



REFORMED

— PAVILION —

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 44

FEBRUARY 8, 2025

*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

CONTENTS

3 MEDITATION
The Marriage of a Maidservant

4 EDITORIAL
On the Eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches' Centennial (4):
The Flourishing Maiden

6 HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S BANNER ARTICLES
Article 96: The New King and His Kingdom: The Covenant with Noah (continued)



Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

See reformedpavilion.com for all contact and subscription information.

And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he hath betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

—Exodus 21:7–11

The Marriage of a Maidservant

One of the civil laws that God delivered to Israel concerned the marriage of a maidservant, and it brims over with the gospel of God’s merciful tenderness to his poor, helpless church.

Behold the heartbreaking scene. Over there is a poor man in Israel. He has a wife. He has sons and daughters. But the man is poor. He can hardly feed and clothe his children. His situation is desperate. And what danger his children are in—especially his daughters. Who is more helpless than a poor little girl? How will such a girl make her living? And who will protect a helpless girl in an impoverished family from the godless men who crave her? Time and again throughout every society in history, including our own, the nations of men have shown themselves more than willing to turn a blind eye when wicked men make a prey of the children of the poor. The cruel, proud, heartless, monstrously selfish men of this world traffic in poor children and devour them. And there is that poor man in Israel! And there is his daughter! Helpless. Defenseless. As ripe a target for cruel men as ever there was.

Now behold the mercy of God to that poor little girl. God made provision for the father to sell his daughter to be a maidservant! To the modern mind it may seem to be hardly a mercy. Sell one’s daughter? That she may become a maidservant to another man? But consider God’s provision carefully. The father was not selling his

daughter into slavery. Rather, the father was giving his daughter in promise of marriage to a fellow Hebrew. That is why the girl would “not go out” in the seventh year of release “as the menservants do.” The girl was “betrothed” to the man who purchased her, or she was “betrothed” to the man’s son. And because the girl was too young to be married yet, she would live in the man’s house as a maidservant until such time as she came of age. All the while the man who had betrothed the maidservant to himself would protect her and provide for her out of the abundance of his house. If he had betrothed her to his son, he would “deal with her after the manner of daughters.”

Consider what marvelous protection God graciously provided for such helpless daughters. The poor father would carefully consider the man to whom he would betroth his daughter. Not just any man would do, but only a man who would deal with his daughter as tenderly as a husband. Or, if she were to be married to his son, only a man who would deal with his daughter as if she were his own. And how carefully God protected the poor daughter in her new home. If the man changed his mind about marrying her or if he chose another wife for his son instead of her, the man must nevertheless make full provision for her. Under no circumstance was the man to sell her outside of Israel to a strange people. And if he was not willing to provide for her to

the full, then he was to let her “go out free,” furnishing her “liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto” her (Deut. 15:14).

How tenderly God provided for and protected the poorest and the most helpless of his people. And now let us look by faith through the circumstances of this civil law to the “truth and substance” of it that “remain with us in Jesus Christ” (Belgic Confession 25). The church is that

poor, helpless girl. She is empty of her own riches; she is prey to her cruel foes. But God has betrothed her to his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ’s riches of righteousness are hers, and she is an heir of eternal life with him. She who was poor and defenseless is now wealthy with the unsearchable riches of Christ and safe in his house. How good is our God! For the marriage of a maidservant is the gospel of our salvation. “I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32).

—AL

EDITORIAL

On the Eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches’ Centennial (4): The Flourishing Maiden

I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. (Ezek. 16:7)

The Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC), made to live by God’s sovereign grace, flowered into a beautiful maiden. Well-formed and well-fashioned by God in his tender care, the denomination was lovely to behold.

Oh, to the eye of flesh she was nothing to see. In the early months of 1925, there were only a few congregations and three ministers. And until March 1925 those congregations and ministers were not even officially united as a federation of churches. The only other denomination upon earth that even paid the PRC any mind was her mother, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), who considered her Protestant Reformed daughter to be dead to her. No, to the

eye of the flesh there was nothing lovely in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Ah, but to the eye of faith, which sees as God sees, the Protestant Reformed denomination was beautiful indeed. As the tiny bud on the apple tree in the orchard grows from an unnoticed little thing into a beautiful flower that unfurls its lovely petals, so the Protestant Reformed denomination flourished from an unnoticed little thing that was meant to die into a lovely woman.

