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Notes on Chiliasm

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Notes on Chiliasm.

(Conclusion.)

3. *Chiliasm vitiates the Gospel principle.* Salvation is by grace alone. Salvation is by the Gospel alone. This truth constitutes the principle of Christian theology and of all Christian thought. It dominates Christian theology. It is intolerant of the conception, in any form, that salvation can come to man by any other way than by the Gospel of grace. And it rules all Christian thought. The Gospel of the forgiveness of sins is the Christian's prime consideration, his chief joy, his spiritual one and all. That is the Gospel principle, and this principle is vitiated by chiliasm. The chiliasts within the Protestant churches do not indeed deny the chief article of the Christian religion, justification by faith, salvation by grace. The Lutheran chiliasts and the Fundamentalist chiliasts strongly insist on the *sola gratia*. When they forget their chiliasm, they utter sweet Gospel-truths. But as soon as the chiliastic thoughts intrude, they are thrown out of harmony with the Gospel principle. Any deviation from any Scripture-truth has this effect. Sooner or later every error affects the heart of the Christian doctrine, the Gospel of grace. Chiliasm is no exception to this rule. In various ways it goes against the Gospel principle.

1) "When chiliasm actually enters the heart, it diverts the heart and mind from the hidden spiritual glory of the Christian life, which consists in the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and of the future heavenly heritage, and puts in place of it the expectation of external and earthly grandeur." (F. Pieper, *Chr. Dog.*, III, p. 592.) The Gospel bids us rejoice in the forgiveness of sins. Chiliasm directs men to rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and in the hope of the millennial earthly bliss. But these two do not combine. They are not affinitive, but antipathetic. So much of the heart as is preempted by carnal expectations is closed to the Gospel. To the extent that chiliastic thoughts are effective, the effect of the Gospel is nullified. This is not a small matter. The Christian lives and moves and has his being

in the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. His life develops as he feeds on the Gospel. He loses strength by just so much as his thoughts are diverted from the Gospel. And the danger is ever present that, feeding his flesh and developing its strength with carnal expectations, he will lose his taste for the Gospel, will lose the Gospel. That has happened. "*Es muss aber der Leser im Anfang erinnert werden, dass er die Traeume der Juden¹⁾ fliehe, welche diese geistlichen Verheissungen auf das leibliche Koenigreich uebertragen und so in zwiefachen Irrtum verfallen. Denn AUF DIESE WEISE VERLIEREN SIE SOWOHL CHRISTUM, dessen Reich geistlich ist, als auch das leibliche Koenigreich, welches sie vergeblich erwarten.*" (XIV, 1056. On Micah 4.) In countless cases, by the infinite grace of God, the chiliastic disease is not permitted to run its full course. But wherever it lodges, something of Christ, of the Gospel, is lost. It is an evil thing.

2) Much of the Gospel is lost in another way. *Chiliasm fails to give full scope to the Gospel-message.* The thoroughgoing chiliast has made, not soteriology, but eschatology, the chiliastic eschatology at that, the center of his theology. Captivated by its allurements and fully persuaded that the "gospel" of the millennial kingdom is needed to revive and rejuvenate the distressed Church, he is bound to neglect the preaching of the Gospel. His chief attention is given to "the Gospel of the Kingdom." That is his favorite topic. That he stresses in his dealings with men. He speaks of it by day and dreams of it at night. Spener (himself given to a subtle form of chiliasm), in speaking of the grosser chiliasts, said "*dass die Liebe zu der Meinung vom Chiliasmo, wo sie einmal in ein Gemuet eingesessen, die Leute so einnehme, dass sie sich nicht halten koennen, allerorten davon zu reden.*" (*Lehre u. Wehre*, VI, 213.) The situation has not changed to-day. Note how often the premillennialist preaches on his favorite topic. If he preached on it but once, that would be once too often. But he cannot refrain from presenting it again and again and again. And the preaching of the Gospel-message suffers. The Gospel-message which his audience needed to hear in that particular service was not delivered. Read the average chiliastic literature, and you will not charge the *Lutheran Witness* (XL, 103) with exaggeration when it says: "When men get infatuated with millennialism, they forget about sin and redemption from sin, grace, pardon, and salvation. Their mind is filled with ages, eons, weeks, lunar years, times and half times, thousand years, the Middle of the Week, Seventy Years, the Satanic Trinity, Northeastern Confederacy, Zionists, Locusts from the Pit, a phantasmagoria of images from

1) Walch adds here: "*und Ohliasten*" (VI, 2846). Whether Luther specified the chiliasts or not, the warning is directed at them.

Daniel and Revelation disarranged and misunderstood. Christ and His redeeming work, the Spirit and His graces, are forgotten." While the eons were being marshaled in their chiliastic order and the glories of the future world-supremacy of the Church unfolded, a famishing soul was yearning for the Gospel of the forgiveness of sin; but there was no time for preaching it.

