



# 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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And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

—Exodus 20:22–26

### Worshiping the God Who Talked with You from Heaven

God's word to Moses in this passage is often overlooked, as if it were merely a repetition of things already said or as if it were merely a minor detail about altar construction. But God's word to Moses in this passage is a climax. In it God draws all the preceding events of Exodus to a thrilling apex and to a lasting lesson.

What indicates the importance of this passage? It is the first thing that God says to Moses the mediator after God spoke the ten commandments from the top of Mount Sinai. The people were afraid, and they needed a man to stand between them and God. Moses the mediator went up into the mountain and drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. The very next words God says to his people through Moses are the words of this passage.

What else indicates the importance of this passage? God declares to his people, "I have talked with you from heaven." Could anyone imagine such a thing? The holy God, before whom the holy angels cover their faces, had talked to his people from heaven. Man had heard God's own voice! And what is even more amazing, man had lived! What sinners can hear the voice of the living God and not be consumed? But there it is: "I have talked with you from heaven."

What an important passage! For in it God declares his covenant mercy and grace to his helpless and unworthy people. The people were so helpless. The people could not deliver themselves from Egypt but must be brought out by God's strong hand and stretched-out arm. The people could not bring themselves out of certain death by Pharaoh's host but must be brought through the Red Sea upon dry ground. The people could not feed themselves but must be fed with bread from heaven. The people could not quench their thirst but must be sated with water from the rock. The people were so helpless! But behold the love of God for a people that could never return anything to him: "I have talked with you from heaven."

The people were so unworthy. In Egypt they had mocked Moses. Under the increased oppression of the Egyptian overlords, they had been angry with Moses. Before the Red Sea they murmured. At Mara they murmured. In the wilderness they murmured. When they were hungry or thirsty or afraid or weary, they pined for Egypt and chided Moses. The people were so unworthy! But behold the love of God for a people that was only ever unfaithful to him: "I have talked with you from heaven."

There was only one possible response: worship. The people who had heard the living God in

spite of their helplessness and unworthiness should worship the God who had talked with them from heaven. God’s message can be summarized this way: Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven; worship me.

But what worship should they bring? God taught them that too. God is not pleased with worship that is of man. Man’s silver and man’s gold cannot represent God. Man’s labors and man’s tools cannot fashion a suitable altar for God. Man, even down to his very unclothed essence, does not delight the Lord. Therefore, no images of silver or gold; no hewn stones for the altar; no steps up to it.

God is pleased with worship that is of God, and God would provide all Israel’s worship through his only begotten Son. Jesus’ blood is more precious than silver and gold (I Pet. 1:18–19). Jesus’ cross is the altar God provides for his people (Heb. 13:10). And Jesus’ righteousness is the robes whereby the guilt and shame of his people are covered (Rev. 7:14).

These tidings from heaven we have heard, for “ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.” Therefore, worship God in Christ.

—AL

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome one, welcome all, to this week’s issue of *Reformed Pavilion*.

The new year has only just begun, but the Lord has already visited the earth in 2025 to remind its inhabitants that he comes quickly. Los Angeles burns with fire. “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him” (Ps. 50:3). The southern U.S. is buried under ice and snow. “He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?” (147:15–17). The whole world waits for an outbreak of the next pestilence, whether bird flu or some other dread malady. “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Matt. 24:7). And over all these events stands the promise of our savior: “Behold, I come quickly” (Rev. 22:7).

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Though it means that men will burn, and men will freeze, and men will perish—come, Lord Jesus!

And therefore, let all men know that the Lord is coming quickly. Repent, while it is today! And “let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

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Herman Hoeksema’s reprinted article from the *Banner* this week is quite significant. In a few of his past articles, Hoeksema had examined the views of Professor Ralph Janssen, who was teaching the next generation of Christian Reformed ministers in Calvin Seminary. Hoeksema showed that Janssen’s doctrine of scripture was higher criticism. Hoeksema demonstrated his concerns by quoting from class notes that Hoeksema had collected from Janssen’s students.

