



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

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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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And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

—Exodus 5:1–9

Behold the hardness of Pharaoh's heart. God sent his servants to Pharaoh: Moses and Aaron. God announced himself as the true God: "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel." God spoke his word to Pharaoh: "Let my people go."

And what was Pharaoh's response?

Pharaoh mocked God: "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" Pharaoh denied God: "I know not the LORD." Pharaoh disobeyed God: "Neither will I let Israel go."

Behold the hardness of Pharaoh's heart.

But there is more. Moses and Aaron explained that their God had met with them and instructed them to sacrifice to him in the wilderness. Moses and Aaron reported that it was a life and death matter, for their God must be obeyed. Moses and Aaron besought Pharaoh, for the sake of their lives, that they be allowed to go three days' journey into the desert.

And what was Pharaoh's response?

Pharaoh accused Moses and Aaron of ulterior motives. Pharaoh, who had no understanding of the worship of Jehovah, concluded that Moses

and Aaron were merely trying to give the people a break from their work: "Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works?" And Pharaoh told them to get back to work: "Get you unto your burdens."

Behold the hardness of Pharaoh's heart.

But there is more. Pharaoh turned upon Israel with vicious cruelty. Prior to this, the Egyptians provided Israel with straw, which the Israelites would then use to bake bricks for the building of Egypt's cities. Now Pharaoh cut off the supply of straw. The people of Israel must forage for straw on their own. But there may be no diminishing of the tale of bricks. Rather than letting them go to worship God, Pharaoh increased their bondage.

Behold the hardness of Pharaoh's heart.

Thus it always is when the word of God comes to men. Some men believe that word and are saved. Some men hate that word and harden their hearts against it, mocking God, denying God, disobeying God, accusing God's people of evil motives, and lashing out at God's people with murderous cruelty.

What explains that reaction? “That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it proceeds from God’s eternal decree” (Canons of Dordt 1.6). Why was Pharaoh’s heart hardened? Because God had hardened it, according to his eternal purpose of reprobation. “I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go” (Ex. 4:21).

Behold the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart. And behold the electing mercy of God, according to which he saves his chosen people. “According to which decree He graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe” (Canons of Dordt 1.6).

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA’S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

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Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article XXI. The Fallen King and His Kingdom

Thus far we have discussed the creation of the world as a kingdom under man; the fall of the king; the results of this fall with respect to the king personally and finally the relation of this fall to the entire human race. God created the world a kingdom in the real sense of the word, a kingdom over which He was sovereign and that was to exist and develop itself according to His laws and ordinances. Over that kingdom He had placed man as king under Him, had given him dominion over the world, and had created him with all the necessary gifts and endowments to exercise this dominion. But this king of the world, this head of creation, standing in original righteousness, having dominion over all things, but at the same time being servant of God rebelled against the sovereign majesty of his Creator, transgressed the law of his God and listened to the word of the devil, the arch-enemy of the Almighty. He broke the covenant and became the party of the devil over against his covenant-God. Because of this sin he stood guilty before God and, therefore, was worthy of death, lost the image of God and could do no spiritual good. But there was still more. Not only upon himself did sin have its influence and was the punishment of

sin inflicted, but also upon all his posterity. He was in the first place the head of the race in the judicial sense, and in him all his posterity are personally responsible and personally guilty, and therefore, worthy of death. He is the father of humanity, and thru birth from him we receive the same human nature as he, in the power of sin and death, and, therefore, we are born in sin and iniquity. He is the root of the organism, as such committed a principle sin, a sin, which in our actual sin bears its fruit, and will finally reach its full development in the man of sin, the son of perdition.

But this is not all we must consider. Not only the relation of the human race to the fallen king must be discussed, but we must also ask the question: what is the effect of the fall of the king upon the kingdom as such? Was the effect, the influence of sin limited to Adam and his posterity? Did the fall of the king effect him only? Or was the dominion over which he was placed also changed because of the sin of man? And if the fall of the king necessarily had its influence upon the entire order of the world, what would have been the result had sin and death exerted its influence to their full extent? And

finally, if they have not exerted their influence to the full immediately, what is the actual condition of the world, of this kingdom of God, between the fall of man and the final restoration, and why is it, that sin and death did not immediately have the effect on the world we might justly expect?

