



REFORMED

— PAVILION —

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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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MEDITATION

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

—Exodus 12:21–30

It was the solemn night of the Lord's passover. All the Israelites laid their hands on the lambs that they had set aside, one lamb per family. That evening each family killed its passover lamb, collecting the blood in a basin and roasting the flesh of the lamb over the fire. The father took a leafy bunch of hyssop to use as a paintbrush; and, dipping the hyssop in the basin of blood, he painted the two doorposts and the door lintel of his house with the blood of the lamb. From that moment on the family remained inside its house. No one came in or went out, for the Lord had come into the land of Egypt to destroy Egypt. Each Israelite family stayed in its home to eat the roasted flesh of the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The family members ate standing up, with their loins girded and their feet shod and their staffs in their hands. They ate in haste. It was the Lord's passover.

At midnight the Lord came into Egypt as the destroyer. The scene was almost too terrible to imagine. The Lord entered into every house that was not covered by the blood of the lamb. In the houses of the Egyptians, the Lord went to the bedrooms of the firstborn and slew them. All the firstborn in the land of Egypt were slain that night. There was not a house where there was not one dead, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on the throne to the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon and all the firstborn of cattle. The people of Egypt rose up in the night and, finding their firstborn dead, cried out in anguish and fear and grief. Pharaoh, all his servants, and all the Egyptians wept and wailed.

But in the houses of the Israelites it was different. The Lord, the destroyer, came to each house of the Israelites and saw the blood of the lamb smeared on the doorposts and the door lintel. Seeing the blood that covered the family

in that home, the destroyer passed over and slew no firstborn there.

What made it so, that the Lord would pass over the houses that were covered in blood? Was it that the Israelites were better people than the Egyptians? Emphatically not! Then was it that the Israelites had obeyed God's law better than the Egyptians? Impossible! What then? Why did the Lord pass over the Israelites when he saw the blood? The fact of the matter is that the Israelites were just as guilty as the Egyptians. The Israelites were just as fallen in Adam. The Israelites were just as disobedient and willful as the Egyptians. By rights, the firstborn of Israel should have died with the firstborn of Egypt on the night of the passover. But behold the grace and mercy of our covenant God! The Lord gave his firstborn Son in the place of the firstborn of

his people. The passover lamb was a type of the Lamb of God (John 1:29). God slew his own firstborn for all the sins of his elect people and by the blood of his Son covered his people's sins with a perfect atonement. The blood over the homes of the Israelites was the blood of God's firstborn. When the destroyer came to the homes of God's people, the blood of his Son was smeared on the doorposts as the salvation of those homes. And so the Lord passed over.

Tremendous night, full of wonder and salvation and comfort for the people of God. For Jesus' sake the Lord does not destroy his own but graciously blesses us!

It was the solemn night of the Lord's passover.

—AL



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The mail wagon has arrived here at *Reformed Pavilion*, carrying missives from near and far, from friend and foe. Receiving letters to the editor is one of the most interesting aspects of publishing a magazine, not only for the editor but I think for the readership as well. Editors and readers alike look forward with anticipation to learning what our fellow readers are thinking. The arrival of the mail wagon is very welcome indeed, and our readers are hereby invited to keep the letters coming.

Before proceeding, a brief note about publishing letters from our readers. When one writes a letter that he asks to be published, *Reformed Pavilion* publishes that letter with the correspondent's name. Other times readers write to the magazine without asking for their letters to be published. If any of these letters would contain confidential information, *Reformed Pavilion* would not publish the letter, or at least not that part of the letter that is confidential. But other times our readers' letters contain non-confidential material that might be of broader interest to the readership of *Reformed Pavilion*. In that case, the magazine might publish the letter with or without the name of the correspondent. As long as the letter comes to the editor with the author's name, it is possible to publish that letter with or without the name in the magazine. Because none of the following correspondents specifically requested that their letters be published, the writers are identified by place, but the names of the correspondents have been withheld.

Without further ado, let's dig into the mailbag to see what our correspondents have to say.

