instances refer to the territory ruled by a king and should be rendered “kingdom.”²³ It is not always certain which interpretation should be given to every use of the Greek term, but there is not much danger of being misunderstood. If it describes the crown, robes, or honours of a certain king, then the adjective “royal” is in order. If it is the territory of a certain king, then it should be rendered “kingdom.” Whether the strategic expression is called “the rule of God,” or the “Kingdom of God,” it is assumed that God is in charge, but there is also a geographical territory involved. This is also identified and should not be ignored. In the Scripture, the territory is that once ruled by Solomon while he sat on the throne at Jerusalem.

V. BIBLICAL ENDS

Of all the words and expressions found in the Bible that are related to eschatology, none of them is used in a context that demands a global consummation, the end of history or of time. For example, the expression that is sometimes translated “the end of days” (*be'acharith hayamim/ ep' eschaton ton hemeron*) is never used in a context that means the end of time. It is paralleled with expressions that mean “after this” (Dan. 2:29, 45; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17) or “in the future” (2 Pet. 3:3, 4; Jas. 5:3; 2 Tim. 3:1). Ben Sira used these words to describe the “end of the days of your life” (Sira 33:23)—not the end of the days of the cosmos or of time. In a place where the Aramaic of Daniel reads “the end of days” (*liketzat yomya*, 4:31), the Septuagint renders it “at the end of seven years” (Dan. 4:34), to cohere with the context. The days that came to an end at that time were the days during which Nebuchadnezzar had lost his reason—not the end of time. In no instance in the New Testament, Hebrew Scriptures or Dead Sea Scrolls is this expression used to mean the end of time or history.²⁴

The Greek word used in both the Septuagint and the New Testament

²³See GWB, *Jesus*, 16, for documentation of all these passages.

²⁴For an examination of every use see GWB, “Eschatology and the ‘End of Days,’” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 20, 1961; 188-93.

for end is *sunteleion*.²⁵ This term is used ninety-one times in the Septuagint and seven times in the New Testament. As a verb this term means “to finish, complete, destroy” (Ex. 5:12; 36:2; Psa. 58:13; Isa. 32:6; Tobit 8:19; 14:10; 1 Mac. 3:42; 8:31; 2 Mac. 4:3). As a noun it means “the completion, the end, or the destruction,” but the end involved is not the end of time or history. It is the end of a wing (3 Kgdms 6:22), of a city (4 Kgdms 13:17, 19; Jer. 4:26; 5:10, 18), of life (Sir. 11:17), of lawless people (Sir. 21:9), of fear of the Lord (Sir. 21:11), of works (Sir. 38:28, 29), of speech (Sir. 43:27), of boasting (Sir. 45:7; 50:11), or of light (Job 26:10). When applied to time it means the end of a year (Ex. 23:16; Deut. 11:12; 2 Chron. 24:22; Dan. 11:13) or of seven years (Dan. 4:30). The most important eschatological usages of this term are in Daniel, where it means the end of anger (8:19; 11:36) or of the astonishment (12:6). The anger involved was God’s anger which expressed itself in the astonishment Antiochus Epiphanes* caused when he defiled the Temple and persecuted the Jewish people for three and a half years, from 167-164 B.C. When God’s anger came to an end, so did the astonishing activity of the Greek kings (Dan. 11:27, 45; 12:6, 7). The time of the end (Dan. 8:19; 9:26; 11:35, 39; 12:4) is the time of the end of a war (LXX Dan. 9:27). The remission of the Jewish people’s sins (Dan. 12:7) takes place at the same time. “All of these things will be completed” (Dan. 12:7), said the man clothed in linen.

VI. AGES THAT END

The end of the age does not mean the end of the world, time, or cosmos. The word *olam*, in biblical Hebrew, and *aion*,²⁶ in biblical Greek, are both primarily temporal terms,²⁷ which do not mean “eternal” or “eternity.” “From age to age” usually means from one earlier period in history to

²⁵*sunteleion* renders seventeen different Hebrew words. The great majority of times, however, it renders the Hebrew *kalah*.

*[with a further fulfillment in Antichrist (Matt. 24:15ff.)—eds.]

