



REFORMED

— PAVILION —

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 46

FEBRUARY 24, 2024

*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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MEDITATION

And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

—Exodus 13:17–19

The children of Israel stood at the crossroads of Succoth. God had delivered Israel out of the house of bondage. The night of the passover the children of Israel had journeyed from the city of Rameses, and now they stood at the crossroads of Succoth (Ex. 12:37; 13:20).

Today no one knows where Succoth was located. That is very likely because Succoth was not a city or a town at all. Succoth probably had no significance and no name until the children of Israel stopped there. But Succoth was very important for the children of Israel, for it represented their great crossroads. From Succoth two ways branched out. Both ways went into Canaan, the promised land flowing with milk and honey. But the ways were as different as night and day, as different as hell and heaven. Shall we look upon these ways? We shall learn the wonderful way of God.

The first way out of Succoth was a long-established, well-traveled, and well-maintained interstate highway. The name of the highway was *The Way of the Land of the Philistines*. It was the main route for the constant travel between Egypt and Canaan. Merchants, caravans, and travelers filled this busy roadway. The Way of the Land of the Philistines followed the curve of the Mediterranean Sea, running East and North out of the Nile delta of Egypt into the land of Philistia, from thence into Canaan, and then all the way beyond into Syria and Mesopotamia. This route was the obvious route for the children

of Israel. In fact, this route was the *only* route for the children of Israel. There was no other road out of Succoth. Along the Way of the Land of the Philistines, the children of Israel would have arrived in Canaan within a few days.

The other way out of Succoth was no way at all. At least, it was no way that man could see. It was a way that had no road but was merely wilderness. It was a way that had no people, no inns, no food, no water, no services. It was a way with no signage and no markings to show the route. It was a way that had no destination but dead-ended in the Red Sea. It was a way that did not even have a proper name. God gave it the name *The Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea*, which was pure irony, for there was no way through the wilderness, and there was no way through the Red Sea. The Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea was a way that was not a way!

Behold the two ways at the crossroads of Succoth.

Now let us come near and understand the two ways.

The highway that was The Way of the Land of the Philistines represented Israel's strength. Israel could travel that way all by herself, with no need of God. No seas would need parting; it was a smooth highway. No manna from heaven would be needed; there were inns and merchants. No water from the rock would be required; the water in their waterskins would last the short journey. No shoes would need preserving; the people would be off the road in no

time. No pillar of cloud and fire would be needed to lead the way; the highway was clearly marked. No tents would be called for; the houses of Canaan beckoned.

But what would the way of Israel's strength produce? An instantaneous return to bondage! After a few days on the highway, Israel would see war in Canaan and would flee back to Egypt. Behold it well! The way of man's strength always ends back in Egypt's bondage.

But the non-way that was The Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea represented God's strength. It was the way that could only be opened by divine promise, as Joseph had reminded his brethren: "I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (Gen. 50:24). And by faith in that promise, "Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones" (Heb. 11:22). Now, more than four hundred years later, God's promise opened the way into Canaan. It would be the way of God's wonders: the parting of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, water from the rock, the pillar of cloud and of fire. It would be the way of sojourning with God in tents in the wilderness; indeed, the very name of the place—Succoth—means "booths" or "tents." For at that

crossroads God declared which way he would lead the children of Israel: the way of tents, the way of the wonder, The Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea.

And what would God's strength produce? Canaan! Heaven! Israel went into the wilderness harnessed, that is, they marched forth in orderly array under the guiding hand of God. After a lifetime of wandering in the wilderness with their God, eating heavenly bread and drinking living water, Israel would enter the promised land. Behold it well! For God's true Israel, the way of God's strength always ends in heaven's joy.

And now would we learn the truth and depth of God's way? Would we learn that way's true name? Hearken and believe: the way is Jesus Christ. The way was always Jesus Christ, and the way is only Jesus Christ through his body and blood. For "I am the way" (John 14:6). And his flesh is "the new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:20).

It was the crossroads of Succoth. And at that crossroads God declared the only way that goes to Canaan: the way of tents, the way of the wonder, The Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea—the way of Jesus Christ.

—AL



FROM THE EDITOR

A hearty welcome to one and all on this last Saturday in February. Here at *Reformed Pavilion* headquarters the days grow steadily longer, and there have even been some sightings of robins and geese. Slowly but surely God returns the earth to life, for “while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22). No man can break God’s covenant of the day and God’s covenant of the night; so also God’s covenant of grace with his people in Christ is everlasting and sure (see Jer. 33:20–21).