An attentive reader from Illinois wonders whether a passage in one of Herman Hoeksema's articles has been correctly transcribed.

Thanks for yet another heartwarming and instructive writing in the *Reformed Pavilion*.

Can you check whether a sentence is correctly transcribed in the article by HH in the recent Vol. 1 Issue 34 publication? The sentence is about midway in the first column of the last page (pg. 13) and reads:

Be it sufficient now to point out, that if the power of grace, the theory of the humanist and post-millennialist is a dream and a dangerous one.

This was confusing to me. Perhaps HH meant to say something like: "Be it sufficient now to point out, that - according to - the power of grace, the theory of the humanist and post-millennialist is a dream and a dangerous one."

Thanks again for your "weekly" articles.

Our correspondent has sharp eyes, and he is correct that there was an error in the transcript. In the sentence in question, the words "if the power of grace" should not be there. The sentence should read, "Be it sufficient now to point out that the theory of the humanist and post-millennialist is a dream and a dangerous one."

Much thanks to our eagle-eyed reader, who not only reads the magazine but also reads it carefully.

Staying on the topic of Herman Hoeksema's articles, a reader from Scotland makes the following suggestion:

As always, thank you for *Reformed Pavilion*.

May I be so bold as to make a suggestion? When you come to the end of the Hoeksema article in *RP*, I believe that it would be beneficial if these articles were inserted in a Special *RP* which would be easily accessible and downloadable for electronic devices.

It is always exciting for us in our little corner of North America to receive a letter from overseas. Thanks to our foreign correspondent for gracing us with the kind words and the excellent suggestion. There are approximately two hundred Hoeksema articles from the *Banner*, so we still have about three years before we come to the end of republishing them in *Reformed Pavilion*. However, our correspondent's suggestion is compelling. Wouldn't it be great to have all of Hoeksema's *Banner* articles compiled in one place? Perhaps in a book or even in an anthology of two or three volumes. I think there would be interest in such a set even beyond the readership of *Reformed Pavilion*. As editors and readers, let's put our heads together over the next few years to see what might be possible when the time comes.

And if there are any other readers from overseas who would like to say hello, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Moving on, not all our readers are happy with *Reformed Pavilion*. A reader from Iowa offers the following rebuke with regard to the undersigned's leaving the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC):

Your continuing quoting of the Hoeksemas really demonstrates that you had

no right to tear yourself and your followers out of the PRC.

Haven't you noticed that without PRC articles to quote, you would have little or nothing to put in your magazine.

The way the RP movement has fallen apart should be telling you and Langerak and VanderWal something. Face it before all your followers wind up in who knows what kind of bad denominations.

Our correspondent has a few of his facts wrong, but let's overlook that for a moment to address his main point. His main point: "You had no right to tear yourself and your followers out of the PRC." In response I have a few questions for our correspondent. These questions are not at all intended as *Gotcha!* questions or as snares in which to entangle our correspondent. These questions are asked in all sincerity and with a fervent desire that our correspondent think them through and give them his honest answers, at least in his own heart. If our correspondent is minded to write again with his thoughts or with questions of his own, *Reformed Pavilion* will devote to him all the space that he needs. Here are the questions:

1. Would it ever be possible for the Protestant Reformed denomination to apostatize from the truth?
2. If it would be possible for the Protestant Reformed denomination to apostatize from the truth, what would you consider to be a significant enough departure to call the PRC "apostatizing" or "departing" or even "apostate"?
3. Has the Protestant Reformed denomination departed in those significant ways, so that she must now be considered apostatizing?
4. If the Protestant Reformed denomination ever would depart from the truth significantly enough to make itself an apostatizing church, what should the members of the denomination do?

These were probably the most significant questions that those of us who left the PRC in 2021 had to face. I will leave it to our correspondent and to our readers to answer these questions for themselves, but for those of us who left the PRC in 2021, it was the answers to these questions that led us to “tear [ourselves] out of the PRC.” When we answered these questions a certain way—which I believe was the biblical and confessional way—then there was no other choice for us but to leave. It was as much a shock to us as it was to anyone that we had to leave the PRC, but it was also a time of much gratitude to God for graciously delivering us from error in spite of our error-prone selves.

