



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 11

JUNE 24, 2023

*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

5 FROM THE EDITOR

6 CONTRIBUTION
Concerning Believers and Their Seed

11 HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S BANNER ARTICLES
Article 12: Mankind's Relation to the Fallen King (continued)



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

See reformedpavilion.com for all contact and subscription information.

MEDITATION

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

—Exodus 3:1–6

At eighty years old, Moses now arrived at a very special place on the earth: Mount Horeb, also known as Mount Sinai. As far as Moses knew, he came to Mount Horeb by happenstance as he kept the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro. Leading the sheep to the back side of the desert around Midian, he arrived at Horeb. But Moses' arrival at Horeb was no happenstance, for God led Moses to the mountain in order to appear to him and speak to him.

Mount Horeb was indeed a very special place on the earth, for it was the mountain where God had made his abode. Not that God needs an abode on the earth. Heaven is God's throne, and the earth is his footstool (Isa. 66:1). Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, even heaven cannot contain God. Even the heaven of heavens cannot contain God (I Kings 8:27). God fills heaven and earth (Jer. 23:24). No, God does not need an abode. But God's people do. So, for the sake of his people, God is pleased to have a dwelling place: Eden, then Horeb, then Jerusalem in Canaan, then the church, and finally the new heavens and the new earth. In that dwelling place God gathers his people unto himself. Such was Horeb in Moses' day. Horeb was "the mountain of God" (Ex. 3:1).

And what must Moses learn in the mountain of God? Moses must learn this: God is holy.

In the burning bush God taught Moses the lesson of God's holiness. A gout of flame leapt and roared out of the midst of a great bush, but the bush was not consumed. It must have been a large bush and a huge conflagration, for Moses apparently saw it from some ways off and had to turn aside from all the sheep in order to make his way over to see this great sight. God called unto Moses out of the fire and explained the meaning of the fire: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon the holy God. God's holiness! That was the great lesson of Horeb. When God would later appear to Moses and the children of Israel upon this same mountain in order to give them the law, God would also appear at that time in a consuming fire upon the top of the entire mountain. Our God is a consuming fire. Our God is holy.

What is God's holiness? Simply this: God's holiness is God's devotion to himself. Or, more fully, this: God's holiness is God the Father's eternal and ardent love for the Son in the Spirit and the Son's eternal and ardent love for the Father in the Spirit, according to which love the triune God is completely and perfectly consecrated to himself, seeks himself, and delights in himself from eternity to eternity and according

to which love the triune God is completely and perfectly opposed to all that is opposed to him. Fire is an apt symbol for God’s holiness, for fire ardently and hungrily consumes its fuel and burns unto itself, heat cascading into heat and flame leaping into flame. So also God is an all-consuming fire, burning with the heat of his own perfect love and devotion to himself. And because the infinite God himself is the fuel of his own holy devotion, God is the consuming fire that is never consumed.

Why must Moses—and why must we—learn of God’s holiness in the mountain of God? Because God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob. God is the covenant God. It has pleased God in his perfect and holy devotion to himself to have a people who belong to him. And because the holy God loves his own good pleasure and is absolutely devoted to his own perfect and eternal will, we sons of Jacob are not consumed by the consuming fire. And when we must be consumed—for God is holy—God laid his only begotten Son on the fire of his altar in our place.

What a special place was this Horeb! The holy dwelling of the holy God, the covenant God, our God!

—AL



REFORMED

— PAVILION —

FROM THE EDITOR

It is hard to believe, but this issue of *Reformed Pavilion* is already the last issue in June. Though summer has just begun, its course is almost run. Our days are a breath, a span, grass. “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Ps. 90:12).

The highlight of this issue is an article by Mr. Henry De Jong concerning Herman Hoeksema’s *Believers and Their Seed*. Our thanks to Mr. De Jong for his contribution. We again extend an invitation to our readers to submit letters or articles for publication. If past issues are any indication, the readership greatly appreciates the contributions of other readers. Though *Reformed Pavilion* is still a newborn in the world, the letters and contributions of our readers have generated significant discussion.