In addition to this, chiliasm deprives men of opportunities of hearing the Gospel by reducing the extent of the Gospel contents of the Bible. It empties a great number of Bible words of their Gospel content and fills them with chiliastic matter. Not only the extreme premillennialists do this. The moderate premillennialists are guilty of it too. All chiliasts do it. They cannot do otherwise. In order to find Scripture for their basic teaching, they are compelled to take texts which describe the glory of the Gospel and the Gospel rule of the Savior and invest them with a chiliastic sense, making them speak of the glories of an earthly kingdom. Under the manipulation of chiliasm few real gospel-texts remain in the prophets and not a few New Testament passages are divested of their Gospel character. "*Es ist das in der Tat eine Eigentuemlichkeit der Lehre vom Tausendjaehrigen Reich. . . . Man muss nun alles aufbieten, seiner Meinung neue Stuetzen zu bereiten, bis zuletzt die ganze Schrift in den Strudel des Chiliasmus hineingezogen wird.*" (*Lehre u. Wehre*, VI, 213.) The prophecies of the Old Testament are freighted with the wealth of the Gospel. "The Gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures," Rom. 1, 1 f. Little of that wealth remains in the chiliastic Bible. H. Frost quotes Micah 4, 1—8 ("The Law shall go forth of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem," etc.) and Jer. 23, 1—8 ("In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, the Lord Our Righteousness," etc.) and divests these prophecies of their Gospel character: "These words cannot be connected with the present-day Church. . . . The descriptions given, however heavenly in character, are pronouncedly earthly in prospect and realization. We must conclude, therefore, that they speak of an earthly period and condition which have not yet been fulfilled, but which will be in God's good time—in the 'millennium.'" (*The Second Coming of Christ*, 147—150.) Many other prophecies suffer the same fate. For instance, the glorious promises given to David and those relating to the building of the Church through the Gospel-preaching. According to the *Scotfield Bible* 2 Sam. 7, 8—17 does not refer to the Gospel reign of Jesus Christ, but to the "days of Israel's exaltation and blessing"; "the Lord will yet give to that Thorn-crowned One 'the throne of His father David'" (Notes on 2 Sam. 7 and Acts 2); and Amos 9, 11—15 is given the heading "The Lord's return and the reestablishment of the Davidic monarchy; full king-

dom blessing of restored Israel." All these and the related prophecies have little to offer to the chiliastic reader who is hungering for the Gospel, the message of the forgiveness of sins. "It is a greatly impoverished Gospel when the promises concerning David's Seed are taken from it, are characterized as 'Jewish,' and are 'postponed' to another age than this and to another people than the redeemed of this age. And that is exactly what is being done under our very eyes." (Ph. Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 130.)

The Gospel contents of the New Testament, too, are greatly reduced. In the first place, those passages of the New Testament which quote the Messianic prophecies mentioned above are of course filled with the same chiliastic contents. It should not be a matter of course. Seeing that the New Testament quotes these prophecies as fulfilled through the preaching of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins, one should think that the chiliastic interpreter would revise his misinterpretation. But in spite of the insistence of the apostles that now, at the present time, in their days and our days, these prophecies are being fulfilled, the premillennialist assures his readers that the millennium will bring the fulfilment. James distinctly says, Acts 15, 13—18, that through the conversion of the Gentiles by means of the preaching of the Gospel the tabernacle of David is being built. Nay, says the *Scofield Bible*. "James quotes from Amos 9, 11. 12. The verses which follow in Amos describe the final regathering of Israel, which the other prophets invariably connect with the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant. 'And will build again the tabernacle of David,' i. e., reestablish the Davidic rule over Israel (2 Sam. 7, 8—17; Luke 1, 31—33)." Luke 1, 31—33! So Mary also is made to rejoice over the chiliastic blessing, and the thoughts of the readers of this passage are diverted from the real Gospel. In the note on 2 Sam. 7, 9—17 also Acts 2, 29—32 is given as a New Testament reference. And one who reads this passage in the light of the *Scofield Bible* is deprived of the Gospel comfort of that part of the passage which is filled with chiliastic concepts.

And more of the New Testament must go. The greater part of the preaching of John the Baptist does not deal with the Gospel. John the Baptist was a chiliast of the postponement-theory school of premillennialism. "Christ came offering to establish the Kingdom in power and glory, provided the Jews were willing to accept His principles of righteousness. It was as the forerunner of this phase of the work of Christ that John the Baptist came. . . . His quotations from the Old Testament are all prophecies of what we call the second coming of Christ. John spoke of Christ as Savior only in one passage. . . . And it can be demonstrated that he did not understand what he was saying when he cried: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" (D. Barnhouse, *His Own*

Received Him Not, But —, p. 18 f.) So the reader must not look for Gospel in the greater part of the record of John the Baptist's work. Neither must he look for it in those portions of the gospels which record the "early ministry" of Jesus. For "there is a great contrast between the early message of Jesus, which was the same as John's message of repentance, and His later messages, which prepare the way for the great doctrinal utterances to be found in the epistles of Paul. . . . The early ministry of Jesus was primarily an ethical message. 'After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel,' Mark 1, 14, 15. This was far different from the message of Christ's later ministry, when He announced that He was come to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke 19, 10, and that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many, Matt. 20, 28." (D. Barnhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 22.) Will the pupils of these men look for the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins in the earlier portions of the gospels? And much of what Christ said in His "later ministry" is emptied of its Gospel content. It is made to deal with chiliastic matters. For instance, "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, etc.," Matt. 24, 14. Do not think of the Gospel of salvation! For, as Barnhouse tells you, "the Gospel of the Kingdom is a threat because of approaching judgment." (*Op. cit.*, p. 22.) Take Matt. 25, 34: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Millions of God's children have been comforted by this sweet Gospel-text. But it was not meant for them! It does not refer to the heavenly inheritance bestowed upon the believers by the grace of God. For "it is to be observed that 'the kingdom' here spoken of is not the heavenly one, but the earthly one, that is, the millennial," and it comes to those who "have shown compassion upon the godly Jews." (H. Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 115 f.) There is much Gospel left in the preaching of the Christian chiliasts. They do preach the Gospel of salvation through Christ's vicarious satisfaction. But it is not a small matter to deprive a soul that is hungering for the Gospel of any Gospel-text or to forego the preaching of the Gospel in favor of the preaching of chiliasm.²⁾