Perhaps our correspondent would give different answers to these questions than we did, but these questions go a long way toward answering why we had to leave the PRC.

With regard to our correspondent’s facts, a few gentle corrections. First, the Hoeksema *Banner* articles are not “PRC articles.” Hoeksema wrote those articles when he was still well and truly Christian Reformed, from 1918–1922. Republishing the Christian Reformed Hoeksema from a century ago says nothing at all about whether the Protestant Reformed Churches are still true churches one hundred years later. I am certain that if Herman Hoeksema had been alive in 2021, he would also have signed the Act of Separation and left the Protestant Reformed Churches because of their apostasy from the truth.

Second, it is not correct to characterize our leaving the PRC as tearing ourselves out of the PRC. Remember that the Protestant Reformed denomination put us out of her fellowship. Protestant Reformed consistories sent letters to their members warning them not to read *Sword and Shield*. Protestant Reformed consistories closed their pulpits to me, though I was a minister and member in good standing in the denomination and though classis had appointed me to preach in those pulpits. The PRC would not address, much less answer, the pile of protests that members submitted, which protests

still sit untouched in the archives of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church. Finally—to cut a long story short—the PRC deposed me from the office of minister and excluded me from the kingdom of heaven by barring me from the Lord’s table. The PRC did everything in its considerable power as a church institute to tear out of her midst those who eventually left. By the time we signed the Act of Separation and left in 2021, the PRC had already cast us out in no uncertain terms. Our leaving was simply the culmination and formalization of what the PRC had already done.

Third, by now it should be evident that those who left the PRC cannot be called my “followers.” That description has been used from the beginning as a sly way to dismiss our doctrinal concerns and to cast the reformation of 2021 as nothing but the partisan schism of an evil faction. But if one looks around in 2024, one will notice that the Reformed Protestant Churches have decisively cast me out. All my supposed “followers” suddenly and violently “unfollowed” me. Whatever else that might say, it certainly says that I do not have “followers.” Christ is the Head of his church, not Lanning. Christ is the one with followers—called disciples—not Lanning.

Fourth, *Reformed Pavilion* is in the unique position of being able to carry as much or as little in each issue as the week requires. The fact that some issues have been very large while other issues have been very small is no embarrassment to the editors or to the readers. The fact that some issues have almost nothing besides Hoeksema’s *Banner* articles certainly does not mean that there is little or nothing to say. We are thankful for each page that the Lord provides, even if the magazine would be only a single page.

Our correspondent does not see eye to eye with *Reformed Pavilion*, but we are thankful for his letter anyway. Criticism of the magazine, and even outright opposition, serves to sharpen our understanding of the truth.

The next letter comes from a reader in Minnesota, who has this kind thing to say about the meditations on Exodus:

I wanted to thank you for the series of meditations on Exodus in The Pavilion. The Sunday School class I attend is going through Exodus and these articles have been very helpful. Thank you and may God continue to bless your ministry.

God be praised for giving us his word and for giving us the Spirit of Christ to understand it. Your prayers for God's blessing are also much appreciated.

That's all for the mailbag this time. Thank you for your letters. Keep them coming! And thanks be to God for giving us a little space to publish.

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

August 7, 1919

(Pp. 485–86)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

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

Nimrod, so we found, was not so unlike a modern humanist.

The idea that he was a most terrible hunter of men, a bloody tyrant before whom all humanity trembled with fear, we strongly repudiated. The text of the record about him in Scripture does not justify such an interpretation; neither does it explain how Nimrod could gather around himself all the rest of mankind and establish kingdoms.

And, therefore, we took Scripture in its most natural and simple sense. He was a mighty hunter. A hunter not of men but of the many and dangerous wild animals that abounded and constituted a threat to man's property and life. He, therefore, appeared as a benefactor to mankind. And while he was serving man he gained a widespread reputation of being the servant of Jehovah, so that his name and mighty deeds were perpetually remembered by future generations in the proverbial expression: "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jehovah."