Herman Hoeksema’s next *Banner* article appears in this issue as well. In Hoeksema’s *Banner* articles so far, he has regularly used the term *covenant of works* to describe God’s covenant with Adam. This is partly to be explained by the fact that *covenant of works* was simply the vocabulary of the day in the Christian Reformed Church to refer to God’s covenant with Adam. Hoeksema’s use of the term does not mean that he also adopted every error that went with the term. However, as this issue of the *Banner* shows, Hoeksema was still somewhat infected with the doctrinal errors that were inherent in a covenant of works. Especially shocking to read in this article is Hoeksema’s insistence on two parties in God’s covenant, a position that he

would reject later in his ministry as he was faced with the necessary implications of that doctrine. Hoeksema would continue to write in the *Banner* about the covenant of works, so perhaps we will have opportunity to evaluate this more closely in an upcoming *Reformed Pavilion*. However, note that Hoeksema was not developing the doctrine of a conditional covenant, even in his development of a covenant of works. Rather, Hoeksema’s main point was that God truly had a covenant with Adam and that all of God’s dealings with man must be explained in light of God’s covenant. Hoeksema was developing the reality of God’s covenant over against the dispensational premillennialism that had infected the Christian Reformed Church of his day. Notice also that Hoeksema was already voicing a subtle but insistent opposition to the doctrine of common grace. He used the term *common grace*, but he put the word *common* in quotation marks. Upcoming articles in the *Banner* would reveal that Hoeksema was more and more opposed to the theory of common grace and all that came with it. From a historical standpoint, it is fascinating to watch Hoeksema’s theological development unfold before our eyes. From a doctrinal standpoint, it is wonderful to behold God’s gracious rescue of Herman Hoeksema and what would become the Protestant Reformed Churches from the errors that were taking hold in the Christian Reformed Church. Truly God is good to his people, though they are never deserving of it.

—AL



The following article by Mr. Henry De Jong continues the discussion of Herman Hoeksema's book *Believers and Their Seed*. Beginning with an interesting personal recollection of Rev. George Lubbers' involvement in the English translation of the book, the article then cites Prof. Homer Hoeksema's acknowledgment of Reverend Lubbers' help. Thus this article picks up the thread of Miss Agatha Lubbers' letter a few weeks ago¹ and continues to add historical color to what may well be Herman Hoeksema's most important book.

Especially valuable in the following article is Mr. De Jong's English translation of Herman Hoeksema's editorial in the December 15, 1932, issue of the *Standard Bearer*. Hoeksema's Dutch booklet *De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad* had been sent to several Reformed papers in the Netherlands

with requests for review. Several of the papers published reviews, and Hoeksema took the opportunity in his editorial to thank the brethren. He also took the opportunity to respond to one review in particular, by a Rev. J. Vander Sluis of Velp, the Netherlands. Vander Sluis attempted to inject common grace into Adam's fall and also proposed a kind of presupposed election as the ground for infant baptism. Hoeksema briefly and convincingly answered Vander Sluis' arguments.

Our thanks to Mr. Henry De Jong for his article, including his translation of Hoeksema. The article adds much to our understanding of the theological landscape in which *Believers and Their Seed* was first published.

—AL

Concerning *Believers and Their Seed*

Recollection

When Rev. George C. Lubbers was engaged in mission work in the state of Maine, my parents went to Maine and spent quite a bit of time with Reverend Lubbers and his wife. There is a picture of them together there. When for a time I was a seminary student in the early 1990s, Reverend Lubbers—at his daughter Agatha's suggestion—was willing to teach Greek grammar. We agreed on that together, but the idea was later vetoed at the seminary.

The recollection of my brothers and me from what we read and heard as boys growing up is that the Lubbers as a family worked together with Reverend Lubbers and then Rev. Homer Hoeksema in preparing the first English translation of *Believers and Their Seed*. The original Dutch of “*mijn brochure*,” as Reverend Hoeksema called it, is found in volumes 3 and 4 of the

Standard Bearer, beginning with the April 15, 1927, issue and running through the November 1, 1927, issue.

