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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.
—Psalm 27:5*

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And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: and thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre...And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

—Exodus 29:5–6, 8–9 (See also 40:13–14.)

Clothed with the Garments of Salvation

The second consecration ceremony was the dressing of Aaron and his sons in the holy garments for glory and for beauty. Aaron, standing at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and having been washed with water, would be clothed in the seven special garments of his office. First, the white tunic (coat) would cover him from neck to ankle; then the blue robe would hang to his knees; then the pieces of the ephod would be fastened to him front and back, hanging to his waist; the breastplate with its twelve precious stones bearing the engraved names of the children of Israel would already be fastened to the ephod; then the skillfully-wrought belt (girdle) would be tied around Aaron's waist to hold tunic, robe, and ephod in place; then the white turban (mitre) would be wound around Aaron's head; finally, the golden crown would be fastened to the mitre. When all was in place, Aaron would be fully clothed with the garments of his high-priestly office.

Aaron's sons also would be clad in their priestly garments. First, their white tunics (coats) would be put upon them; next, the belts (girdles) that would hold their tunics in place; finally, the white turbans (bonnets) would be wound around their heads.

The dressing of the high priest and the other priests was a splendid ceremony. There stood all the priests in the lovely and costly robes of their office. How the precious gems must have flashed

and shone from the high priest's holy garments! How the golden thread and golden clasps and golden crown must have gleamed upon Aaron! How the rich and royal colors must have impressed the people! How pure and righteous and holy the priests must have appeared in their white vestures!

The dressing of the high priest and the other priests was a comforting ceremony for God's people. For all the priests would be clothed at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The tabernacle of the congregation refers to the tabernacle that would soon be built according to the pattern that God was showing Moses in Mount Sinai. The *tabernacle of the congregation* is literally the *tent of meeting*. It was the place where God would meet with his people in covenant fellowship as their covenant Father and covenant king. The *door* of the tent of meeting indicated that there was a way for God's people to approach unto him. By God's gracious provision the people had access to God's throne of grace. And the dressing of the priests took place at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation! Through the office of priest, God would bring his people unto himself!

The dressing of the high priest and the other priests was a typical ceremony. That is, it was a shadow to teach the people about the reality. The dressing of the priests finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who confessed in Isaiah 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be

joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” Our savior is clothed with the garments of salvation, meaning that God has fully equipped him to bring salvation to his helpless people. By his work in his life and death and resurrection, our Lord is the high priest who has brought his people through the door of the

house of God into the presence of his Father in heaven. Even as Jesus is the way to the Father, so Jesus is the high priest who brings us to the Father on the way that is himself.

Lovely consecration ceremony! Behold the dressing of the high priest and the other priests. And by faith behold the great high priest, clothed in the garments of your salvation.

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA’S *BANNER* ARTICLES

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(pp. 101–2)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article CXLVI: The New King and His Kingdom: Prophecy and Sacred History

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” —Rev. 21:5

We entered upon the discussion of the element of prophecy in the history of Israel in our last essay. We stated that it is especially to prophecy from the point of view of its predictive character that we expected to call the attention. And we closed by making mention of the phenomenon that as all the forms that belong to the dispensation of the kingdom of Israel gradually decay and form a mere external point of view, the cause of God’s kingdom in the world assumes a more and more hopeless aspect, the light of prophecy begins to shine more clearly and an ever more beautiful picture is displayed to the believing Israelite of the future they might expect.

We mentioned this merely as a fact. It cannot be gainsaid that the prophets hold the glorious picture of the future of God’s kingdom before the people of God in the old dispensation in clearer and more hopeful and beautiful colors according as history itself assumes a more desperate aspect. But there must be a reason for this phenomenon. And surely, the subject of prophecy in connection with the history of Israel, and with sacred

history in general, is sufficiently important to be worthy of a little special attention on our part. And, therefore, we will in this week’s paper make an attempt to explain somewhat the connection there is between sacred history and prophecy.

Prophecy is a necessary concomitant of sacred history. It can never be properly understood when taken as a separate phenomenon, a phenomenon all by itself. It is with prophecy as with the miracles. Much has been said of late of the separate miracles that are recorded in Holy Writ. We have discussed in connection with the miracles the ideas of natural and supernatural, the question whether they are always immediate or also mediate. But to me it seems that we will never do justice to the element of the miraculous in the Word of God, before we see and judge the miracles in the sphere and the light in which they belong. That sphere is the “Sacra,” the sacred, the sphere of grace. God is performing in this world a wonderwork, the work of his grace. That wonderwork of God’s grace embraces all things. It embraces heaven and earth. It embraces man and all creation. The ultimate aim of all that God performs in this sphere is expressed in the words of him that sitteth upon the throne:

“Behold, I make all things new.” Through the depths of sin and death God not simply preserves all the works of his hands, but in his new kingdom he leads it on to higher glory, by the power of his grace in Christ Jesus. It is the completion of his kingdom, it is the perfecting of his covenant toward which all things tend. This great work of God’s grace is his wonderwork. It can never be explained from nature; it belongs to the sphere of grace. And the separate miracles will never be properly understood until we conceive of them as brilliant spots in this development of God’s kingdom in the world. But even as it is with the miracles, so it is also with the element of prophecy. Prophecy and sacred history belong together. The one cannot be understood without a proper understanding of the other. Prophecy is, indeed, a necessary concomitant of sacred history. The one apart from the other looks absurd.