And what was the loveliness of the Protestant Reformed Churches in those early years of her increase? Why, it was the gospel of sovereign grace. The Christian Reformed doctrine of common grace made God into a helpless beggar and taught God’s people to pine after the world. How hideous! But the Protestant Reformed doctrine of sovereign grace was God’s gift of the very gospel itself to his people. For the Protestant Reformed doctrine of sovereign grace declared that God, and God alone, saves his helpless people, according to his eternal love for them in Christ. How lovely is sovereign grace!

And how lovely was the church formed by that gospel!

For the sake of the gospel of sovereign grace, the consistories and ministers had been slain. By means of the gospel of sovereign grace, God had caused the denomination to live. And by the gospel of sovereign grace, God formed and fashioned the Protestant Reformed denomination into a splendid woman.

The full radiance of the Protestant Reformed maiden was unveiled on March 6, 1925. On that date the combined consistories of Eastern Avenue, Kalamazoo I, and Hope adopted the Act of Agreement, by which the churches federated as a denomination, united in the gospel of God's sovereign grace. The churches adopted the name *Protesting Christian Reformed Churches*, in light of their united protest to Synod 1926 of the CRC.

Immediately the newly formed federation of churches began fulfilling requests for instruction from many interested Christian Reformed congregations. In Iowa: Hull, Doon, Sioux Center, Rock Valley, Pella, Oskaloosa, and Orange City. In Illinois: South Holland and Oak Lawn. In Michigan: Byron Center, Roosevelt Park, Hudsonville, Holland, Kalamazoo, and Creston. In Wisconsin: Waupun. In California: Redlands, Los Angeles, and Bellflower. In all these places and more, Christian Reformed people left their apostate and cruel mother and organized Protestant Reformed congregations. Across the

land the gospel of sovereign grace rang forth once again.

What a lovely and flourishing maiden was the Protestant Reformed denomination! How excellent were her ornaments of the gospel of sovereign, particular grace!

On the eve of the centennial of the Protestant Reformed Churches, the heirs of the PRC must know the denomination's flourishing. For when the denomination's heirs consider her flourishing, it becomes evident that all her flowering was given her by God alone. Just as God alone had made the helpless little Protestant Reformed infant to live, so God alone had made the Protestant Reformed maiden to flourish. The denomination had nothing of her own to show. "Thou wast naked and bare." But the denomination was adorned with the excellent ornaments of the gospel by the sovereign grace of God. "I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field" (Ezek. 16:7).

O heirs of the Protestant Reformed Churches, consider it well: you are nothing! The church of herself has never been anything but dead and stillborn and naked and bare. But consider well: Christ is everything! God causes his beloved church to flourish by the gospel of his sovereign grace. Though she may appear ever so pitiful to the eye of the flesh, she is nevertheless the most lovely maiden. For her gospel is Jesus Christ, "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

To be continued...

—AL



Article XCVI. The New King and His Kingdom: The Covenant with Noah (continued)

We stated that wherever the rainbow is mentioned in the Word of God it occurs in connection with the covenant of grace in its cosmic significance. The rainbow does not simply serve the purpose to instill a certain feeling of security and tranquility into the hearts of men, being a sign in the heavens that there shall never be another deluge, but it witnesses of God's eternal covenant of grace. And it is in that light that the rainbow occurs evidently in a few passages of Scripture.

We called your attention to Ezekiel's vision. The purpose of Ezekiel's prophecy is to announce the displacement of the old dispensation by the new, of the old temple made with hands by the new and spiritual temple of another dispensation, of the particularistic form of God's covenant and kingdom by the cosmic, universal realization of the same.

Accordingly, Ezekiel, called as prophet of this wonderful message, receives at the commencement of his prophetic career a vision in which this central message of his prophecy is clearly expressed. Jehovah, enthroned above the cherubim, as covenant God of all the earth, moves in every direction through the earth. And it is in that connection, so we found, when Jehovah reveals himself and his covenant in their universal, cosmic significance, that the rainbow occurs, shining round about the throne as the symbol of grace.

The next passage we mentioned as an indication of the same significance is Rev. 4.