Prof. Homer Hoeksema on *Believers and Their Seed*

In the May 1, 1968, issue of the *Standard Bearer*, under *Editor's Notes*, Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema wrote,

Beginning in this issue under the department “Pages From The Past” there will appear my translation of a very valuable Dutch brochure by the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema entitled, “De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad,” (“Believers And Their Seed”). This brochure, though somewhat “dated” and though, as might be expected, also polemical, offers a clear exposition of the entire concept of the covenant and of the

¹ Agatha Lubbers, “Concerning *Believers and Their Seed*,” *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 9 (June 10, 2023): 6–7.

place of the children of believers in the covenant. We hope that many readers who can no longer read Dutch will benefit from this translation of a booklet which has already gone through two editions in the Dutch language. With the exception of the addition of chapter headings, and certain changes necessary to the production of smooth but accurate translation, the material is presented unchanged. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness in this translation to an earlier manuscript-translation of the Rev. George C. Lubbers, from which I gained much valuable assistance.²

Beginning, then, with this May 1, 1968, issue and running through the November 1, 1970, issue, *Believers and Their Seed* was published in twenty-three issues of the *Standard Bearer* under the rubric *Pages from the Past*.

In a translator's preface to the 1971 edition of *Believers and Their Seed*, Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema wrote,

I wish to acknowledge the valuable help of the draft translation prepared by my

colleague in the ministry, Rev. George C. Lubbers. My prayer is that our covenant God may use this work for the instruction of many in the truth of the covenant of grace.³

Rev. Herman Hoeksema on Reviews of *Believers and Their Seed*

Rev. Herman Hoeksema returned to his book in an editorial in the December 15, 1932, issue of the *Standard Bearer*, some five years after the brochure *De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad* (*Believers and Their Seed*) was first written.⁴ In this editorial Reverend Hoeksema addressed some reviews of *De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad* that had been written by men in the Netherlands. This editorial was not included in the English translation of *Believers and Their Seed*. The undersigned's translation of Herman Hoeksema's editorial is provided here. In some places I have updated the punctuation to reflect English conventions. In some places I have included the original Dutch and my comments in brackets.

—Henry De Jong

Believers and Their Seed

Herman Hoeksema's December 15, 1932, *Standard Bearer* editorial

Translated by Henry De Jong

Several hundred copies of my brochure about the writing above were sent to the Netherlands, with a request for review.

Several Dutch papers responded to this request. Some reviews were very short, consisting of an announcement of the little work without rendering a judgment. Others were longer and discussed the contents of the brochure somewhat more broadly.

We are thankful to the brethren in the Netherlands for their kindness and for the friendly notice which they took of us.

It would take up too much of our space were we to include all the various reviews in our magazine.

We can, however, assure the brethren that we have read their judgment with great interest. And several things have become clear to us by reading

² Homer Hoeksema, *Editor's Notes*, *Standard Bearer* 44, no. 15 (May 1, 1968): 341.

³ Herman Hoeksema, *Believers and Their Seed*, trans. Homer Hoeksema (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1971), iii.

⁴ Herman Hoeksema, "De Geloovigen en Hun Zaad," *Standard Bearer* 9, no. 6 (December 15, 1932): 124–26.

these reviews. I have especially been strengthened in the conviction that also in the Netherlands a thorough discussion of the question of the Covenant in general [*de kwestie des Verbonds in het algemeen*], as well as of the Covenant as ground for the baptism of the little children [*het Verbond als grond voor den doop der kleine kinderen*], cannot be considered unnecessary, nor would it be unfruitful. There is not too much unanimity on this matter in the Netherlands either.

