



# REFORMED

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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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Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

—Exodus 22:28

### Honoring the Gods

**T**he people of Israel were to honor their rulers. No evil word concerning their rulers was to pass their lips. “Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.”

In this commandment God gave the rulers a surprising name: gods. Yes, the rulers were mere men. Yes, they were often foolish men, who judged unjustly. “God...judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?” (Ps. 82:1–2). Nevertheless, God called the rulers gods. “I have said, Ye are gods” (v. 6). How surprising! God gave the rulers his own name! God’s name is God, and God named the rulers gods.

By calling them gods, God indicated that the rulers’ power and authority are from God. “There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1). And by calling them gods, God clothed rulers upon this earth with his own dignity and honor. The ruler represents God. When one deals with the gods, one deals with God. When one reviles the gods, one reviles God. When one curses the gods, one curses God. “Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.”

By calling them gods, God authorized the rulers to do what no private individual may presume to do, in the taking of life. The gods bear the sword. The gods are “the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:4). No man may presume to take life, for life is given by God. But when the gods take life, they do so as servants of God, on behalf of God.

How highly must the rulers be honored, for they are the ordained ministers of God! How highly must the rulers be honored, for the rulers are gods!

But how lightly all men esteem their rulers, despising them and mocking them to scorn. Where today can be found the carefulness of one such as Paul, who was instantly humbled when he realized that he had reviled the ruler? “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people” (Acts 23:5).

And how lightly the rulers themselves esteem their Ruler. How lightly the gods esteem their God. Judging unrighteously, bearing God’s sword for their own gain, “they walk on in darkness” (Ps. 82:5). God will judge the gods. “I have said, Ye are gods...But ye shall die like men” (vv. 6–7).

But now let us come to the deepest spring concerning the gods. God clothed the rulers with the mantle of his name, calling them gods, for the sake of that moment when Jesus Christ would stand before them. “The rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ” (Acts 4:26). There was Herod; there was Pontius Pilate; there was the Sanhedrin; there was the high priest—all of them gods. And all of them gods, that we might hear from their mouths the verdict of God himself concerning Jesus. “He is guilty of death” (Matt. 26:66). “Herod...set him at nought” (Luke 23:11). Pilate “delivered him to be crucified” (Matt. 27:26). From the mouths of the gods came the sentence of God: “Crucify him, crucify him” (Luke 23:21).

This is the gospel of our salvation! God sentenced Jesus for our sin. And God acquits us for the sake of Jesus' righteousness. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). How deep is

the gospel of God, revealed in the verdict of the gods.

And now, grateful church, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people."

—AL

## HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

March 10, 1921

(pp. 149–50)

**Our Doctrine** by Rev. H. Hoeksema

### Article CIX: The Erroneous Views and Unwarranted Criticisms of Rev. H. Hoeksema (continued)

Rev. H. Hoeksema wrote a few weeks ago, "The professor made mere accusations. He promised to substantiate them by passages from our Reformed Standards. He never did. Not for once. I publicly ask the professor for proof that the theory of Common Grace is a confessionally Reformed doctrine. I HERE DENY THAT IT IS. (Larger type is mine.) All the professor has shown is that I differ on this subject with Kuyper and Bavinck. As to Calvin's view, we shall see again. Not they, but our Standards are the criterion in this case."<sup>1</sup> Rev. Hoeksema will have taken proper cognizance of what I wrote in my last article. That article showed what the views of the fathers of Dort were as to Common Grace or, as it was also called, the light of nature. That article, furthermore, showed what decisions the Synod of Dort passed in regard to Common Grace. May I remind Rev. Hoeksema that the promise I made to him has been fulfilled. The Synod of Dort has taken a very decided stand on Common Grace. Its conclusions are stated in strong language. Rev. Hoeksema's denial of Common Grace, therefore, turns out to be very sad indeed.

But just as sad is it that also in this connection he does not stop at the mere denial of the doctrine. (Previously it has become evident how many other errors accompanied Rev. Hoeksema's denial.) He here goes further and makes bold to deny that the confessional writings teach the doctrine of Common Grace. What is our Church to make of all this? Deny Common Grace and deny that our Confession teaches it! I ask in all seriousness, where is this going to land us? What are we coming to?