In this issue we introduce a new rubric. The title of the rubric is *The Arbor*, and it will be a place to feature poetry or other pleasant reflections. A castle’s grounds might have an arbor: a

leafy, shady recess formed by tree branches and shrubs, perhaps including some latticework, climbing vines, and flowers. Scripture abounds with references to beautiful gardens of trees. Indeed, such was the garden of Eden. “And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food” (Gen. 2:9). An arbor in a castle’s grounds would be a fine spot to sit and reflect on a poem or two. Well, now *Reformed Pavilion* has its own arbor and a fine poem to enjoy in it. Our thanks to Mrs. Connie Meyer for submitting the thought-provoking, humbling, and gospel-filled piece. And consider this a cordial invitation to our readers to submit poetry of your own.

Blessed reading!

—AL



What Was It Like?

What was it like
to breathe in the bliss
of perfect light
and holiness
from all eternity,
and then
to inhale the air
shared by beasts and entrails
from the birth
of Him
held under curse
of sin
all of His life on earth?

What was it like
to pity the poor,
to care for the weak,
to lift up the meek,
and then
to hear what they speak
brother to brother,
in lies, in hatred, and blame
that even the best of men
aim
at each other?

What was it like
to love in divine perfection
His God,
every moment without exception
with all of His heart, mind, and soul,
a geyser
never contained
in whole,

and then
to watch those still wiser
men become chained
in the void of their own
selfish control?

What was it like
to sacrifice all
in infinite pain
and infinite rejection
of infinite death
to gain
an unending life
in unending store
of unending joy
in God's sweet embrace
for each held in place
by election,
and then
to hear
them in their own breath
complain
and want more?

What was it like
for God's own beloved Son
to come to earth
and be slain?

Our sins He bore.

—Connie L. Meyer

Article XLVI. The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)

Characteristic of the old dispensation, so we found, was that not the people of God's covenant, but the heathen nations controlled the course of the world's history, humanly speaking.

It was not Israel, the people of God's choice, thru whose national existence ran the line of God's covenant, that dominated with its laws, customs and institutions the various spheres of human life in general. Israel was not even called to exert its influence in the world. It was isolated. Its significance lay in the future influence it was to exert. But Egypt and Babylonia, Assyria and Persia, Greece and Rome, the heathen nations, in a word, controlled the world and its history, they decided whether the world should have war or peace, they were the nations that stood highest in their development of art and science, that controlled the commerce and industry of the world. It was heathen law and custom, heathen thought and might that was dominant.

And in the second place, we also found the evident tendency of this heathen world-power to destroy the people of God's covenant and wipe it off the face of the earth. The nations of the world stand inimical over against the people of God and aim at the latter's destruction. Not, indeed, as if these nations were fully conscious of the fact that they were fighting the people of Jehovah. But the devil, the dragon, who exerted his influence upon the nations of the world, undoubtedly was conscious of this fact. It was his intention to destroy the seed of the woman before it was ready to bring forth the Great Seed, by Whom his head was destined to be crushed. To speak in the rich symbolism of Revelation 12,

all thru the old dispensation the dragon confronts the woman, watching her intently, purposing to swallow up the man-child she is to bring forth, as soon as it is born.

This purpose, however, of the dragon meets with complete failure and disappointment. A remnant, the remnant according to the election, always remains of Israel, is indestructible. The man-child, the Christ, is brought forth, and as the Great Seed of the woman he is caught up to the throne of God after he crushed the head of the serpent principally by His complete obedience. The world-power suffers defeat. It is not allowed to crush the woman's seed.

What we wish to emphasize in the next place is that in the new dispensation the relation, the outward historic relation, is radically changed. In the days of the New Testament it is Israel that governs the world, and the heathen nations are without any historical significance.

Israel of the new dispensation, of course, is Christendom. They that represent the case differently and would make us believe that Israel also in our day must still be sought in the children of Jacob according to the flesh, while the church of Christ is something altogether new, something intervening in history, certainly are in conflict with all the New Testament has to say on this matter. Israel of the old dispensation is continued in the church of the New Testament day. Christianity is the continuation of Israel. Not the Jew according to the flesh is a child of Abraham, but he that believes in Christ. "They that are of faith the same are sons of Abraham," Gal. 3:7. And in the new dispensation there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. Neither must you

say that Christ is Lord of the Jews and not of the church, for the same is Lord of all and is rich unto all that call upon him. Rom. 10:12. Not, indeed, as if we should mean to intimate that all that call themselves, or are called after Christ are spiritual children of Abraham. On the contrary, the same law of election that saved only a remnant of Israel in the old dispensation is of effect in regard to Israel of the New Testament times. And, therefore, it is not all Israel that is called Israel. But even as the spiritual children of God in our own times are a continuation of the true Israelites in the days of the old dispensation; so also we may say that historic Christianity is a continuation of Israel as a nation. Christendom in the outward sense runs parallel with Israel of the O.T. from the same outward point of view.