Professor Janssen took umbrage with Hoeksema’s approach and wrote to defend himself. Hoeksema gave Professor Janssen space for his defense in Hoeksema’s *Our Doctrine* rubric in the *Banner*. The reader will see that the last half of Hoeksema’s article this week is actually a letter from Professor Janssen.

What is especially significant in Janssen’s response is his approach in defending himself. Instead of dealing with the point at issue—Janssen’s view of scripture—Janssen instead

labored to discredit Herman Hoeksema. And how did Janssen seek to discredit Hoeksema? By accusing Hoeksema of denying common grace. Janssen understood the mind of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). Janssen understood that the CRC revered the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper as nearly infallible and that the CRC was infatuated with Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of common grace. Janssen knew that Hoeksema's opposition to Kuyper's common grace could eventually land Herman Hoeksema in trouble with the CRC. Therefore, when Hoeksema exposed Janssen as a higher critic, Janssen in turn exposed Hoeksema as a denier of Kuyper's common grace.

All of this was taking place at the end of 1920—still more than three years before the CRC would adopt the infamous “Three Points” of common grace at Synod 1924 and still more than four years before Hoeksema would be suspended from the ministry for his opposition to the three points. But the battle over common grace was already joined in the pages of the *Banner* in 1920.

Reading the article, one cannot help but wonder at God's marvelous work of preserving his church and his truth. From every human appearance Hoeksema should have been crushed by the combined weight of Ralph Janssen—probably the most educated man in the CRC at the time—and Abraham Kuyper—the revered Dutch theologian and statesman. In fact, at the time that this article appeared in the *Banner* (November 4, 1920), Abraham Kuyper was only days away from his death (November 8, 1920). Kuyper's legacy in the Dutch Reformed church

world, including in the CRC, would be his theory of common grace. Loyalty to Abraham Kuyper and his theory of common grace was at an all-time high. Opposition to anything of Kuyper in those days—especially Kuyper's doctrine of common grace—was ecclesiastical suicide. Hoeksema should have been drowned by the inrushing common grace tide in the Christian Reformed Church.

But when the tide of common grace rolled in and swallowed the CRC whole, God caused Herman Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) to be thrown clear of destruction. The CRC cast Hoeksema out in 1924, thinking that they were ridding themselves of a troublesome prophet. But in reality it was God who, through Hoeksema's suspension and deposition, was throwing Herman Hoeksema and the PRC to safety.

As the heirs of the PRC consider the Protestant Reformed centennial this year, it is fascinating to watch the battle over common grace unfold in “real time” from over a century ago, as the great Professor Janssen tried to bury Herman Hoeksema under Abraham Kuyper. How wonderful are the works of our God, whose footsteps are in the deep waters, whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and whose ways are higher than our ways.

Let the true heirs of sovereign, particular grace say, “Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things” (Ps. 72:18).

—AL



## On the Eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches' Centennial (2): Jerusalem, the Church

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know. (Ezek. 16:1–2)

As we stand on the eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches' centennial, God in Ezekiel 16 interprets the century-long history of the denomination. For Ezekiel 16 is the story of God's church in the world. Though God spoke in the chapter to Old Testament Jerusalem through the prophet Ezekiel, who was among the captives in Babylon, the chapter is not merely the story of Jerusalem in the days of the Babylonian captivity. Rather, Ezekiel 16 is God's explanation of how he always deals with his church in the world. Jerusalem is the church; the church is Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the shadow; the church is the body that casts the shadow. Jerusalem is the picture; the church is the reality that is captured in the picture. Jerusalem is the type; the church is the antitype. When God said to Ezekiel at the outset of the chapter, "Cause Jerusalem to know," he was speaking to his church in all ages.

Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations. (Ezek. 16:2)

What is it that the church in the world must know about herself? Her abominations. Jerusalem of old did not know her abominations. Jerusalem of old was rotten with sin, but she imagined that God owed her protection from the invading Babylonian force. Little did Jerusalem realize that she was full of iniquity and that God was full of wrath. The invading Babylonian force was from God. Ezekiel must cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.