One or two preliminaries I wish at this point to dispose of before proceeding to further material. I have reference to Rev. Hoeksema's remarks subjoined to my last article (cf. *Banner* of Feb. 24).<sup>2</sup> It may seem to be a minor matter that Rev. Hoeksema mentions there, still I cannot allow it to go unchallenged. When I resumed my articles, Rev. Hoeksema wrote in an appended note that he was glad to hear that I "took up the pen again." This, I remarked in *Banner* of Feb. 24, appeared very strange and, furthermore, informed the readers of the fact that Rev. Hoeksema was not at all inclined to place a further article of mine in *The Banner*. I likewise

<sup>1</sup> Herman Hoeksema, "[Article CIV:] Not Satisfied," reprinted in *Reformed Pavilion* 2, no. 52 (April 5, 2025): 10–11.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Janssen, "Article CVII: The Erroneous Views and Unwarranted Criticisms of Rev. H. Hoeksema," reprinted in *Reformed Pavilion* 3, no. 3 (April 26, 2025): 14–18.

mentioned the fact that Rev. Hoeksema had not told the readers why the article was finally placed. To this Rev. Hoeksema has replied in a “note” as follows: “Regarding the previous article, its delay is easily explained. The Publication Committee had intimated in a letter Prof. Janssen received that they might have to discontinue the discussion unless the professor confine himself to the subject and would come to the point. Since the previous article of the professor produced nothing new, was only a review of what we had several times before, I doubted whether the committee would be pleased to have me publish the article. I placed it in their hands. The result was that it was published a week later.”

In view of what Rev. Hoeksema here says, I ask once more, What are the facts? First, as far as the article in question is concerned, I wish to say that I took it to The Banner office on Monday, Feb. 7, in the forenoon. Thereupon I went to the Seminary and informed Rev. Hoeksema by phone (Rev. Hoeksema was still at the parsonage, had not yet been at The Banner office and had not yet seen the article) that I had an article for The Banner at the office. He expressed his surprise about my resuming my reply, but added at once that he didn’t know about placing the article. I was somewhat astonished, but repeated my message that an article was there at the office and requested that it be placed. Thereupon Rev. Hoeksema spoke about seeing the Publication Committee in regard to placing a further article of mine. In view of these facts it is nothing short of amazing to see Rev. Hoeksema write, “Since the previous article of the professor produced nothing new, was only a review of what we had several times before, I doubted whether the Committee would be pleased to have me publish the article.” To repeat, Rev. Hoeksema was disinclined to place the article before he had ever seen the article. What he is telling us is, much as I regret to say it, an untruth.

Now, a second preliminary matter. As seen above, Rev. Hoeksema says that the Publication Committee intimated “that they might have to

discontinue the discussion unless the professor confine himself to the subject and would come to the point.” I do not know how the Publication Committee feels about this statement of Rev. Hoeksema. But as far as my side of the matter is concerned, I wish to say, again regretting to do so, that what Rev. Hoeksema writes in this connection is an untruth. The facts are here black on white and the proof is absolute that Rev. Hoeksema’s statements are untrue. If the Publication Committee has no objections, the Banner readers can have the facts and see the proof.

We pass now to Rev. Hoeksema’s attacks or criticisms. My critic is very anxious that I should write about these and leave his un-Reformed standpoint alone. He fairly pleads with me in his “note” and says, “Now, please professor, write about the subject rather than about me.” Yes, he has even tried, as we saw, to make the readers believe that the Publication Committee wants me to do so.

Well, how about these attacks of Rev. Hoeksema? What is it he attacks? On the one hand, matters, views that have been discussed in detail at Synod, in regard to which Synod has made definite decisions. What are some of the matters that were up at Synod? For one thing, miracles as those of sun and moon standing still, of the walls of Jericho falling down flat. Further, exploits of Samson, as that of his carrying the gate of Gaza to the top of a neighboring mountain. Likewise questions as those of the interpretation of the Song of Solomon, of the authorship of the five books of Moses, of credibility of Scripture. These matters were up at Synod, were discussed at length, and Synod came to definite conclusions in regard to them. But what does Rev. Hoeksema do? This: instead of respecting the authority of Synod and the decisions of Synod he takes these identical things, puts them in a totally different light, distorts my views and goes with the views, thus distorted, to the people, basing new charges upon them. In other words, what Synod has done does not stand for much. After Synod is through Rev. Hoeksema must also come to settlement with me on these