Another remark is this, that in discussing this point we should not be tempted to let ourselves be controlled by the desire to maintain the salvation of all baptized infants who die in infancy. This tendency was revealed in more than one review. In one of them it was even the main argument [*het hoofdargument*]. That can and may not be allowed. Then we judge according to the flesh and come to a wrong conclusion. The salvation of little ones who die in infancy is not the main issue in the matter [*is geen de hoofdkwestie in de zaak* (is not the chief question in the case)], and above all cannot be a point of departure. We should certainly by the Holy Scriptures decide these things and by it alone.

But we thank the brothers for their interest.

However, we want to go into one review (or one part of it) and quote some parts of it, not because the author agrees with us on everything, nor because he disagrees with us, but first of all because he objects in the form of questions, and secondly, because he deals in part with the “common grace” question.

It is the review of Rev. J. Vander Sluis of Velp, the Netherlands, in the *Goudsche Kerkbode*, which we have our eye on. The dear brother has devoted no less than four articles to the discussion of my booklet [*mijn boekje* (my little book)]. We quote from the last article:

There are still some points on which we do not agree with Rev. Hoeksema.

The writer says:

Now Adam decides against God and for Satan. He rejects God’s Word and thereby God Himself.

He listens to the temptation of Satan through the woman. He chooses for the darkness and rejects the light. He breaks God’s covenant. His light turns into darkness, his righteousness into sin and guilt, his holiness to corruption of his whole nature, his life to death, his love into enmity. Death rules over him. For we must not say that Adam did not die on that very day, still less that a certain general grace [*een zekere algemeene gratie*] delivered him from the deadly effect of sin. No, the matter was so, that Adam, at the very moment that he sinned, was deprived of God’s favor and became an object of God’s indignation and wrath. God slew him... Death reigned over him, and he had become a slave of sin.

According to the writer, the death which Adam died immediately after his fall consisted in spiritual death. We agree with him. But is the spiritual death the whole death? Besides spiritual death, there is temporal and everlasting death. Now Adam died the spiritual death, but the temporal and everlasting over him was delayed [*werd uitgesteld* (was postponed)]. And not only with him but also with his descendants. The seed of Adam is indeed born in spiritual death, but with that spiritual does not enter into them immediately the temporal and everlasting death. Is not that the grace [*is dat niet de genade*], the longsuffering of God upon the whole human race?

Now may I in the first place say that a question cannot serve as a ground for an objection. The writer says at the beginning that he disagrees with me on this point. Well now, he should then also have shown out of the Scriptures why he cannot agree with me. However, in place thereof he asks a question. Or a series

of questions. So of course we cannot get any further.

However, the questions are obviously meant as comments. And especially from the last question it is clear that the esteemed writer also means, as far as he is concerned, to answer it in the affirmative.

I would say, however:

1. That the Scriptures nowhere teach that the grace of God is upon all men, head for head and soul for soul, [or] that Adam did not at once die the everlasting death.
2. That it is indeed clear that this is not the case. If you ask: why didn't Adam immediately die everlasting death in Paradise, the simple answer is: because God's counsel was not fulfilled in Adam. According to that counsel he stood at the head of the whole human race, and that race must be born out of him. According to that counsel he carried in his loins elect and reprobate. But when that counsel is now realized, is it then grace for the reprobate that Adam did not immediately die the everlasting death, so that those who perish would never have been born? Scripture certainly teaches the opposite. And it should also be clear to Rev. V. d. Sl. that his position [*zijn standpunt* (his standpoint)] is untenable.

The reviewer continues:

The writer says:

It is then also neither *genade* nor *gratie* [Dr. A. Kuyper Sr.'s terms for particular grace (*genade*) and common grace (*gratie*)] when by God's providential appointment [Hoeksema does not use *God's Voorzienigheid* (God's providence) but speaks of *God's voorzienig bestel*; *bestellen* means *to order, to arrange*; Hoeksema thus speaks of God's foreseeing, ordering, and arrangement of all things in and according to his eternal counsel]

our race does not at once perish in its root, but must continue to exist and to serve God's counsel, and when anyone in that race is born outside of Christ [he too must continue to exist and to serve God's counsel]. For he is born under guilt and condemnation and into death, and can never do anything but through his own guilt and sin help to bring to fruition the fruit of that one root sin, and thus multiply [increase] guilt with guilt.