But this is not all that is to be said about the genius and power of Nimrod. We also read that he established kingdoms. And it is especially from this point of view that we must undoubtedly connect his name with the history of Shinar's valley.

Nimrod was a great organizer. He established mighty kingdoms. He laid the foundations of kingdoms that continued to exist for ages afterward and were foremost in their influence upon the history of the world. And this fact corroborates all we have learnt to know about Nimrod in our former discussion. In the first place it reveals that he was a great genius. It must be considered that the idea of a kingdom was hitherto unknown. Nimrod was undoubtedly the first one of mankind that conceived of the possibility of establishing a union and an authority other than tribal and patriarchal, he was the first one that conceived of the idea of a kingdom. Not, indeed, as if that idea was foreign to man's nature. It should be remembered that God had created

His world a kingdom. Man was created the king-servant. In a sense it may be said that this was the very image of God in him, that he was king under God, vice-roy in the kingdom of the world. And though it is true that because of his sin man had subjected himself to the dominion of satan, this did not alter the fact that he was in his very being a king. The difference was that instead of being vice-roy under God he had now become king under the devil and reigned according to his will. But king he was and it was not unnatural to him to live under the form of a kingdom. And thus it is to be explained very well that Nimrod could conceive of the possibility of establishing a mighty monarchy with himself as the sole ruler over all. But although the idea of a kingdom was not foreign to man's very being, the fact remains that it required a genius to first of all conceive of such a mighty plan. It was in Nimrod's mighty mind that the idea originated and the plan ripened. He could copy from no one before him. The fact, however, that Nimrod established kingdoms reveals still more. His success in this respect shows in the second place, that he cannot have been the mighty and cruel tyrant he is sometimes pictured to have been, that he was not the terrible hunter of men he is often presented to be, but that he was the undaunted hunter of ferocious beasts that were a peril to men, and that as such he was the benefactor of mankind. Individual tyranny and personal cruelty are not qualities adapted to lay the foundation of kingdoms. Had Nimrod been such an individual outlaw, a pirate of the woods, striking fear into the hearts of his fellowmen, he might have best gathered around himself a band of men of the same caliber, but never would he have succeeded in causing all mankind to rally around his person. And, therefore, Nimrod must have been the idol of his age. His contemporaries acknowledged not only that he was a man of great power and undaunted courage, but their hearts and minds were captivated by his being the mighty hunter before Jehovah. If a kingdom were ever established and men subjected themselves to a hitherto unknown form of authority, it was not at all difficult to determine who would

be the king. Nimrod, the mighty hunter before Jehovah, was the choice of all mankind.

Now, what is the connection that may be conceived between the person of Nimrod and the history of the confusion of tongues in the valley of Shinar? We imagine that the entire history was such, that Nimrod first of all attempted to establish a kingdom that would embrace all mankind, a universal kingdom. This plan, however, was frustrated by the powerful intervention of the Almighty. And it was only after this mighty plan of a universal kingdom had been frustrated that Nimrod satisfied the hunger of his genius by establishing individual and separate kingdoms, embracing those whose unity had been left intact by the confusion of tongues. Of course, we confess immediately that this connection is not directly indicated by the text. Scripture speaks of Nimrod's exploits and the confusion of tongues separately. Nevertheless the above picture of the course of events seems perfectly justified. In the first place, it may be remarked that it is but perfectly natural to suppose that the immigration into the valley of Shinar with the definite plan of building a city and a tower whose top would reach into heaven took place under the central leadership of one man, or at least of a few individuals. It is not very well conceivable that all at the same time conceived of the idea of establishing such a kingdom. Neither is it possible to conceive that there was no leadership, no recognized authority in this entire movement. There must have been someone that took the lead, whom the others were willing to follow. And since in the previous chapter we find mention of the great Nimrod, the benefactor of mankind, the organizer of humanity, the founder of kingdoms, the inference seems perfectly justified that it was under the leadership of the mighty hunter who lived at that time that the people moved into the plain of Shinar to establish a universal kingdom. In the second place it may be urged that all men were still of one language. They were still closely connected. Tribal quarrels may have threatened disruption and separation even at this early period, but all men were still of one