2) One does not know what to make of this statement by C. I. Scofield in the chapter "The Four Gospels," introducing the New Testament in the *Scofield Bible*: "III. The doctrines of grace are to be sought in the epistles, not in the gospels." Dr. Scofield can hardly mean that the gospels do not reveal the grace of God. For the next sentence states: "But those doctrines rest back upon the death and resurrection of Christ and upon the great germ truths to which He gave utterance and of which the epistles are the unfolding." Does he mean that the gospels do not reveal the Gospel of grace with the needed clarity? Even that would be a bold

3) *Chiliasm undervalues the Gospel.* The chiliasts in the Lutheran Church and in the fundamentalist section of the Reformed Church make much of the Gospel. They preach the Gospel of salvation through the blood of Christ with great earnestness and vigor. But at the same time they disparage this glorious Gospel. They do it in more ways than one. For one thing, the fundamental dogma of chiliasm constitutes a disparagement of the Gospel. The heart of chiliasm is the doctrine that the millennial Church will be invested with greater excellence and glory than the Church of the present dispensation possesses. This feature of chiliasm stands out very distinctly in Dispensationalism. The present dispensation is characterized by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ Crucified. But this is not the final dispensation. A better one is coming. "The sixth dispensation is the Dispensation of Grace; this began with the covenant of grace (Heb. 7, 19—22). . . . The seventh is the Dispensation of the Kingdom; this will begin with the light of the coming and glory of Christ (2 Thess. 1, 7—11) and the Messianic covenant (2 Sam. 7, 16; 1 Chron. 17, 7; Is. 32, 1, 2; Luke 1, 30—33; Rev. 20, 4, 6). . . . When Christ comes again, therefore, it will be to undertake a new work in the fulfilling of God's purposes toward the children of men, wherein He will reveal Himself as the Translator and Transfigurer of the Church (Eph. 2, 1—7)." (H. Frost, *op. cit.*, pp. 130. 132.)

All of this is derogatory to the glory of the Gospel. The Gospel constitutes the glory of the Church. Lowly and harassed as she is, she is resplendent with a glory that cannot be exceeded in this life. Oh, the excellent glory of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins! "The glorious Gospel of the blessed God" (1 Tim. 1, 11); "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 4, 4); "the ministration of righteousness doth exceed in glory" (2 Cor. 3, 9); as long as the world endures, the glory of Jesus shineth *in the Gospel*: the Gospel "gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4, 6). The Gospel is God's last word to us. Into the Gospel God has poured all the riches of His saving grace and saving power. The Gospel is God's most precious gift to the Church Militant, a treasure unsurpassed, unsurpassable. "It remaineth" (2 Cor. 3, 11); it will not be replaced by the glory of a seventh dispensation. Where the Gospel principle is in force, dominating all thinking, the thought of a better, more glorious dispensation than the Gospel dispensation

assertion. At any rate it is misleading to say that the doctrines of grace are to be sought in the epistles, not in the gospels. It is a false contrast. — It is altogether misleading when he concludes with the statement: "Furthermore, the only perfect example of perfect grace is the Christ of the gospels." Scripture sharply distinguishes between grace as the forgiveness of sins and grace as a virtue. The concepts of saving grace and of *gratia infusa* must not be treated as one, as is here done.

cannot arise. Men who deal in such thoughts have not fully appreciated the Gospel. Thus, "through the teaching of Dispensationalism" (and, we add, of every form of premillennialism) "the era of grace and the Gospel of grace were stripped of what properly belonged to them." (Ph. Mauro, *op. cit.*, p. 78). They do strip the Gospel of its full glory. B. Keller glories in the Gospel and in the Gospel era. Yet—"es ist nicht die groesste Gnadenzeit der Menschheitsgeschichte. . . . Das Allergroesste wird Gott erst noch tun. . . . Die Aufrichtung des Tausendjaehrigen Reichs bedeutet die groesste Gnadenzeit der Menschheitsgeschichte." Surely Dr. Th. Graebner is right in declaring: "Wie wird durch solche Millenniumsschwärmerei doch das Evangelium in seinem innersten Kern verwundet!" (*23d Report, Cal. and Nev. Dist.*, p. 36 f.) Chiliasm declares in effect that the Church is to look forward to something better than the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. It obscures the glory of the Gospel.