We agree with the writer that man is born under guilt and condemnation and into death, and that he cannot but cooperate in bringing to fruition the fruit of the one root sin, and thus multiply [increase] guilt with guilt.

Thus man has nothing other than guilt before God. But how is it now that God does not immediately punish such heavy guilt with temporal and everlasting death? How is it that God bestows to the deeply guilty man life, food, clothing, and all sorts of other benefits? Is that not *de gemeene gratie* [common grace], *de algemeene genade* [universal grace], the longsuffering of God upon the whole human race?

To the last question we give the answer: no, absolutely not. Scripture does not teach it so. The Scripture teaches that God will make his power and wrath known upon the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. The Scripture does not teach that God is longsuffering toward the ungodly [reprobate]. Longsuffering is an attitude of love, whereby God the Lord does not realize the final redemption of His people from suffering and misery until all is ripe in the day of Christ. God is longsuffering over His people. He forbears [endures] the ungodly [reprobate]. And He is longsuffering and forbearing over His people in the midst of the ungodly. Such is the presentation of Scripture.

And to the question: why then does not the full punishment come immediately? we give the same answer again: because this cannot come until the fruit of sin is filled in the race. God's counsel is being worked out, must be worked out, not only in regard to election, but also in regard to reprobation. If God at once punished the ungodly wicked, either in Adam or at some point in history, with everlasting death, that counsel, both in regard to election and reprobation, would be rendered ineffective [*juist verijdeld worden* (would be defeated)]. This is as plain as day. But favor [*gratie*] is not for the godless reprobates, when they receive in this life all sorts of means to realize their godless existence. Exactly by these very means they increase guilt and store up for themselves treasures of wrath. And all this is certainly according to God's order [*God's bestel*]. And this is never grace [*en dit is geen genade*].

Finally, Rev. V. d. Sl. writes still the following:

The writer says:

Now if children are taken from the midst of such a family (of godly parents), who certainly could not yet consciously assume any attitude toward that covenant of the Lord, then such parents must not doubt at that death and that grave of their children. They do not say: my child has been baptized, and therefore it is blessed. But they certainly say also at that grave: Lord, in thy name I have brought forth a child, and I have received it out of thy hand. I have dedicated [consecrated] it to thee, in order that it may be a child for thy covenant. And now thou hast taken it from me. In that same faith in which I dedicated it to Thee, I leave it with

Thee, without my mind being filled with fearful [anxious] doubt over the salvation or election of this child, but knowing that Thou, according to Thy good pleasure, which for me by faith is always good, dost rescue [save] out of my seed Thy children.⁵

Rev. Hoeksema means therefore, that only by faith do believing parents have the certainty that the Lord saves [rescues] His children out of their seed. Whether children who die in infancy, who are taken from them, belong to the children whom the Lord saves, believing parents must leave to the Lord. Rev. Hoeksema thus does not dare to say anything about the election and salvation of children who die in infancy. Completely different from our fathers in the "Five Articles Against the Remonstrants." There they say, Head I–XVII, that godly parents should not doubt the salvation and election of their children whom God takes away from this life in their infancy. And they derive that thought from the Word of God, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but out of the power of the covenant of grace [*de kinderen der geloovigen heilig zijn niet van nature, maar uit kracht⁶ van het genadeverbond*].

We heartily agree with the writer that the promise "I will be thy God and the God of thy seed" is not relative and conditional but absolute and unconditional. The promise does not depend on anything in man [literally, "The promise does not hang off of something in man" (*De belofte hangt niet af van iets in den mensch*)].

For whom now is that promise? Only, of course, for the elect. But how can that

⁵ See Hoeksema, *Believers and Their Seed*, 159.