So it is for the church in the world today. She does not know her abominations. The church does not consider her iniquity, her unfaithfulness,

her departure from God and his things. The church imagines that she is a lovely thing in the world and that God is blessed to have her as his church. But the church must know her abominations.

Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. (Ezek. 16:2–3)

How will the church be taught her abominations? By being taken back to the day of her birth and nativity. There she will find that her birth was a wonder of grace. There she will find that she is nothing and has always been nothing. There she will find that all that she has ever been in this world has been due to God's mercy in Christ. For such a one to grow cold to God and his truth and to become infatuated with another gospel is the height of ingratitude.

So it was for Jerusalem. Her birth and nativity were as ignoble and impossible as could be imagined. The city of Jerusalem had been the habitation of pagan Canaanites. Judah's father Abraham had worshiped idols like an Amorite. Judah's mother Sarah had served false gods like a Hittite. What good could possibly come from them? None at all. A good thing could only come from God and his promise. God's promise ran through the Amorite and the Hittite and produced Jerusalem, who forever owed her life, her love, her gratitude to God alone. God was not blessed to have Jerusalem; Jerusalem was blessed to have God.

So it is for the church in the world today. The birth and nativity of the true church in this world have always been as ignoble and as impossible as can be imagined. God brings a

denomination of true churches into the world in the midst of bloody controversy, harrowing persecution, and universal reproach. A true denomination of churches is simply not viable at her birth. But God's gracious promise runs through her birth and nativity, and she is made to live. The church forever owes her life, her love, and her gratitude to God. In considering her birth and nativity, she is made to know her abominations for all her thankless departures from her God.

Thus Ezekiel 16 explains the centennial of the Protestant Reformed Churches. What the

true heirs of the Protestant Reformed denomination must be made to know at the Protestant Reformed centennial is her abominations. They must be made to know this that they might find nothing of worth in themselves but everything of worth in their God and his mercies in Christ. And to know the abominations of the Protestant Reformed Churches, the true heirs of the denomination must remember the denomination's birth and nativity.

To be continued...

—AL

## HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

*The Banner*

November 4, 1920

(pp. 666–68)

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

### **Article XCII. The New King and His Kingdom: The Covenant with Noah (continued)**

**T**he Anabaptistic view as applied to the covenant that was established with Noah may be dismissed without further discussion. This conception has nothing to do with Reformed theology. True, in the recent past it was alleged sometimes that in our own circles there were those that were Anabaptistically inclined, the principle of whose life-view was the separation of nature and grace; but this allegation rested on a misunderstanding and was never proved to be a fact. As far as I know there never was anyone among us who maintained that grace had to do with the individual soul only, was not truly universal in its scope and was to be carefully separated from nature. That redemption reclaims, not only the soul of the individual, but, if only rightly conceived the whole human race as an organism, and, in fact, all creation is still accepted by all that call themselves Reformed. And it would be next to impossible to read what is told us of the covenant with Noah in the light of Anabaptistic convictions.

There is no question about the clear fact that in the ark the human race is saved, that when Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth leave the ark they stand there as the second beginning of the organism of the race, as carrying in their loins the whole organism, and as representatives of that organism of the human race in its fulness. There is no dispute about the fact that the covenant God establishes with them embraces them as fathers of the human race that is to develop anew after the deluge. Still more. It cannot be denied that this covenant concerns all the living creatures, involves all creation. All the living creatures were saved with Noah in the ark, were saved from the destruction of the flood. And it is specifically stated that the covenant God establishes embraces in its scope and blessing all creation. The very fact that the rainbow must serve as a sign of this covenant points to the same fact. In short, to maintain that the covenant is not truly general in its scope, to hold the view that it concerned only the salvation of

the soul and nothing more, and that it had nothing to do with nature, is so flagrantly in contradiction with all that Scripture reveals in this connection that it may be dismissed as absurd.