Again, Chiliasm belittles the Gospel by replacing the simple Gospel-preaching of the present era with the more efficient instrumentalities of the millennium. These millennial agencies for the salvation of man are of various kinds. There are the instrumentalities of force and of visible splendor. Frost: "In the coming dispensation (the Kingdom) He will make salvation possible by consummating all that the past promised and the present secures, enjoining faith with works and constraining men to worship Christ as they see Him in all the splendor of His being and reign (Zech. 14, 9—21)." (*Op. cit.*, p. 132.) *Scofield Bible*: "The Kingdom is to be established by power, not persuasion." (Note on Zech. 12, 8.) Barnhouse: "Christ will establish His kingdom through power over all the earth. . . . There is to be a great overturning, to be accomplished by the power of the Lord Jesus, who will brook no interference in that day. . . . It will take the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, coming not as the meek and lowly Savior, but as the Lord of power and glory, to enforce righteous principles upon this earth." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 46. 116. 185.) *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1934, p. 281: "The kingdoms of this world do not become the kingdom of Christ by virtue of human service and ministry, but by the sudden and mighty power of God and in the midst of humanity's rebellion against God on earth." *Lutheran Companion*: "Christ's rule will be forced upon the unwilling world." *Friedensbote*: "Von der Herrlichkeit, die sich alsdann in Jerusalem entfaltet, werden die Heiden mit Macht angezogen werden und in Massen herzustroemen mit dem innigen Verlangen 'Zeigt uns euren Gott!' Dann wird man den Heiden nicht mehr mehr muehsam nachgehen, sondern sie kommen von selbst herzu, angezogen von den reichen Guetern der Gottesoffenbarung, die sie vor sich sehen." (*Lehre u. Wehre*, 64, 288.) Th. Zahn: "Ebenso undenkbar aber ist auch, dass das Zusammenleben Christi mit seiner ueber Suende und Tod er-

haben eine Gemeinde in einer verklärten Natur nicht ansiehend wirken sollte auf die noch ausserhalb dieses heiligen Bezirkes stehender Menschen zu der Zeit der 1000 Jahre." (On Rev. 20, p. 604.)

In addition to these agencies there will be new revelations to accomplish the conversion of the sinners. Auberlen: "From heaven the saints rule the earth, whence we may conclude that one of the glories of the millennium shall consist in the much freer and more vivid communion of the heavenly and earthly churches in particular, and the lower and higher world in general. . . . In this respect we must view the millennial kingdom as a time of new revelations, which reappear after the long pause during the church-historical period. . . . Israel, brought back to its own land, will now be the people of God in a much higher and more internal sense than it was before; for now the power of sin is checked, the knowledge of God fills the whole land, and the Lord dwells again among His people at Jerusalem. A new time of divine revelation will begin, the Spirit of God will be poured out abundantly, and a fulness of gifts of grace (*charismata*) be bestowed, even as the Apostolic Church possessed it typically." (See R. F. Weidner, *Annotations on Rev.*, pp. 282. 358.) Blackstone: "Jesus is coming again, and it is just as consistent that we shall receive an addition to the revealed Word of God, when He comes, as it was when He came before. . . . Premillennialists look for the main accomplishment under Christ Himself, who will cut short the work in righteousness, and with different instrumentalities, Is. 4, 4; Zech. 14." (*Jesus Is Coming*, p. 114.) Will God give new revelations, make additions to the revealed Word, the Bible? He could do that only by subtracting from the Bible. He would have to delete, for instance, Heb. 1, 1. 2: "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son," John 17, 20: "through their word," etc. Will God give new revelations in order to accomplish His gracious purposes towards the world? Will He declare that the Gospel was insufficient for that purpose? How grievously chiliaam belittles the Gospel!³⁾

3) One of these instrumentalities, which is most offensive to us, — and to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (see chapters 8, 9, 10), — but very fascinating to the ultra-Jewish section of the chiliaamists, is the restoration of the Levitical cultus, its Temple, altar, feast-days, and annual sacrifices. The *Scotfield Bible* insists that Ezek. 43, 19—27, prescribing the offering of bullocks and goats, describes the millennial form of temple-worship. So also Blackstone: "The Levitical sacrifices and form of worship are with some modifications reestablished." (*Op. cit.*, p. 191.) The radicals of this ultra-Jewish section deserve this castigation at the hand of A. Kuyper: "The literal conception of this prophecy has tempted this Christian called Baumgarten to the sin which the apostle condemns so emphatically, namely, the return to Jewry. For that, and nothing else, is this sin when Baumgarten and Auberlen, after the blood of our Mediator has flowed upon Golgotha, and notwithstanding the express warning in Galatians and Hebrews, dare to call us Christians from among the Gentiles back to the Aaronic dispensation. Then the sum of it all must be

Yes, the millennial kingdom, equipped with these additional means of grace, will exert a much wider influence than the Kingdom of Grace, equipped only with the Gospel. The Gospel saves but a few. It is a poor, weak Gospel. But when the millennial forces are once put in operation, a universal salvation will result. Will all the world be converted in the millennium? The chiliasts are, as usual, not agreed on this point. Auberlen has his doubts. "It is possible that an apostasy should take place at the close of the millennium. . . . The inherited sinfulness of our nature shall be the only influence during the millennium to prevent the power of the transfigured Church saving all souls. For what can move him in whom the visible glory of the Church, whilst the influence of evil is restrained, evokes no longing for communion with the Church's King?" (Statement incorporated in the Fausset commentary on Rev. 20 and, in part, in Weidner's *Annotations*, p. 358.) But the great majority of the premillennialists believes in "the general conversion of the world" (J. A. Seiss, see p. 164 of the current volume of this magazine), "the restitution of all things, . . . a transformation of the whole world, both spiritually and physically, . . . the 'restoration of all things, being the blessing which Christ through judgments will bring to the earth at His return, first to Israel, then through Israel to the whole world'" (H. Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 235 f.). In the words of the *Scofield Bible*: "The Kingdom is to be established first over regathered, restored, and converted Israel and is then to become universal" (note on Zech. 12, 8). Ph. Mauro has examined more chiliastic literature than we have, looked closely at the *Scofield Bible*, and this is what he found:

that after all God does have a delight in the blood of bullocks and of rams. Then, for there is no alternative, our confession that the ministry of shadows was ended in Christ is an untruth and self-deception." (*Chiliasm, or the Doctrine of Premillennialism*, p. 17 f.) Others of this ultra-Jewish faction are more conservative. The note in the *Scofield Bible* on Ezek. 43, 19 states: "Doubtless these offerings will be *memorial*, looking back to the cross, as the offerings under the Old Covenant were anticipatory, looking forward to the cross." But even with this safeguard the reintroduction of the Levitical sacrifices amounts to a disparagement of the Gospel. Our glorious Gospel needs no embellishments and reinforcements. The Gospel as it stands to-day, proclaiming the death of Christ and sealing the gift of the forgiveness of sins with the water of Baptism and the body and blood of the Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar, is perfect. No chiliastic contrivance can add to its power of salvation and beauty of grace. What, bring up the blood of goats to the altar where Christ is saying: "This cup is the new testament in *My blood*," in order to have an additional instrumentality of salvation?—Just by the way, where does Scofield find the "memorial" as opposed to the "anticipatory" in his *sedes doctrinae*? By what authority does Blackstone reestablish the Levitical sacrifices "*with some modifications*"? And are they not sadly jumbling their sharply defined seven dispensations? The fifth is the Dispensation of the Law, beginning with the Mosaic covenant (Frost), the Israelitish aion (Blackstone). That "terminated in the crucifixion," they said. It seems it did not. It reappears as an essential part of the seventh dispensation.

"Here is Modernism with a vengeance. Think of it, my brethren! For nineteen centuries it has been taught as one of the most indisputable of Christian verities that NOW is the day of salvation. But here is a copyrighted 'Bible' that tells us of a coming day in which all the inhabitants of the earth will be saved and blessed; a day in which the most glorious triumphs of the Gospel of Christ will be made to look contemptibly cheap and insignificant; a day when conversion will be on a national, a wholesale, and a world-wide scale!" (*Op. cit.*, p. 209.) Luther on the conversion of the entire world: "*Es haben auch etliche diesen Spruch [John 10, 16] dahin gedeutet, dass es muesse erfuehlt werden bald vor dem Juengsten Tage, wenn der Endchrist werde kommen und Elias und Henoch. Das ist nicht wahr, und hat's eigentlich der Teufel zugerichtet, dass man glaubt, die ganze Welt werde Christen werden. Der Teufel hat's darum getan, dass er die rechtschaffene Lehre verdunkelte, dass man sie nimmer recht verstuende.*" (XI, p. 791.) Apply this to the matter in hand—*der Teufel hat's darum getan*, Satan is spreading this delusion for the purpose of obscuring the glory of the Gospel. — We are charging the chiliasts with disparaging, undervaluing, belittling, the Gospel. And they are indeed telling their people that there is something better and more efficient than the Gospel. Their people—unless God in His mercy prevents it—will impatiently be awaiting the time when this barren Gospel era comes to an end. And some of them may say: Can we not at once substitute something better for this poor, beggarly Gospel?

4) Chiliasm, in its normal development, *directly antagonizes the Gospel of grace*. Dispensationalism does just that. We have in Section 3 arraigned the teaching that the seventh dispensation will exceed in glory the sixth dispensation, the Dispensation of Grace, as involving an undervaluation of the Gospel. But it does more than that. It sets up, in effect, a way of salvation different from that of the Gospel; and that certainly denies and antagonizes the fundamental teaching of the Bible that salvation and all blessings come to man only by the Gospel of grace. The chiliast does not indeed specify the contents of these new revelations. We must not ask them to do so. For they are new, at present unknown, revelations. But if they are *new* revelations, they must differ from the Gospel revelation. So also force and visions of splendor as instruments of salvation lie outside of the sphere of the Gospel, are in conflict with the Gospel. We cannot but charge Dispensationalism with antagonizing the Gospel. Read, in addition to the pronouncements quoted under 3), also the following: "Christ came between the Dispensation of Law and that of grace, ending the one and beginning the other; . . . Christ will come between the present Dispensation of Grace and the future one of the Kingdom, again ending the one and beginning