⁶ *Kracht*: "energy, power, strength, force, vigor." See *Kramers' Dutch Dictionary: English–Dutch and Dutch–English* (New York: Dover Publications, 1946), 856.

promise be signified and sealed by Baptism? Only then, when men consider the little children of believing, God-fearing parents to be elect, until the contrary is evident.

—V. D. Sl.

To this we answer:

1. That the article in question from the Doctrinal Standards, in my judgment, does not say and cannot mean the same as: all baptized children who die in infancy are saved. The article speaks about this question from the point of view of the faith of the godly parents.
2. That the promise is certainly for the children of the promise, for “the

seed.” And I think I have clearly shown in my brochure that the Scripture teaches that this does not include all children of believing parents who are baptized. The children of the promise are counted for the seed, both in the old and in the new dispensation.

3. That the supposition that the little children are elect, head for head and soul for soul, can never serve as a ground for baptism, simply because we know with certainty from the Holy Scripture that this is never the case. And experience also very much teaches otherwise.

—H. H.

HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

November 12, 1918

(Pp. 844–45)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article XII. Mankind's Relation to the Fallen King (continued)

We approach the discussion of the doctrine of the Covenant of Works, and, at the same time that of the covenant in general.

We found that the grim and undeniable fact of the universality of sin cannot be adequately accounted for on the basis of the imitation theory.

We also came to the conclusion that it leaves a wrong impression to speak merely of hereditary sin. What we must know is not merely the fact that all are sinful, nor even the manner in which all become sinful, but the judicial basis upon which this punishment is justifiable. For sin is spiritual death and spiritual death is punishment, and, therefore, the question that must

be answered is: Where is the judicial ground justifying this universal punishment of all mankind?

The answer can be given only if we have a clear and correct understanding of our relation to Adam. We must understand that we are related to him not only in a physical sense, he being our first father, but just as well judicially and ethically, he being the head of the covenant of works.

Thus we come to the discussion of the covenant of works and of the covenant in general.

Of all the different elements of our doctrine, that of the doctrine of the covenant is perhaps most important, and at the same time most of

all peculiarly Reformed, more so than the doctrine of predestination and all it implies. Many there are, even outside of the Reformed circles that will join us in our confession of the Sovereignty of God in regard to His control of all things and the election of His own people from eternity. But these same people, uniting with us on the basis of predestination, separate themselves when the doctrine of the covenant is touched upon. It is peculiarly Reformed. For the same reason it is of the greatest importance that we obtain a clear conception of this truth, and this not only to understand our reformed doctrine in general, but at the same time for the practical reason that it will make us strong against many a movement that is liable to seduce from the straight path of our Reformed truth. It will make us steadfast in the midst of the many currents of false doctrine that influence us from almost every direction.

Take for example the powerful movement of Chiliasm or Premillennialism. Accept the doctrine of the covenant and Premillennialism becomes an impossibility.

If an apology were called for because of my occasional mentioning of Premillennialism, I would point to the fact that it is undoubtedly one of the most powerful and influential currents in the Christian world of today, especially in our own country. We all know, that as far as the American world may still be called orthodox a large percentage of it is chiliastically inclined. Now, I do not want to be misunderstood in my attitude toward these millennial Christians. In more than one respect they rank very high in my estimation, higher, indeed, than many a church that has abandoned and denied its true character and has become nothing but an institution that is employed by the world for the attainment of its purposes and ideals. Especially I am inclined to think very highly of their attitude of avowed opposition over against the world, their persistent refusal to amalgamate and forsake the principles of the truth, their bold testimony of the name of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, their continued emphasis on

such truths as that of depravity and the need of atonement. The books they publish have no doubt a very wide, and, let us freely acknowledge it, in many respects a strengthening and healthy influence in the Christian world at large, especially in a period that finds delight in obliterating all distinctions and lines of demarcation and casting all the different forms of religion in the one great melting-pot of the Universal Brotherhood of Man. Just think of that widely read work of Philip Mauro, "The Number of Man," and of the equally well known book of I. M. Haldman, "The Signs of the Times." For many a reason, therefore, I have a very high regard for these premillennial Christians. But with due respect for their strong stand and faithful testimony in regard to some of the most fundamental truths of the Word of God, they are not Reformed, yea, when it comes to such doctrines as that of the covenant they stand diametrically opposed to the principles that are dear to us, and the distinction between them and us ought to be perfectly clear to the minds of our people. And since our American market is fairly flooded with premillennial literature it is but natural that occasionally I am bound to make a comparison between it and our doctrine.