Now I want to call attention to the fact that according to the representation of Dr. A. Kuyper in his well known, widely read work “De Gemeene Gratie,” there are but two possibilities. He evidently is of the opinion that one must favor the Anabaptistic conception of this part of Scripture, and hold that the covenant with Noah concerned only salvation of the souls of the elect and nothing more; or, if you repudiate this view, you must come to subscribe to his view, namely, that the covenant with Noah is essentially different from the covenant of grace; is, in other words, a covenant of so-called common grace. The latter is his view. According to him the covenant with Noah is not to be viewed as a stage in the development of the covenant of grace as such. It is a different covenant. A covenant that rests not upon Christ and his redemptive work, but upon a general basis. It is a covenant in which not only the elect are party, but all men, every individual that is born of woman. It is a covenant of common grace. And it is evidently his contention that if this view is not accepted one must turn Anabaptist and separate nature and grace. I receive this impression from a paragraph in “De Gemeene Gratie,” Vol. I, p. 18, where he writes as follows:

“Tot zesmalen toe wordt het alzoo uitdrukkelijk in dit kort bestek uitgesproken, dat we hier niet staan voor een verbond van particuliere, maar voor een verbond van gemeene gratie; en het is bijna niet te verstaan hoe men, in strijd hiermee, en deze stellige, tot zesmalen toe herhaalde uitspraak niet achtende, nochtans

het algemeen karakter van dit verbond heeft weggeredeneerd en bijna ontkend. Allen valsche geestelijkheid bewoog hiertoe. Het woord van Jezus niet achtende, dat er zelfs ‘geen muschje op aarde valt zonder den wil des hemelschen Vaders,’ kon men er niet inkomen, wat hier de zorge voor het gevogelte des hemels en alle gedierte der aarde beduidde. Vergetende wat de Evangelist Johannes ons betuigt, dat alle dingen door het Woord gemaakt zijn, en dat daarom in dat Woord het leven is, en dit leven het licht der menschen, kon men zich geen Genadeverbond anders dan van particuliere strekking denken, en vond in zijn beperkte voorstelling voor een Verbond van gratie met alle kinderen der menschen geen plaats. Dat we naar ziel en lichaam Jezus eigen zijn, drong zijn gevolgtrekkingen niet in het besef door. En dat de godzaligheid niet alleen voor het toekomstige maar ook voor het tegenwoordige leven een vrucht van genade heeft, werd in zijn diepte niet verstaan.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, that we want to assert very emphatically that we are in no way inclined to this false spirituality, that we can very well understand the word of Jesus that no sparrow perisheth against the will of our heavenly Father; that we fully accept the passage of the Apostle John, where he expresses that all things are made by the Word, and that the Word is the light of men; and that we most heartily subscribe to the beautiful passage of the Heidelberg Catechism that speaks of our being not our own, but belonging to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ with body and soul. Neither shall we make the attempt to reason away the general character of the covenant with Noah. We will do full justice to it. But we do not believe that the only alternatives are those Dr. Kuyper mentions. It is not simply a choice

<sup>1</sup> English translation: “Six times in this short space it is very expressly stated that we do not stand here before a particular covenant, but before a covenant of common grace; and it is almost incomprehensible how, in conflict with this, and disregarding this emphatic statement, repeated six times, one could nevertheless reason away and almost deny the general character of this covenant. All false spirituality moved to this. Not heeding the word of Jesus, that “not even a sparrow falls to the earth without the will of the heavenly Father,” one could not understand what the care for the birds of the air and every beast of the earth meant here. Forgetting what the Evangelist John testifies to us, that all things are made by the Word, and that therefore in that Word is life, and this life is the light of men, one could not conceive of a covenant of grace other than of a particular nature, and in his limited conception finds no room for a covenant of grace with all the children of men. That we belong to Jesus body and soul did not penetrate his conclusions. And that godliness has a fruit of grace, not only for the future but also for the present life, was not understood in its depth.” (Translation done by Google Translate, with slight editing.)

between finding the Anabaptistic view or the common grace conception in the passage that speaks of the covenant with Noah. There is a third possibility. It is very well possible to have a still different conception. A conception that establishes a far more intimate connection between nature and grace than the view of a covenant of common grace could ever establish. It is the conception that the covenant with Noah is essentially nothing but the covenant of grace, the one covenant that develops all through history, but that this covenant of grace is here revealed in its widest scope, as embracing the entire organism of the human race, blessing all creation and aiming at the redemption from the bondage of corruption of all that exists.