There is, undeniably, a good deal of similarity between the prophecy of Ezekiel and the book

of Revelation with respect to their central purpose and significance. Both mean to picture the displacement of one dispensation by another. Ezekiel's message is: God's covenant and temple shall remain, even though their outward, particularistic form shall be dissolved; another dispensation shall displace the old, a dispensation of greater significance and higher glory; the new and spiritual temple shall surpass the temple made with hands. Mark, he does not announce an essentially different covenant. The covenant is essentially the same throughout the ages. But he must speak of another dispensation of that covenant. So also the book of Revelation means to picture the displacement of the earthly, imperfect, temporal dispensation of God's kingdom and covenant by the eternal and perfect manifestation of them. The book of Revelation announces and pictures the coming of the ultimate form of the kingdom and the covenant, the holy city and the temple, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, the ultimate redemption of all creation. The central message is that Christ is coming with clouds, coming to establish his kingdom, coming to definitely defeat the powers of opposition, coming quickly, throughout the ages, and that this coming of Christ into his kingdom shall find its culmination in the Parousia. He shall not cease to come till all is finished and the mystery of God shall have been completely accomplished. Of this glorious coming, of this displacement of the dispensation of imperfection and battle by the kingdom of peace and perfection, John must prophesy.

Accordingly, John, like Ezekiel, receives a vision similar to that shown to the prophet of the old dispensation. At the very beginning of his prophecy concerning future things he receives a vision of the eternal and glorious form of God's kingdom and covenant that is to displace the earthly manifestation of it. The vision, it may be remarked, is in many respects similar to that in Ezekiel. John also beholds the covenant God in glory, seated upon a throne, appearing like the glory of the jasper and sardius stones. Around that central throne of the Most High John beholds twenty-four other thrones, and on these the twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in garments of pure white and crowned with wreaths of victory. Before the throne there are seven lamps representing the seven spirits of God; and there is also the beautiful crystalline sea reflecting the glory of it all. Again, round about the throne and in the midst of it, John beholds four living creatures, much like the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision, resembling respectively a lion, calf, man and eagle; each of these creatures having six wings which are full of eyes within and without. The activity of the elders and of the creatures day and night consists in giving glory to Him that sitteth upon the throne. The creatures have no rest day or night and sing: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." And as the living creatures thus give glory to the God of heaven and earth, the elders fall down, cast their crowns before the Enthroned One, and say: "Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things and because of thy will they are and were created."

It is not necessary to enter into detailed interpretation of this glorious passage. Let us notice that in this vision John is shown in general outlines what must come to pass. The dominion of Him that sitteth upon the throne, the glorification of the church, the redemption of all creation, so that all things give glory to the God of heaven and earth and all that opposes

his glory and dominion is defeated and destroyed,—all this must come to pass before the course of history has reached its goal, before the coming of Christ has reached its destination.

That dominion and glory is here once pictured as being cosmic, universal in scope. God's kingdom and covenant has, in the vision, reached its ultimate fulfillment. This is clear from the number of the elders, representing the church glorified. There are twenty-four, embracing the church both of the old and of the new dispensation. That is evident from the number of the creatures representing all the living creation in its various powers. That is plain, too, from the song of the elders, who give glory and honor and power to Him that sitteth upon the throne as the Creator of all things. Because He did create all things, therefore, He is worthy to receive honor and glory from all the works of his hands, as in the vision He is actually receiving. In a word, we have here once more a vision of God's glorious, redeemed kingdom in its universal aspect and scope. The time shall come that this vision shall be realized, that the redeemed and glorified saints, seated on thrones round about the great throne, and in the midst of a glorified creation, shall give glory eternal to the Most High. All creation shall be redeemed. Thus is the message.

And what is of significance for our purpose is that also with this vision we find the rainbow as a symbol of God's grace. "And there was a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon" (Vs. 3). Here it is, indeed, that the rainbow fits in most beautifully. It tells us that God remembers his grace and covenant. That covenant embraces all things. God remembers it till all that is pictured in the vision shall have been accomplished. And the rainbow occurs here, without doubt, as the symbol and sign of God's grace with respect to his all-comprehensive covenant.

How it can be maintained in the light of such passages as these that the rainbow has no further significance and purpose than to instill a certain feeling of security and ease into the

hearts of all men that there will be no second flood, we confess is a mystery to us. And how it further can be defended that the covenant of which the rainbow is a sign has no further significance than the promise that no such catastrophe as the flood shall ever return, we do not understand.

In the vision of Rev. 4 God, crowned with the rainbow, is striking terror into the hearts of the enemy of his kingdom and covenant, and threatening destruction upon them, for out of that same throne proceed lightnings and

voices and thunders. The covenant God, rather than instilling peace and tranquility into the heart of all men, inspires the opponents with fear.

But that same covenant God, surrounded by the rainbow, speaks to all his believing people of grace and peace, and of the glorious redemption of all creation!

We must learn to view the rainbow in the heavens in that glorious faith!

Then it has real significance.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.



REFORMED
— PAVILION —