In regard to the point in question it may be observed that the premillennialists have an entirely different view of history than the Reformed people. They cut the tread that runs through all history both of the old and of the new dispensation. They cannot admit that essentially there is but one people of God, and that one people of God [is] the covenant people, of whom Christ is the Head and King forever. They have no conception of the continuity of the covenant of grace, of the gradual process of its development and revelation, and for that reason they have no eye for the organic unity of Scripture and cannot admit that the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old. To them Israel is the covenant people of God and Christ is the King of Israel in the literal and national sense of the word. And when Israel rejects its King and nails

Him to the accursed tree the continuity of history is broken, for Israel of the old dispensation is not essentially the same as Israel of the New Testament. No, the history of Israel is discontinued principally with the crucifixion of its King and actually with the destruction of the Holy City, and the people of Israel are now in captivity. And it is in this period of captivity that Christ gathers and forms an entirely different people, a people that is His Body and of which He is the Head, but a people that is not destined to form a kingdom. In the future God shall again remember His old people Israel and restore them as a nation, Jerusalem shall be rebuilt and Christ shall sit on the throne of David literally to all eternity. Israel and the Church are two, essentially different, the one is God's Kingdom, the other is His Church, the former is the nation over which Christ is destined to rule as King, the latter is his Body. But they are and remain two forever.

Of course, if the truly Reformed covenant idea is grasped at all there is no danger of ever embracing this premillennial view of history. The former stands for the continuity of history, the gradual development of God's plan and the idea of progress in the Revelation of God to man. There is but one covenant essentially, and that one covenant is the covenant of grace established with the people of God in Christ Jesus, but that one covenant passes through various stages of Revelation till at last in the days of the new dispensation it reaches its highest stage of development and manifestation, because then the King of His people has become manifest and actually entered into His heritage from Jehovah. From this standpoint there is no essential difference between the old and the new dispensation, Israel and the Church are essentially one. True, they represent different dispensations but they are dispensations of the same covenant essentially. They have the same God and the same Christ, are members of the same Body and citizens of the same Kingdom, are saved in the same blood and by the same Spirit through the same faith in the same gospel. They have the

same purpose, namely to exist as God's people in the world and show forth the glories of His Name, let their light shine, and ultimately they are all to be gathered under the same Head into the Kingdom of glory that shall embrace all the works of God.

But if a true conception of the truth of the covenant ought to guard us against the strong seductive influence of Pre-millennialism it must also prepare us for battle against a still stronger movement that is in the air today, and which after all is nothing but some form of Post millennialism. After all I am afraid that what is called Calvinism by many in our day is nothing but a manifestation of this very movement. It really believes in the victory of the Kingdom in this dispensation, through the propagation of Christian principles and all kinds of outward improvements. We must influence state and society and by our influence gradually transform the world into the Kingdom of God. We must bring the kingdom, and if we do not bring it, it will never come. And, therefore, we must work, have our influence be felt in every sphere, be the salt of the earth and the light of the world and gradually the leaven of the kingdom will leaven the lump of the whole world. The consummation of the kingdom is to be expected along lines of gradual development, it is to be a gradual victory of the eternal principles of justice and truth, till the kingdom of darkness shall have been vanquished completely. Of course, the more these principles are emphasized the broader they become, and the more all stress is laid upon the outward improvement of the world. The fact that the world as such lies in sin and that the principle of sin committed in paradise is also developing itself, in a word the contrast, the sharp distinction between the Church and the world is lost sight of, and gradually the Church finds itself busy in all kinds of movements in the world that have nothing to do with the kingdom of God and its development. The ideas of Church and State are hopelessly confused, and the former becomes little more than a handmaiden of the latter.