We do not hesitate a moment to assert that we must differ with the view as presented by Dr. A. Kuyper. Mark, not because we underestimate in any way the gigantic labors of this exponent of Reformed theology in the Netherlands. We esteem him very highly. We owe him very much. He has been a great blessing in reviving the Calvinistic conception of life. But although we fully acknowledge all this, and though we duly appreciate the work of this giant of Reformed thought, we refuse to believe that he has said the last word and brought Reformed theology to its last stage of development. In that case we would only have to repeat what was said by this great leader. And thus all progress of the Reformed line of thinking would cease. And in the second place, we refuse to believe that the writings of Dr. Kuyper can simply be accepted as in a way canonical. To prove that anything is Reformed one cannot be satisfied by referring simply to either Kuyper or Bavinck. They may not only not have said the last word, but the possibility must be granted that they sometimes struck out on a wrong path. And it is our conviction that a wrong keynote was struck when the covenant with Noah was presented as essentially different from the covenant of grace.

I believe that for a full and clear understanding of the glorious truth of God's covenant and kingdom, and for the maintenance of true

Reformed theology, it is necessary that we return from that path and strike a new road.

This we shall try to show.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

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We are glad to give space to the reply of Dr. Janssen to our criticism of his views. And we just as sincerely hope that the professor may be able to justify himself before our church, which he serves at our school.

To personal insinuations we shall give no reply. We would ask the professor to avoid them in the future. They do no earthly good to his case. I do not regard this a personal controversy between Dr. Janssen and myself, but a serious matter concerning nothing less than the very basis of our faith. Let us simply bar them from this discussion.

In the second place let no one be deceived by the above attack on our view regarding the doctrine of common grace. Of course, we are glad to discuss that doctrine with the professor. But then we must have more than mere statement. However this may be, it is my deepest conviction that there is no relation between our views on common grace and our criticism of Dr. Janssen's views. However, we are anxious to learn what connection the professor has discovered. And you may look for our reply, of course.

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#### **REPLY TO REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA**

In recent issues of *The Banner* Rev. H. Hoeksema has allowed himself a digression from the subject, "The New King and His Kingdom," to the study of which he has been devoting himself these last months. The digression is of considerable length, containing different elements and a variety of material. The main purpose, however, is unmistakable. Its several parts are all made to converge on the writer's chief intention, viz., an attack on the chair of Old Testament Exegesis at our Theological Seminary.

In making this attack Rev. Hoeksema uses what he calls "the professor's dictations." Now,

it should be pointed out, to begin with, that this material which constitutes the basis of his criticism is not of the nature of “dictations.” The professor has not as yet prepared or issued for his classes “dictations,” or anything for which he assumes responsibility. What there is extant is simply student-material, notes which they have put together. It is, therefore, in the first place, an injustice to represent the material that is subjected to criticism as “the professor’s dictations,” or to make the public believe that this material is accurate and has the authority of the “professor” back of it. It is, in the second place, an injustice to rush into print with this kind of material, an injustice to both students and professor. What would Rev. Hoeksema think if some adult members of a Bible class taught by the pastor should take notes on what was being discussed and should, thereupon, hand these notes to a neighboring clergyman, and this clergyman should start to write a series of articles in his church paper attacking the pastor and teacher of that Bible class? There, certainly, can be but one answer to this question. In the third place the Christian Reformed churches have their curators for the Theological School and Calvin College. If Rev. Hoeksema has some “professor’s dictations” that he feels like criticizing, he should lodge his complaint with that body. His present method of procedure ignores the curators and our church polity. He is taking the law into his own hands. And, fourthly, it is nothing short of astounding that Rev. Hoeksema, the pastor of Eastern Avenue church, the church of which the professor is a member, should never have spoken one word to me about these “professor’s dictations,” nor have declared to me his intention to write a series of articles attacking me. However, be the methods of the pastor as deplorable as they may, be furthermore the attempt he makes in his articles to assure his readers that there is no malice on his part and that he is not actuated by animosity as vigorous as possible, I don’t really see as yet why he should come with such assurances to his readers at all, why he should repeat the assurance;

I don’t understand that psychology. I say, be the methods what they may, the fact remains that the attack of Rev. Hoeksema is there, and I purpose to devote a few articles to it and also after that to some other theological questions which, to my mind, deserve to be looked into, questions which it is timely to discuss for general enlightenment.