the other." (Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 135.) The final, the most glorious dispensation, will not be one of grace. That is certainly Frost's meaning. And study this: "Two revelations were given to the Apostle Paul: 1) that of salvation to infinite perfection for individual Jew and Gentile alike through faith in Christ and on the ground of His death and resurrection (Gal. 1, 11. 12). That this salvation is an exercise of grace which far surpasses anything hitherto experienced in the Old Testament is clearly revealed in 1 Pet. 1, 10. 11. And 2) that of the new divine purpose in the outcalling of the Church (Eph. 3, 6). This new purpose is not merely that Gentiles are to be blessed. Old Testament prophecy had long predicted Gentile blessings. The purpose consists in the fact that a new body of humanity was to be formed from both Jews and Gentiles, a relationship in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile position retained, but where Christ is all in all (Gal. 3, 28; Col. 3, 11)." (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1934, p. 151 f.) Whatever may be the import of this "second revelation," it is clear that the author is no longer describing a salvation obtained through faith in Christ. That salvation comes under the sixth dispensation. These writers protest that their system is not subversive of the theology of grace. They find it is necessary to utter such protests. Frost declares: "The Second Coming will end the Dispensation of Grace — though not of grace itself — and will begin that of the Messianic kingdom." (*Op. cit.*, p. 132.) "Though not of grace itself" — but does that mean that in the seventh dispensation grace, the Gospel of grace, rules? No. For the next sentence reads: "When Christ comes again, therefore, it will be to undertake a new work in the fulfilling of God's purposes toward the children of men." And later on: "Christ will come between the present Dispensation of Grace and the future one of the Kingdom, ending the one and beginning the other." The Dispensation of Grace will end, these men insist. God will no longer, in the final dispensation, employ the Gospel method. Different methods will be substituted. The strong language Ph. Mauro uses in this connection is not too strong: "The New Testament knows of but *one salvation*; and that salvation is identified *with the Gospel of Christ*, which is expressly declared to be 'the power of God unto salvation,' Rom. 1, 16; 2 Tim. 1, 10; 1 Cor. 15, 1. I give it as the indubitable teaching of the New Testament that salvation is *of one sort only*, without any 'respect of persons'; and that it comes only 'by the Gospel.' Hence, in setting forth a *different* salvation, *apart from* the Gospel of Christ, this doctrine contradicts fundamental truth of the New Testament. Here, then, is a matter for the serious attention of all 'Fundamentalists.'" (*Op. cit.*, p. 209 f.)

Again, there are chiliasts who antagonize the Gospel in the most direct way: they teach the possibility of salvation by works of the Law. Where the Gospel dominates the heart, the thought that men

have, at times, under certain conditions, obtained salvation through the Law cannot arise. And since chiliasm is out of harmony with the Gospel principle, we are not surprised to find that chiliasts are able to pen statements like these: "Time, according to the Scripture, is divided into seven dispensations, a dispensation being a divinely chosen period of time wherein God deals judicially with men according to their obedience or disobedience." (H. Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 129.) Is God, then, dealing with us in the present, the sixth dispensation, *according to our obedience or disobedience?* Frost says so. And was salvation possible in the preceding dispensations through works? Yes. "Through the five dispensations of the past God made salvation possible by revealing Himself through dramatic miracles and specific laws and by requiring works" (p. 131). It is true that this chiliast goes on to say: "and the offering of such sacrifices as would be the expression of dependent faith (Heb. 9, 16—24; Jas. 2, 21—26)." But one who knows what faith is cannot harbor the thought that "God made salvation possible by requiring works." (By the way, the Dispensationalists should guard more carefully against jumbling their dispensations. Salvation by faith is the characteristic of the sixth dispensation. This characteristic should not be introduced into the other dispensations.) The next sentence reads: "Through the present dispensation (grace) He is making salvation possible apart from works." Then how could he make the general statement that in all dispensations God deals with men according to their obedience or disobedience? The next sentence reads: "In the coming dispensation (the Kingdom) He will make salvation possible by consummating all that the past promised and the present secures, enjoining faith with works." In the present dispensation God makes salvation possible by faith apart from works, in the final dispensation by enjoining faith with works. The reader of this kind of literature is being trained to think along legalistic lines. Again, "the test of acceptance with Christ, the King, is not so much that of faith as works"—in the affair of the Judgment of Nations. Men are "spared from death," gain entrance into the millennial kingdom for "what they have done to the King's 'brethren,' namely, godly Jews" (p. 116).—One in whose heart the Gospel rules cannot make his mouth say and his pen write that any and all divine blessings are not always the gifts of pure grace. *Bibliotheca Sacra* can write down just that. There are three systems of divine government, the Mosaic Law, the grace rule of life, and the kingdom rule of conduct, "which embodies that precise responsibility which will be required when Christ is reigning on the earth. . . . As to the essential character of these three systems of human conduct it may be observed that two are *legal* and one is *gracious*. Two simple tests are available in determining those precepts that are *legal* in distinction to those that are *gracious*: a) That

which is *legal* is demonstrated to be such because of accompanying meritorious conditions which determine the divine blessings, while that which is *gracious* is an appeal based upon divine blessings already bestowed. . . . b) Again, that which is *legal* is demonstrated to be such by the fact that only human ability is appealed to; while that which is *gracious* is evidenced by two facts: that divine enablement is provided and its exercise is anticipated." (July, 1934, p. 263 f.) In the millennial kingdom, the final and most glorious dispensation, the legal system, the law of merit, rules! — Did Jesus Christ at one time, and will He again, preach the Law as the vehicle of God's blessings? The postponement-theory section of the dispensationalist group of the premillennialists affirms it. "The kingdom system is set forth in the Old Testament predictions concerning the Messianic period and in those portions of the synoptic gospels which record the Kingdom teachings of John the Baptist and of Christ." (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, l. c.) "The essence of Christ's teaching in the first part of His ministry, that in which He was offering the Kingdom to the Jews, His own people, is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount." John's ministry "was not unlike the early ministry of the Lord Jesus. It was primarily an ethical message." (D. Barnhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 22 f.) "Under the law of the Kingdom no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven (Matt. 6, 12. 14. 15). Under grace the Christian is exhorted to forgive because he is already forgiven (Eph. 4, 30—32)." (*Scofield Bible*, note on Matt. 5, 2.) The Gospel principle was temporarily suppressed where such thoughts found utterance.⁴⁾