And then, we must understand especially this fact, that the wonderwork which God performs in the world through the power of his grace, the establishment of his kingdom and realization of his covenant, proceeds, develops along organic lines. Ever since the fall it is in the world; in every period of history God is accomplishing this work, and he is doing it quickly, as fast as the organic development of all things in history allows. But from period to period there is development, advancement, an approach of the final goal that is to be reached. It is not only so that the ultimate restoration and perfection of all things is now nearer than in the old dispensation, but there is also a full realization of the kingdom of God after the Word became flesh. From period to period God’s wonderwork advances and develops. Every succeeding period shows a clearer realization of God’s final purpose, an advance over the preceding. But because the development is organic and not mechanical, the one period is always prophetic of the other. The wonderwork of God begins in paradise and follows the generations of Seth to Noah. It assumes a clearer form with Noah and continues in the line of Shem to Abraham. Its form becomes riper and more specific when the covenant is revealed to and established

with Abraham and his seed in their generations. It again reaches a further stage when Israel is covenanted with God as a nation to be God’s kingdom in the world. With the fulness of time, when all that is particularly national is broken, and earthly forms having disappeared, the kingdom in its development among all nations rushes onward to the Parousia. Always the same work of God essentially, always advancing along organic lines of development, steadily approaching the final goal. And because of this development, the forms and institutions of one period are prophetic of the following. Clearly this is the teaching of the Word of God with respect to Jerusalem. It may be said that from a certain aspect God is building, preparing a City of God, a Jerusalem, throughout the history of the world. In the old dispensation this Jerusalem develops till it assumes the form of an earthly city, in which God dwells in a dwelling made with hands. This earthly form of Jerusalem, however, is by no means essential to the Jerusalem God is making for his people. Its manifestation in earthly forms of wood and stone is only accidental. The form can be destroyed, but Jerusalem remains. Hence, in the New Testament we are told that Jerusalem still is. It is the spiritual city of God to which we have come. But when we come to the revelation of the end, of perfection, we still find Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, now glorified and perfected forever, without temple, and God flooding the city with his light. Essentially, from a spiritual point of view, it is always the same form and manifestation in the world. It is the failure to see this truth which constitutes the fundamental mistake of all pre-millennialism. Now, then, because of this truth history itself is prophetic. One phase and period is prophetic and typical of a succeeding period. The forms decay, the essence of God’s work always remains and advances.

But if this is clearly understood, it will not be difficult to see what part prophecy plays in sacred history, and why it is a necessary concomitant of it. Neither will we fail to understand why it is that exactly as the earthly forms of a certain dispensation decay, the light of prophecy, as

predictive of a brilliant future for the people of God, shines all the more clearly. The people that live in a certain dispensation naturally connect the essence of God's kingdom with its outward form. How clearly this becomes evident in the life of Jesus' apostles before the Spirit is poured out. They think of God's kingdom in the light and under the aspect of the kingdom of Israel. They cannot appropriate the idea that Israel as such, as a nation, with all its institutions and national privileges, can perish from the face of the earth, without also making an end forever to the history and development of the kingdom of God in the world. And to the very end, till the very eve of Jesus' departure from them, they conceive of the kingdom of God in a Jewish aspect. And as it was with the disciples, so it was with the people of the old dispensation in general. Dark days they were historically, those that preceded the coming of the Messiah. They were days in which it seemed as if the cause of God's kingdom was a lost one. But a shadow of Israel's former glory remained. Only comparatively few had returned from captivity. The ark of the covenant was no more in the holy place. And the scepter had, as far as the earthly kingdom of Israel was concerned, departed from Judah. Surely, Israel's glory was no more. And besides all this the enemy from without oppressed and persecuted God's people till suffering sometimes became well-nigh unbearable. What was the hope of God's true people at that time? What was Israel's joy in the midst of the darkness of captivity? What encouraged the people and inspired them with the hope of a brighter future when that monster of iniquity,

that clearest Old Testament type of Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes, raved and so bitterly persecuted God's people? How could faith in the completion of God's kingdom be staid at a time when all the external forms of that kingdom crumbled into ruins?

It was the light of prophecy. As history became gloomier and assumed a darker aspect, the light of prophecy became brighter. As the hope in existing forms and institutions proved gradually more idle, prophecy carried the hope of God's people beyond the present and made them look forward to another realization of God's promises than they could at that time conceive. Prophecy kindled the hope that even though present forms and institutions might vanish, as of the earth earthly, nevertheless the essence of God's kingdom remained and God would surely fulfill his every word.

Thus it becomes plain that prophecy must accompany the advance of God's wonderwork. It does not stand apart from, but in organic connection with sacred history, which is itself impregnated with prophecy.

It upholds the faith of God's people; in times when history looks dark, it is a light shining in the darkness; it kindles in their soul the strong hope of a brighter future, prepares them for the coming of a new dispensation. It helps them understand that the new dispensation is come after it has actually arrived.

And ultimately it kindles in their heart the strong hope for the time when shall be fully realized what he that sat on the throne announced to the seer on Patmos: "Behold, I make all things new!"

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