This question is of the utmost importance especially in our own day and for our own people. On the one hand we must guard against an anabaptistic conception of sin and salvation, and if we are to understand the correct relation between nature and grace we surely must first of all have an idea of the cosmological effect of sin. We are inclined to be soteriological in our conception of the work of Christ, and to think only of our own personal salvation or perhaps, still more narrowly, of the salvation of our soul and our spiritual deliverance from sin and death. When we speak of the fall of man and of our own sin, we are naturally inclined to think no further than our personal guilt before God and the effect of our sin upon our own soul. And the question that agitated Luther's soul for a long time, namely, that of our personal justification is often the sole object of our consideration. The influence of sin upon the life of our body, upon the order of the world with which we are so closely connected is considered of little or of no importance and is not the object of our concern very much. And the same attitude is naturally assumed over against our salvation. Christ came to save our soul, to shed His lifeblood for our sins and to cleanse us from the defilement of sin thru His Spirit. He implants within our hearts a new spiritual life, a "new man." But the relation of this "new man" to the "old man," to our entire life, and to the world in which we live is hardly thought of. The "new man" lives as a being from another world in this earth for some time, but is destined to be delivered and to go to the house of many mansions. And it is often to be observed, that the people of God think far more of their happy state immediately after death, than of their complete deliverance in the resurrection and the restoration of all things.

I know it, there is something perfectly natural in this emphasis on our personal sin and personal salvation. It should have the proper emphasis. It is the sin of man that caused the downfall of the kingdom, and to speak of great cosmological facts, of the effect of sin upon the world and of the redemption of the whole creation, of the universal significance of Christ as Redeemer, before we have even begun to understand the true character of our own sin and longed for the justification there is in the atoning blood of the Saviour, is vain talk. Even as in the misery of the world the sin and guilt of man are the central facts to be reckoned with in their proper significance, so also in the salvation of the world, it is the justification and deliverance of man, which constitutes the fact of central and chief importance. A man that does not understand his own sin cannot grasp, truly conceive of the misery of the world; and he that has never rejoiced in the personal forgiveness of sin cannot properly speak of the redemption of the universe. And, therefore, this personal element in sin and redemption surely must not be ignored, neither be pushed to the background as a matter of secondary consideration, but should retain its proper place as of primary significance. But all this being readily granted, it must also be admitted, that we may not limit the sphere of our knowledge and investigation to the fall and deliverance of our soul. If we do, we shall never understand the great work of God in Christ Jesus, we shall never understand the great significance of our Saviour, we shall never be able to understand the thoroughly scriptural truth, that after all Christ does not exist for us, but for God and we for Him. That all things are ours, but that we are Christ's and Christ is God's can only be understood if we take the broader view both of sin and salvation. And, therefore, we must consider the question of the influence of sin and death upon the world.

On the other hand, we must also guard against the danger of amalgamation with the world in the evil sense of that term, and in order to do so we must obtain some conception of that "world." We read in Scripture, that "the world"

lieth in the evil one, that the devil is Prince of the “world,” that Jesus expressly states how he refuses to pray for “the world.” Also that world we must learn to know and be able to distinguish ever in practical life. There is a strong tendency to overlook this. There is a tendency to over-emphasize what is implied in the term “common grace.” It would seem, indeed, that those who so strongly emphasize this “common grace” themselves do not quite understand what they would imply in the term. But one receives the impression sometimes that in this common grace a sphere is created in which the children of light and the children of darkness as such can find common ground, common principle, and work together in harmony. It is sometimes presented as if there are actually two kinds of grace, one kind for men in general, regardless whether they are in Christ or not, and another kind for the people of God particularly. Particular grace is personal, limited to the church and is saving in character. It issues forth from the cross of Golgotha and the atoning blood of the Redeemer. This saving grace, applied to the heart of God’s child becomes the principle from which he lives especially in the church. But besides this saving grace, so it is often presented, there is still another kind of grace, essentially different. It is of grace and yet not saving. It is a grace which the people of the world have in common with the people of God, and which lasts only for the period of this present dispensation, and which is the cause of much good in the world. Now I do not mean to

deny the reality back of all this. The truth implied in the term “common grace” we also accept, though I think there is room for dispute as to the correctness of the term itself. No one among us will deny the fact, that sin and death did not immediately reach their full development and this world was not of a sudden changed into hell. Inimitably Dr. Kuyper has developed this idea in his work “De Gemeene Gratie” with which most of us are acquainted. But in the first place we surely must guard against the danger which is far more than imaginary in our day, of abusing the doctrine of “common grace” to make friends with the world and to find a common sphere in which the children of darkness and the children of light live from a common principle, a danger which even Dr. Kuyper himself anticipated when in his preface to “De Gemeene Gratie” he warns against false isolation, expresses the hope that his work may bring about the breaking of that false isolation but also adds: “zonder, wat God verhoede, ook maar iemand te verleiden tot een zich verliezen in die wereld, die niet hem, maar die hij in de kracht Gods beheerschen moet.” And in the second place, I think there is room for a restatement of the relation between Particular and Saving Grace and Common Grace. However this may be, it is also from this point of view of great importance that we understand, not merely the relation between nature and grace, but also and first of all the relation between sin and the world.

—Holland, Mich.