The third count of the indictment against chiliasm may be thus summed up: "This theory disparages the Gospel. 'The more common opinion,' says Dr. McNeile, 'is that this is the final dispensation and that by a more copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit it will magnify itself and swell into the universal blessedness predicted by the prophets, carrying with it Jews and Gentiles, even the whole world, in one glorious flock under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Lord. This is reiterated from pulpit, press, and platform. It is the usual

4) These men have not grasped the meaning of the Scripture term "gospel." *Scofield Bible*: "Four forms of the Gospel are to be distinguished: 1) The Gospel of the Kingdom. This is the good news that God purposes to set up on the earth a kingdom, political, spiritual, Israelitish, universal, over which God's Son, David's Heir, shall be King, and which shall be for one thousand years the manifestation of the righteousness of God in human affairs. 2) The Gospel of the grace of God." (Definition substantially correct). "3) The 'everlasting Gospel' (Rev. 14, 6). . . . It is neither the Gospel of the Kingdom nor of Grace. Though its burden is judgment, not salvation, it is good news to Israel, etc. 4) That which Paul calls 'my Gospel' (Rom. 2, 16)." (Note on Rev. 14, 6.) D. Barnhouse: "There is a great difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace. The Gospel of the Kingdom is a threat because of the approaching Judgment." (*Op. cit.*, p. 22.)

climax of missionary exhortation or rather 'missionary prophecy' . . . In the work of Rev. David Brown on the Second Advent abundant evidence is advanced from the writings of Mr. Brooks, Dr. McNeile, and the Rev. Mr. Bickersteth to show that those gentlemen teach that the Scriptures 'are to be superseded' in the millennium. Other means, probably, as they say, other revelations, are to be made for the salvation of men. Any theory which thus disparages the Gospel of the grace of God must be false. . . . Wrath, judgments, displays of visible glory, and miracles are not designed for the conversion of souls, nor are they adapted to that end." (C. Hodge, *Syst. Theol.*, III, p. 864 f.)

The whole indictment reads, in the words of Dr. G. Stoeckhardt: "*Es liegt nun auch auf der Hand, wie verderblich der chiliastische Irrtum dem christlichen Glauben ist. Derselbe erweckt die abenteuerlichsten Vorstellungen, zieht die Gedanken der Christen von dem Weg des Heils ab, den Gott den Menschen fuer diese Zeit bis zum Ende der Welt hin verordnet hat, verduerstert die wirkliche Christen-hoffnung, die Hoffnung auf die ewige Herrlichkeit, macht klare Schriftworte unklar und zweifelhaft, bringt die Christen um das einfaltige Verstaendnis der Schrift usw. Die chiliastische Richtung, die sich im vergangenen Jahrhundert gerade bei den Erweckten und Erweckungspredigern Bahn gebrochen hat, hat ihre Genesis in dem Ungehorsam gegen Gottes Wort. . . . Und wie? Einer solchen durch und durch krankhaften Erscheinung und Richtung, die aus dem Fleisch geboren ist und das wahre geistliche Leben stoert und hindert, sollten wir in der lutherischen Kirche Hausrecht zuerkennen?*" (*Lehre u. Wehre*, 50, p. 497).⁵⁾

5) When the American Lutheran synods meet for the purpose of bringing about Lutheran unity, the discussion of chiliasm must have a place on the agenda. Some Lutherans are claiming and exercising the right to teach chiliasm in various forms. The others are denying them that right. *The Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod* declares: "With the *Augsburg Confession* (Art. XVII) we reject every type of millennialism, or chiliasm, the opinions that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world and establish a dominion of the Church over the world," etc. (See the entire section, *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 1931, p. 414 f.) The whole Synodical Conference takes the same position. See *Proceedings* of its 34th convention, 1934, p. 9-84. Dr. R. H. C. Lenski, of the American Lutheran Church, rejects the doctrine of the millennium, as the readers of this paper have noticed. Dr. C. H. Little, of the United Lutheran Church, rejects the doctrine of the millennium. "This doctrine has been the rallying-point of heretics and fanatics from the earliest period of the Church down to the present day. It is a characteristic doctrine of the Ebionites and Montanists of the early Church; of the Mystics of the Middle Ages; of the Anabaptists of the Reformation era; and of such modern sects as the Adventists, the Russellites, and others in our own day. It is a doctrine also on which Lutherans are not a unit. Some reject it altogether; others accept it in one or another of its various forms. . . . We conclude that the doctrine of the millennium finds no support from Rev. 20 and is also without any Scrip-