language. They had not separated as yet into different nations. It was, therefore, but perfectly natural that when Nimrod conceived of the idea of establishing a kingdom, he thought of nothing less than a kingdom that would embrace all mankind. But there is also an indication in the text that points to the same view of the course of events. In Gen. 10:10 we read: "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel... in the land of Shinar." And in Gen. 11:2 we read: "And it came to pass as they journeyed east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there." And in vs. 9 of the same chapter: "Therefore was the name of it called Babel, because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did Jehovah scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." A comparison of these passages would seem to establish it beyond all reasonable doubt that the history of chapter 11 must be conceived of as antecedent to that of chapter 10. And further we find that the name of Nimrod's first kingdom was derived from the history of the confusion of tongues. Hence, thus is the course of events. First all mankind under the leadership of Nimrod move eastward till they find the plain of Shinar. There they settle. There they make the attempt to establish a universal kingdom, with Nimrod, whom all idolize, as their king. There they proceed to build the city and the mighty tower whose top is to reach into the heavens. And there they meet with the opposition of Jehovah, who frustrates their plan by the confusion of tongues. Many of the tribes, being of a sudden actually severed from the rest, leave the plain and scatter over the face of the earth. But a remnant remains in the plain, and with that remnant Nimrod establishes the beginning of the mighty kingdom of Babel or Babylon.

The question still remains: why did God frustrate the attempt to establish such a universal kingdom? Of course, it will not do to adduce the reason that by the way of their high tower men conceived of the bold plan to ascend into heaven and make a direct attack upon the sovereignty of God. For true it is, that they intended to build a tower that would reach into heaven, but this may

readily be dismissed as a hyperbole to express that they wanted to build a very high tower. No, what they intended to accomplish is plainly told us. In the first place, they wanted to remain together. The intention is plainly expressed: "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth." In the second place, especially in connection with what we have learnt of Nimrod from chapter 10 it may be stated that they intended to establish a great and mighty kingdom. To that end they wanted to build the great city with its high tower as the center. And in the third place, we are told directly that their purpose was purely humanistic: "and let us make us a name." In short, the air was to make a universal, powerful kingdom, embracing all humanity, and lording it ultimately over all the resources of all the world.

If viewed in this light it is not difficult to see why the Lord frustrated the attempt and looked down with great displeasure upon the doings of mankind. In the first place, it may of course be remarked that the whole scheme was manifestly opposed to the will of God. His will it was, not that all men should combine and federate and form one kingdom and remain together in a powerful center, but that they should multiply and scatter and inhabit the earth and develop into nations and tongues. From the point of view of God's plan it is not difficult to understand the history of Shinar's plan. Jehovah meant to form a people of his own, a people from all nations and tongues, a people that would ultimately manifest His great glory and the manifold riches of His image. For the formation of this people, so rich and full in mansided development, it was necessary that the organism of the race should be separated for a time into many different nations. And since in Shinar's valley the attempt was made to accomplish exactly the opposite, to place a check upon the multifarious development of the race, the Lord must intervene and scatter mankind by main force over the face of the earth. For never would humanity have manifested itself in the fullness of its glory in the New Jerusalem and in the New Kingdom, never would each nation have added its own peculiar glory to the

Heavenly City had Jehovah allowed Nimrod's plan to be crowned with success.

This, then, is the positive result of the confusion of tongues. The elect must ultimately manifest the fullness of God's riches. These elect must be called from the organism of the race as it exists and develops in this dispensation.

This organism of the race, therefore, must develop under the forms of many nations and tongues. And the confusion of tongues frustrates the attempt to prevent this multifarious development.

There is still more. But about this we will write next week, the Lord willing.

—Holland, Mich.



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