I saw a picture the other day. It showed a warrior in armor, holding a sword and presenting it to a lady. The latter eagerly stretched herself to reach for the sword of the warrior and as she was doing so with the one hand she was casting away a book which evidently she had held in the other. Of course, the picture was millennialistic and you have already guessed what I have represented. The warrior symbolized the state and the lady represented the Church, and the whole was a picture of the Church abandoning her proper sphere and calling, casting away the truth of God and longing for the power of the world, in order to establish the kingdom by main force. We are aware that the premillennial idea expressed in the picture is not to be accepted, for the Christian certainly has a calling in state and society and even has his own definite views of what they must be and the purpose they must serve in this dispensation. But I could not help but think that there was truth in the representation, that the Church is more and more denying her true character, and confusing all things, offering herself to the service of the state!

You ask, how in the world the doctrine of the covenant can draw the lines in this respect? You fail to see what this doctrine has to do with the movement pictured above? Well, then, let me tell you that it is my conviction that at the basis of this entire movement in as far as some of our own people are involved in it, lies an altogether erroneous conception of the relation of "common" and special grace, or if you please, a confusion of ideas with regard to the covenant of nature and the covenant of grace. These must neither be separated or altogether confused, but they must be explained in their true and Scriptural relation to each other. Then and then only can we hope to maintain a clear conception of the kingdom of God and its development in this dispensation. Then and then only will we be in a position between the world and the kingdom of God. Then and then only will we be able to appreciate truly the value and the purpose of the different institutions God has ordained on earth in this dispensation.

And, therefore, the clear grasp on the doctrine of the covenant is of extreme importance and of great practical significance.

What is a covenant?

This question is not difficult to answer. Illustrations of the covenant idea are bountiful in every day life and there is not one of my readers that is not able to obtain some definite conception of it. Two friends have common interests, or they cope with common difficulties, or they are confronted by a common danger. They make an alliance, pledge each other faith and truth in all things, promise to help or to protect each other and defend each other against the common enemy. They have made a covenant together.

Two nations conclude an alliance. They have common interests of trade and commerce, and they are threatened with a common enemy as long as they stand alone. Hence they rally themselves and promise that they shall in war and peace stand side by side and never forsake each other in battle till the enemy is vanquished. A concrete illustration the history of Europe has furnished. Or again, a young man and a young lady are engaged and soon their engagement is sealed in the sacred bond of marriage. They pledge each other faith and truth in all things according to the holy gospel, and thus they form an alliance against the intrusion of a possible third; they have made a covenant together.

In fact this illustration is most frequently employed to denote the relation between God and His people. Israel is the wife of Jehovah. He has married her. And the relation between the two is that of faith and truth in all things.

A covenant, then, in the general sense of the word is an alliance or agreement between two persons or parties, mutually free, for the purpose generally of becoming stronger against a common foe.

These are the chief elements of any covenant.

There must always be two parties. Even though the parties are not necessarily equal in

power and authority and to a certain extent we can speak of a “one-sided” covenant, two parties must exist for else a covenant is inconceivable.

These parties are mutually free and the covenant makes provision for mutual rights and obligations.

The occasion for the establishment of the covenant is always furnished by mutual interests generally against a common enemy or to ward off a common danger.

The biblical basis of the covenant is always faith, not in the sense of belief simply, but rather in the sense of the Dutch “trouw,” faithfulness, faith and truth.

And now, it is the Reformed conception that such a covenant relationship exists between God and man, between God and His people in Christ. In such a covenant relationship Adam stood toward His God. The king of the world had an alliance with the Sovereign of heaven and earth.

But not with Adam only. Not with him as an individual. But with him as the head and representative of the human race.

And here lies the key to the explanation of the fact of universal sin.

—Holland, Mich.



REFORMED

— PAVILION —