The attack, then, of Rev. Hoeksema is the first matter I am to take up for a little in the sequel. This attack is a criticism. Now, it is an undeniable fact that in order to properly appreciate any piece of criticism, it is of the utmost importance to know exactly the standpoint of the critic. This, indeed, goes almost without saying. For it is the critic that criticizes, and the criticism that the critic offers will necessarily be determined by what he is, by the views and tenets that he holds. His views will consciously or unconsciously influence him in his work of criticism. Or, to express it still differently, the critic has a standard which he applies when he criticizes, he has a measure with which he metes when he passes judgment on another—in this case on the professor and the “professor’s dictations.” That standard, that measure it is all-important to find out.

In the case before us we are so fortunate as to know at once the views of our critic. Rev. H. Hoeksema professes to be a thorough Calvinist, standing foursquare on the doctrines of the Reformed faith. You say, well, isn’t that sufficient for our purpose? Doesn’t that tell us exactly who the critic is, what his views are, what his standard of judgment is when he criticizes? The remainder of this article will give a part of the answer to these questions.

In the Banner of Sept. 16, 1920,<sup>2</sup> one of The Banners containing Rev. Hoeksema’s digression and criticism, we are told that in the early chapters of Genesis there are to be found “the first fundamentals of all Christian dogma, that of creation, of sin and punishment, of righteousness and holiness, but also of grace and

<sup>2</sup> Herman Hoeksema, “Article LXXXVI: The New King and His Kingdom: Sons of God (continued),” reprinted in *Reformed Pavilion* 2, no. 34 (November 30, 2024): 10–12.

redemption.” And faith finds “that these doctrines occur again and again in ever clearer rays of revelation in Holy Writ.” This is, we all agree, a good comprehensive statement of Rev. Hoeksema’s. The first fundamentals of all Christian dogma are undoubtedly already there in these early chapters. Let us see what doctrines these chapters yield us. Following Rev. Hoeksema’s statement, we have first of all the doctrine of creation, and we may say, by implication, the doctrine of the Creator, i.e., the doctrine of God. We have, furthermore, the doctrine of sin, and by implication the doctrine of the sinner, i.e., the doctrine of man. We have also the doctrine of grace and redemption and by the implication the doctrine of the Redeemer, Christ, i.e., a Christology. These are all important doctrines, doctrines fundamental also for our Reformed faith. And these doctrines, we may agree with Rev. Hoeksema, occur again and again in ever clearer, fuller form in the rest of Scripture.

The question suggests itself, however, are there any other important Reformed doctrines in the early chapters of Genesis or elsewhere in Scripture which we have not enumerated? Rev. Hoeksema has referred to grace. The connection in which he mentioned it implies that he means the saving grace of Christ Jesus, the Redeemer. But we are Calvinists, holding to the Reformed doctrine. We are not Roman Catholics, nor Lutherans, nor Anabaptists, nor Arminians. Calvin is our spiritual father, to his doctrines we subscribe, doctrines that distinguish him from Luther, from Arminius, from the Anabaptists, etc. Now, one of the main doctrines which distinguish Calvin from the Roman Catholics, the Anabaptists, etc. is the doctrine of common grace. In fact, that doctrine was Calvin’s discovery. He found it taught in Holy Scripture. That doctrine, from Calvin on, has been an essential