And now we repeat: Israel in this outward sense, Christianity in its broadest scope controls the history of the world in the new dispensation, while heathendom is of no significance. The Roman Empire was the last of the heathen world-powers that controlled the affairs of all the world. The downfall of the Roman Empire marks the end of heathendom's historical significance.

The relation, then, the outward historical relation, has changed.

In the old dispensation it was heathendom that shaped the affairs of the world and controlled its life in every sphere with its laws and institutions. In the new dispensation it is Christendom that governs the world, and the Christian nations are at the same time the historical nations. It is the nations of Europe, with their extension into our own country, that are of account, not the nations of the Orient, or of darkest Africa or of the islands of the sea. These latter are outside of the pale of history.

This is in the first place a simple historic fact, plain to all. But this is at the same time the contents of the rich symbolism we find in that famous chapter of Scripture, famous especially in our own time, Revelation 20:1–10.

Here we approach two things. In the first place we come to a much debated question, debated of late in our own circles; and in the second

place, we approach a much disputed passage of Holy Scripture, Rev. 20:1–10. And for clearness' sake, before we discuss the passage as such, I wish to make a few statements of introduction.

First of all, I wish it to be clearly understood that **I am a millennialist in no sense of the word.** I am neither a pre-millennialist, nor a post-millennialist. Neither must you receive the impression that my view is expressed by saying that we are right in the midst of the millennium. And again, I do not believe with Dr. A. Kuyper that the millennium is identical with the state of eternity. I do not believe in a millennium at all. And that for the simple reason that according to my firmest conviction Scripture does not teach such a thing. The very word millennium is non-scriptural. The term never occurs. And, therefore, this I wish to state first of all: I do not believe in a millennium in any form.

In the second place, I wish to state just as positively that the question of a millennium or no millennium is not the point of debate in the recent controversy that arose in our own church thru the publication of Maranatha. It seems highly necessary that this fact be stated before our people once more. In spite of all that has been said and published to the contrary, the impression is still rather prevalent that one who simply believes in a millennium, in a thousand years of reign of Christ on earth, is condemned by order of Synod of 1918. The idea is still rather general that the question we have with the pre-millennarians is one concerning the second coming of Christ. A question merely regarding our view of the future. It has even been intimated, time and again, that our church really does not believe in a second coming at all! The impression is, that if one believes that before the dawn of eternity there shall still be a thousand years of reign of Christ on earth, if one believes this without anything further, he stands for that reason condemned and is kindly asked to leave our church.

This is an erroneous representation of the matter!

Personally, once more, I wish to state it most definitely, I do not believe in any millennium

whatever. But it is not true that the Synod of 1918 expressed itself at all on the question of the millennium as such. The eschatological problem was not discussed at all. On the contrary, it was clearly stated, that this was not the point in question, that this was not the ground on which Maranatha was condemned. As far as Synod of 1918 is concerned, you may, dear reader, believe in the coming of a millennium, believe in two resurrections, believe in the return of the Jews to Palestine, if you can do so without adopting the most fundamental principles of Pre-millennialism, and you will not be molested.

Synod never said: “If you believe in a millennium you are in disharmony with our Reformed Standards, and therefore, you do not belong with us.” Synod merely discussed the most basic, the most fundamental principles of pre-millennialism and condemned them in the light of our Reformed Confession. It pointed them out, definitely and clearly. It stated that they consisted in a denial of the kingship, the actual kingship of Christ over the church, and in a denial of the continuity of the church of all ages. Both these positive denials are found in the book that became occasion of the dispute among us.

Synod said: If you teach that Christ is not king of the church you leave the basis of our Reformed Confessions. Again, Synod said: If you teach that Israel and the church are essentially two, so that the church of the new dispensation

is no continuation of the people of God of the O.T. day, you do not belong within the boundary of the Christian Reformed Church. And instead of grumbling and murmuring in private about the act of synod in regard to the millennium, the brethren that do so ought to do either of two things. They ought to point out that these two fundamental principles are not basic for the pre-millennial view, and that they are neither plainly taught in the Maranatha; or they must come out boldly and defend the proposition: One can deny the kingship of Christ, deny, too, the unity of Israel and the church and still be soundly reformed in doctrine!

This must be clear. It is of greatest practical importance that this be clear.

Our people must not be deceived. The eschatological problem was never officially worked out by synod. It may be desirable, indeed, that this be done, so that our confession may express itself clearly on this point. That is a different question. But fact is that it was never done, and all gossip as if this had actually been performed ought to cease. But what was done still stands. The stand of synod was that the denial of Christ’s kingship and of the essential unity of Israel and the church are incompatible with the Reformed Standards.

And that stand of synod has never been gainsaid. Not even by the author of Maranatha.

—Holland, Mich.