²⁶O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, tr. F. V. Filson (Philadelphia, 1950), 52, 61-63, correctly made the same judgment. Cullmann confused the issue, however, when he agreed with others that the expression, which literally means “into the age,” meant “eternity,” but then he claimed that “eternity” really meant endless time.

²⁷Even Dalman, *Words*, 54, agrees to the Hebrew term. Dalman thought the Greek term often meant “eternal” or “eternity” and that the Hebrew and Aramaic term in rabbinic literature often meant “world.” He was probably partially correct, but in both cases that which most scholars have taken to mean “eternal life” was really “life of the age [to come].” Jews and Christians had other words when they wanted to say, “world” or “eternal,” both in Hebrew and in Greek.

another later period with a meaning similar to “from generation to generation” (Deut. 32:7). The term *olam* often occurs in the plural in Hebrew Scripture and in rabbinic literature. It makes no sense as “worlds.” When Amos said, “as the days of [the] age (*kiyemay olam*)” (Amos 9:11), he did not refer to the beginning of creation or the end of the world, but to the age of David, as the context shows. In a passage where the Hebrew text says, “These are the last words of David” (2 Sam. 23:1), the targumic version is, “These are the words of the prophecy of David which he prophesied at the end of the age for the days of consolation that are destined to come” (Targ. 2 Sam. 23:1). The end of the age was the end of the reign of David*. The days of consolation that would follow would be the days of the reign of Solomon that succeeded the age of David. The consolation given here is the same as the consolation promised by Second Isaiah when he assured the Jews that they would be permitted to return to the promised land (Isa. 40:1).

The expression *haolam hazeh haolam haba* should not be translated “this world and the world to come,” but “this age and the age to come.” Matthew used the expression, “neither in this age nor in the age to come” (Matt. 12:32). Mark contrasted “now in this time” with “and in the age to come” (Mark 10:30). “This age” and “this time” were equivalent temporal concepts. The same is true of the related concept, “the age to come.”

Rabbis believed “this age” was the age when Gentiles ruled the chosen people and the promised land; “the age to come” would be the age when the land would be given or restored. For example, “this age” was the age when Israelites were in Egypt, the wilderness, or engaged in the conquest of Canaan. The age of Solomon was “the age to come.” In relationship to the age of the Babylonian captivity (this age), “the age to come” was the age of Ezra and Nehemiah. In relationship to the age of the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, and Greeks (this age), the Hasmonean age was “the age to come.” Christians thought of the Roman age following the death of Jesus as “this age” until the time of Constantine, which became “the age to come,” the Christian age. Rabbis thought Jerusalem would exist in “the age to come” (BB 75b), and those who inherited the land (Isa. 60:21) were those who had a share in “the age to come” (San. 10:1).

“The children of this age” were contrasted to the “children of light” (Luke 16:8); “the days of this age” are contrasted with “the days of the

*[It is the view of this journal that a future fulfillment is to be expected at the end of the present age – eds.]

righteous" (Sir. 18:10); and "this age" is contrasted to the "age you have promised them" (2 Bar. 14:13). The expression "the end of the age" was never applied by Jews to the age when Jews ruled or by Christians when Christians ruled. It was always the foreign rule that Jews and Christians wanted to end. Typologically, the three-and-a-half-year war between Greeks and Jews (167-54 B.C.) was the "birth pangs of the Messiah" or the "tribulation" that was predestined to take place before Hanukkah. The "end of these things" (LXX Dan. 12:7) was the end of this period of hardship that would conclude God's anger, the persecution, and Gentile age. Later Jews and Christians calculated their own ages as antitypes of the ages Daniel reported.²⁸ The idea that these Jews and Christians ever dreamed of the end of time, history, or the cosmos was invented by German scholars at the end of the nineteenth century. It does not have its origin in Palestine in New Testament times. Johannes Weiss's theories can teach us more about German philosophy and New Testament scholarship at the turn of the century than about Jewish and Christian thought-forms at the time of Christ.