part of the Reformed faith. It was a great discovery, this doctrine of Calvin. In the early history of the Reformed church, it is true, the doctrine was not much further developed. The early Reformed theologians did little more than repeat what Calvin had said about it in the Institutes. But the doctrine is here. All the Reformed dogmaticians of the time agree that it is there. The doctrine is there also at the Synod of Dordt. Our confession presupposes it. The Canons of Dordt point out that the Arminians interpret common grace wrongly, identifying it with the light of nature and making also a wrong use of it. When much later the reawakening comes of the Reformed churches, the doctrine of common grace is in evidence more than ever before. That it is essential and fundamental stands “als een paal boven water.”<sup>3</sup> It is to this doctrine and its further exposition that the Reformed theologians devote themselves. The names of the two great leaders of present day Reformed thought, Kuyper and Bavinck, need only be mentioned to enable one to see what importance is attached to this doctrine of the Reformed faith.

But how about Rev. Hoeksema and common grace? You say, he stands foursquare on the doctrines of the Reformed faith and, therefore, undoubtedly holds to this important Reformed doctrine. Let us see what precisely the views of our critic are and find out where he stands.

In The Banner of April 10, 1919,<sup>4</sup> Rev. Hoeksema writes, “Must we accept that there are two kinds of grace, one kind particularly for God’s people, for the elect, for the seed of the woman, and another for all men in general?” “Can God in any manner be graciously inclined \*\*\*\*over against the sinner?” “If not, how can we speak of common grace?” In The Banner of April 17, 1919,<sup>5</sup> Rev. Hoeksema gives an answer to these questions: “God cannot in some way be graciously inclined to all men.” “Such an

<sup>3</sup> English translation: “like a post above water.” (Translation done by Google Translate.)

<sup>4</sup> Herman Hoeksema, “Article XXVIII: The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued),” reprinted in *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 28 (October 21, 2023): 6–8.

<sup>5</sup> Herman Hoeksema, “Article XXIX: The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued),” reprinted in *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 29 (October 28, 2023): 6–8.

attitude of God is utterly inconceivable.” It is “an attack upon God’s holiness and righteousness.” There is, therefore, no common grace. The blessings and privileges which all men enjoy in common and which we have been accustomed to explain from the point of view of common grace are not to be thus explained. How then are they to be explained? The answer is given in Banner, May 8, 1919.<sup>6</sup> “The world in its present existence, with its present life, and with all its institutions (Rev. Hoeksema means the institutions of the state, the home, the school, the society in general, see Banner, May 1, 1919<sup>7</sup>) rests upon the ‘the power of the grace as it was in Christ Jesus.’” “All the blessings, also of this present time are blessings of one and the same grace.” Rev. Hoeksema does not want to call it “special grace,” this grace, namely, that is in Christ Jesus. There is only one grace. The term “special grace” falls by the board. It shares in the same lot as “common grace.” Rev. Hoeksema says, “The same truth (namely, that all the blessings, also of the present time, are blessings of one and the same grace) can be stated in another way.” “There are no two covenants, one special and one common, one eternal and one temporal.”

“There is but one covenant, the covenant of grace.” Of God’s covenant with Noah, which Calvin and his followers, which present day Reformed theologians as Kuyper and Bavinck explain as common grace, Rev. Hoeksema says that it “was nothing but a manifestation of the covenant of grace in Christ.” Quotations similar to the above, from Rev. Hoeksema’s articles, can be multiplied. They all in a variety of ways give expression to his standpoint that there is no common grace.

We can now sum up. Our discovery brings us face to face with a very discouraging fact. The unexpected has happened. In Rev. H. Hoeksema we are after all not dealing with a critic that is a sound Calvinist. In denying common grace he has broken with true Calvinism and has in so far joined ranks with the Anabaptists. He has been found to deny one of the most important doctrines of our Reformed faith. How this unreformed standpoint of Rev. Hoeksema affects his criticism of the “professor’s dictations” we shall see later.

(To be continued)

—R. Janssen



<sup>6</sup> Herman Hoeksema, “Article XXXII: The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued),” reprinted in *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 32 (November 18, 2023): 24–26.

<sup>7</sup> Herman Hoeksema, “Article XXXI: The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued),” reprinted in *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 31 (November 11, 2023): 5–8.