The Augsburg Confession Lutherans pronounce the ban on chiliasm for Scriptural reasons. And the confessional Reformed theologians do the same. One of them is Abraham Kuyper († 1920), whose treatise *Chiliasm, or the Doctrine of Premillennialism* is herewith brought to the attention of the readers of this magazine.⁶⁾ The small pamphlet brings convincing and abundant proof, from Scripture, for its thesis: "Every idea of a millennial dominion with its throne established in Jerusalem, in connection with previously resurrected Jews and Gentiles, converted unto Him, is contrary to the entire economy of the Sacred Scriptures and as such must be rejected. It must be destroyed root and branch in the heart of the brethren." It also calls attention to the fact that, wherever the Reformed churches "expressed themselves, either in their standards of faith" (e. g., *Heidelberg Catechism*) "or at the general synods, they have never encouraged chiliasm. Quite the contrary, whatever these standards say by way of contrast between the ministry of shadows and the ministry of fulfilment, or when they speak of the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom, or whatever is being said about the Last Things, excludes all chiliastic expectations. . . . Neither Luther, Zwingli, nor Calvin have ever encouraged this theory with as much as a word, but rather with Augustine they opposed it as a Jewish-carnal product." The translator characterizes chiliasm as one of "the errors which have made

tural support. In many respects it stands in actual contradiction to the clear statements of Scripture. It implies a third coming of Christ, of which the Scriptures know nothing. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we read of two future comings of our Lord, one for establishing a millennial reign and the other for Judgment. The doctrine of the millennium is a man-made doctrine and has no foundation in the Holy Scriptures." (*Disputed Doctrines*, p. 31—41.) Dr. Joseph Stump, of the U. L. C., takes the same position. "The Scriptures know nothing of a twofold coming of Christ and the establishment of a reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years before the end of the world. The *Augsburg Confession* rejects chiliasm or premillennialism as a Jewish opinion. The New Testament knows only the present age and the age to come—the temporal era of grace, in which the Church is commanded to evangelize the world through the means of grace committed to her, and the eternal era, inaugurated by the second coming of Christ," etc. (*The Christian Faith*, p. 398 f.) And Dr. H. E. Jacobs taught: "While it is true that this article [A. C., XVII] was directed against the gross chiliasm of the Anabaptists of the Reformation period, it clearly disclaims all responsibility for any teaching that separates between a resurrection for the godly and a resurrection for the ungodly by any long period of time and which affirms that there are two comings of Christ in the future." (*A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 515.) As long as other Lutherans teach millennialism, the Lutherans of America are not at one in doctrine. And a unity effected by agreeing to ignore the difference and tolerate the chiliastic teaching as a harmless thing would be a sham.

6) Zondervan Publishing House.— See page 161 of this magazine.— "Dr. A. Kuyper is one of the foremost exponents of Reformed teaching, who in his own country [Holland] is classed with Dr. Bavinck, while in this country he is readily and easily declared to be the equal of a Hodge and a Warfield." (Foreword, by the translator.) He was a leader in de gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

such deep inroads in the life our churches" and declares: "Despite our policy of tolerance, sooner or later we shall be obliged to admit that chiliasm has already proved itself to be another Trojan horse. From time to time this matter has come to the fore and caused the disrapture of some Reformed church or other. If the church was not disrupted, it was at least divided. In spite of these experiences we have continued our policy of tolerance." (Foreword.) "Let us be true to the faith once delivered unto the saints. It may be well to be tolerant with respect to usages and customs, but when it comes to the interpretation of the Word of God, there cannot be any tolerance." (Appendix.)

TH. ENGELDER.

Der Pietismus.¹⁾

I. Der Boden, auf dem der Pietismus gewachsen ist.

Es gibt Erscheinungen in der Geschichte, die man, wie es scheint, schwerlich rein objektiv beurteilen kann; es ist schwieriger als sonst, sich sein unbefangenes Urteil zu bewahren. Eine solche Erscheinung ist der Pietismus. Es wäre leicht, ein Duzend und mehr verschiedene Definitionen und Erklärungen für diese Bewegung in der lutherischen Kirche aus ganz reputierlichen Geschichtswerken anzuführen. Der Grund dafür²⁾ liegt nicht nur in dem verschiedenartigen „dogmatischen Standort“ der Schreiber, sondern vor allem in der Art der Quellen, aus denen wir schöpfen müssen. Der Pietismus hat keine offiziellen Bekenntnisschriften hinterlassen, ja nicht einmal Grundsätze, die überall anerkannt wurden, sondern man muß sein Urteil nach privater pietistischer Literatur bilden, die „um ihrer subjektivistischen, aktuellen, unruhigen Art willen mit großer Vorsicht benutzt werden muß“. Zudem war es eine Zeit, in der die Gemüter recht heftig aufeinanderplatzten, und manches ist in großer Erregung geschrieben. Und tatsächlich war der Pietismus nicht immer und nicht überall derselbe. Kein Wunder, daß die Meinungen auseinandergehen.

Nicht so weit gehen die Meinungen auseinander, wenn man nach den Wurzeln des Pietismus fragt. Wodurch wurde diese gewaltige Bewegung verursacht? Die Antwort lautet fast allgemein, wie McGlothlin es ausdrückt: "Reaction against dead orthodoxy produced Pietism" (*Guide to the Study of Church History*, p. 267.) So eins wie das andere der gebräuchlichen Lehrbücher der Kirchengeschichte. Walker (*History of the Christian Church*): "The general tendency was external and dogmatic. It was the tendency often, though only

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2) Mirbt, in Herzog-Haucks „Realencyklopädie für Prot. Theologie und Kirche“.