VII. JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus was called a king. He was also called a Messiah, which means king, and Son of God, which means king. He referred to himself as the Son of man, which is a code name for a king. He expected to rule over the Kingdom of God. These constitute an impressive list of political synonyms to be applied to someone who was not associated with anything political! Not even Dalman could ignore all of these political expressions. He had to dismiss them with a "no doubt,"²⁹ but they really did leave a lot of doubt for Dalman's thesis. In the midst of his campaign Jesus told his apostles that because they had given up families, houses, and lands to participate in his programme, when the Kingdom came they would receive many more things like the ones they had given up (Matt. 19:28). To the victors belong the spoils. This is normal for a political or military campaign. Jesus reportedly promised his apostles that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel when he sat on his glorious throne, evidently in Jerusalem (Matt. 19:28). What did he mean by that? After his crucifixion some Jews were disappointed, because they had expected him to redeem Israel (Luke 24:19, 20). Somehow they related

²⁸See further GWB, "Cycles of Time and their Signs," *Jesus*, 253-83.

²⁹Dalman, *Words*, 94.

Jesus' work for the Kingdom of God to the redemption of Israel. Redemption of Israel involved restoration of the promised land. Why were these Jews not worried about the end of time or history the way Weiss would have been? Why not the global consummation of history that Meyer thought was the real factor of eschatology? What mention was there of an absolute or transcendent eschatology?

VIII. EVIDENCE AND APOLOGY

With all of Meyer's claim for evidence and logic, the real motivation for his argument was saved for his conclusion. He opposed those scholars who affirmed, even though they "should have known better—that Jesus was mistaken. . . . None of the prophets were [*sic.*] mistaken, least of all the greatest of them."³⁰ Meyer is afraid that someone might dare to find some human error in one or more of the prophets, especially Jesus*. Suppose they did? Would this bring an end to time and history? Would it destroy the Church? Would Christians lose their faith because of it? I doubt it. The Church is always strongest when it deals directly with facts. It is at its weakest when it betrays truth to defend dogma. None of us is free from error, but we should try to learn the truth and affirm it. Whenever we find something false, we should admit it, even though it has been precious to us, subjectively. Objective research does not start out with a hidden agenda committed to discover only that certain predetermined things are true and others false, no matter what the data indicate. The goal of research is to discover what is true and what is false after we have examined and tested the data. Scientists finally learned that we could survive if we admitted that the earth was not flat. Christians and Jews can probably also survive without believing that our religious ancestors did not expect an end to time, the world, and history. We are not required to be Zionistic eschatologists, but it would not hurt us to admit that our religious forbears were religiously tied to a certain piece of real estate in the Near East. Doctor Salk, the scholar who discovered a vaccine for polio, once said, "We have to let mistakes fail. Nature did not preserve the dinosaur."

³⁰Meyer, "Scenario," 14.

*[Dr. Buchanan's view, at this point, is not shared by the editors of this journal]

PROFESSOR MEYER REPLIES:

Professor Buchanan appears not to catch on to what constitutes evidence, and why it does, for eschatology. Still, let there be one last try. If a gospel text on the judgment theme alludes to "the men of Nineveh" and "the Queen of the South" as being *raised from the dead* to bear witness at the judgment, the judgment in question cannot be merely one among many judgments. It must be the unique, climactic, definitive judgment of the world. Numerous texts relating words of the Baptist and of Jesus offer comparable indices to the definitiveness of this imminent judgment.

So, instead of tediously repeating variations on "Meyer has nowhere demonstrated . . ." or "Meyer has given no clue . . ." Professor Buchanan might have asked himself, "Why is it that what seems so solid and cogent to Weiss, Dalman, Schweitzer, Bultmann, Jeremias, and now this fellow Meyer, seems so utterly to elude me?" I suggest that he attend to the combination of two motifs in *basileia tou theou* texts: the climactic and definitive.

What I referred to in Dalman's work (*Words of Jesus*, 96-101, especially 98-100) was the evidence for eschatology in *melak/malkut/melek* texts of Synagogue prayers that, like the Qaddish, go back to the time of Jesus.

Finally, what touching piety towards the Victorian governesses who used to insist that 'none' be followed by a verb in the singular! But things have changed. Fowler, Nicholson, Gowers and their peers stigmatize this "rule" as the merest panderism.