same matters before the case can be called settled for good! A sort of higher court we have here that claims to have the right to pass decisions that are really final. Now, how are we to regard such a standpoint as Rev. Hoeksema here takes? Is it not insubordination, unwillingness to submit to the authority of the “breedste vergadering”<sup>3</sup> of our churches? Is not Rev. Hoeksema by this kind of procedure undermining the very principles, the foundation of our church polity (kerkrecht)? Does his attitude to “kerkrecht” not remind of his attitude to the doctrinal teaching of our church, to the doctrinal standards of the church? He is as revolutionary here as he is there. Another question in this connection. Is Rev. Hoeksema’s lack of respect for authority something incidental and accidental? Or is there a closer, deeper connection between that insubordination and his doctrinal errors? Let us see. We have seen that Rev. Hoeksema by his denial of the doctrine of Common Grace has joined the ranks of the Anabaptists. They, too, will have nothing to do with Common Grace. But how does the matter stand with the Anabaptists in regard to respect for authority? Do they reject authority as they reject Common Grace? Have the Reformed Churches in the past had any experience with them on this matter of authority? Yes. Listen what our Confession says (Art. 36): “Wherefore we detest the Anabaptists \* \* \* \* and in general all those who reject the higher powers \* \* \* \* and confound that decency and good order which God has established among men.” The revolutionary attitude of Rev. Hoeksema to church law, to church authority, is, therefore, intimately connected with his revolutionary rejection of the doctrine of Common Grace, with his eliminating the doctrine even from our Confessional Standards (compare above for this second denial). Rev. Hoeksema is Anabaptistic here, as he was found to be Anabaptistic in his attitude to Reformed doctrine.

A word now about the stand that I myself should take in regard to the matters brought up by Rev. Hoeksema that Synod has disposed

of. Would it be the right thing for me to do, to ignore the decisions of Synod, discuss all these matters afresh in the pages of *The Banner* and try to come to some sort of an understanding or settlement with Rev. Hoeksema and those who have views similar to his? As far as I can see there can be but one answer to that question. If Rev. Hoeksema shows insubordination and becomes revolutionary, that is no reason why I should ignore authority and also become revolutionary. I am very sorry, but I don’t see how I could by right consent to meet Rev. Hoeksema’s wishes and discuss this material that has been at Synod all over again with him. The readers who wish to know my views may possibly infer that I am going to withhold my views from them. That does not follow. I am quite willing that the readers should have access to my views and know them. But—and this is the point—these views will not be given as a part of my reply to Rev. Hoeksema’s attacks. To repeat, I could not consent to join his company and proceed as though the authority of Synod stands for nothing.

But, again, suppose for a moment that it would be the proper thing for me to go ahead and start the discussion of this material all over again, meeting the objections of Rev. Hoeksema and refuting his attacks—suppose this were proper—is there any prospect of our coming together? To my mind, not the slightest. The thought, the spirit, the doctrinal views of Rev. Hoeksema are un-Reformed and essentially different from ours. This cannot be ignored. It is a fact. And to me, and to a host of others, it is a clear case that we can never harmonize. That un-Reformed stand of Rev. Hoeksema crops up everywhere. It is something with which we even should not try to live on friendly terms. This is a most deplorable fact, but it is a fact. And more deplorable still is the fact that his type of thought, his spirit, is gaining ground in our churches. We cannot possibly live together this way. One method, of course, is to crush us and so compel to live together. To use the stampede

<sup>1</sup> English translation: “widest meeting.”

method that Dr. Van Lonkhuyzen speaks about in the “Toekomst.” We ask, can it be done? We emphatically answer, Never.

(To be continued)

—R. Janssen

Note of Editor—If I could feel at all as if the matter were a personal quarrel between Prof. Janssen and myself, I would answer the above insinuations. Now I will refrain from doing so. I wrote no untruths. Neither am I an Anabaptist.

Nor is my action of expressing disagreement with an act of Synod revolutionary.

The professor has not come to the point yet. What I and many others are still looking for, the professor is still to write. I hope that our church-public is not deceived by Dr. Janssen’s method. As yet he has not replied to me at all. He said nothing.

Once more, therefore, please, professor, answer my charges. They are entirely true.

—H. H.

