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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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Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them.

—Exodus 21:1

## The Judgments

Upon Mount Sinai God taught Moses the judgments.

What were the judgments? The judgments consisted of a long list of laws for Israel to keep. Some of the judgments were ceremonial, teaching Israel her worship. For example, there were laws about feasts (Ex. 23:14) and sacrifices (v. 18). Some of the judgments were civil, teaching Israel her life as a nation. For example, there were laws about buying and selling Hebrew slaves (21:2). Some of the judgments were moral, applying the ten commandments to specific cases. For example, there were laws against wounding or killing the unborn child of an expectant woman (vv. 22–25).

The judgments pervaded every waking moment of an Israelite's life. Did one have an expectant wife? There were laws for that. Did one have a firstborn son? There were laws for that. Did one have a daughter of marrying age? There were laws for that. Did one own an ox? There were laws for that. Did one find an ox? There were laws for that. Did one have a slave? There were laws for that. Did one burn brush in his field? There were laws for that. Did one get into a fight? There were laws for that. Did one entertain a visitor? There were laws for that. Did one borrow? There were laws for that. Did one lend? There were laws for that. Did one find a dead animal? There were laws for that. Did one encounter a foreigner in his land? There were laws for that. Did one travel to God's house? There were laws for that. Every conceivable aspect of a man's daily life was governed by the judgments.

Upon Mount Sinai Moses must learn the judgments in all their precision and meticulous detail, in order that he might set the judgments before the people of Israel.

But why the judgments? Why so many judgments? Why such all-encompassing judgments? Ah, in the answer to the *why*, the child of God meets his savior! For the answer to the *why* is the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

You see, the judgments were *figures*. The judgments were *shadows*. The ceremonial and civil judgments pointed ahead to Jesus Christ, who was the reality behind the figures and the shadows. What was the reality behind sacrifices on festal days? Jesus Christ and his atonement. What was the reality behind buying and selling Hebrew slaves? Jesus Christ and his easy yoke of liberty. And Jesus Christ is all-encompassing in the Christian's life. Every moment of the Christian's existence is permeated with the finished work of Jesus Christ that has delivered him from his sin and death and made him free.

Meanwhile, the moral judgments were also fulfilled in Christ. He has accomplished all obedience to the law on behalf of and instead of his people, so that the keeping of the law for righteousness is finished for the child of God. The law does not serve to save the child of God; Christ alone and his finished work saves the child of God. Rather, the moral law serves to regulate the thankful life of the child of God.

Therefore, an examination of the judgments is highly profitable for the child of God in the New Testament. In the judgments the Christian beholds Christ, and the Christian learns his

thankful life. So we confess about the judgments in the Belgic Confession:

Article 25: The Abolishing of the Ceremonial Law

We believe that the ceremonies and figures of the law ceased at the coming of Christ, and that all the shadows are accomplished; so that the use of them must be abolished amongst Christians; yet the

truth and substance of them remain with us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have their completion. In the meantime we still use the testimonies taken out of the law and the prophets, to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel, and to regulate our life in all honesty to the glory of God, according to his will.

—AL

## EDITORIAL

### On the Eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches' Centennial (3): The Daughter Who Lived

**T**he Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) were born out of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) at the end of 1924 and the beginning of 1925. But the CRC did not intend to give birth to a daughter. Rather, the CRC intended to abort her baby. In the language of Ezekiel 16, the CRC loathed the yet-unnamed Protestant Reformed daughter growing within her and, without pity, flung her offspring from her into the open field to die.

And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. (Ezek. 16:4-5)

The true church of Jesus Christ in this world is always loathed and cruelly treated by the false church and her members. Thus Cain dealt with Abel. Thus Esau dealt with Jacob. Thus Israel dealt with Judah. Thus the Sanhedrin dealt with Christ. Thus the Jews dealt with the apostles. Thus Rome dealt with Gottschalk and Hus and Luther. Thus Philip II dealt with the Reformed

believers in the Lowlands. Thus the Dutch Reformed Church dealt with the *Afscheiding*. And thus the CRC dealt with the PRC.

The reason that the CRC loathed her yet-unnamed Protestant Reformed daughter growing within her in 1924 was doctrinal. The daughter believed and loved the gospel that the mother had come to despise. The daughter believed and loved the gospel that God's grace in Christ is sovereign and particular. The daughter believed and loved the gospel that God efficaciously saves his elect, being loving and gracious to them at all times. The daughter believed and loved the truth that God sovereignly condemns the reprobate, hating them at all times and in all things. The daughter believed and loved the truth that God does not offer salvation to man to be accepted or rejected at man's will but that God sovereignly calls his elect people unto salvation in Christ through the promiscuous preaching of the gospel. The ministers and elders and laymen of the yet-unborn daughter preached and wrote and confessed this glorious gospel of sovereign, particular grace.

But the Christian Reformed mother had become infatuated with the theory of common grace. According to this theory, God has a non-saving favor for every human being, head for

head, reprobate and elect alike. According to this theory, God restrains sin in the unregenerate by a gracious operation of his Holy Spirit upon them. According to this theory, God enables the unregenerate to do truly good works in this world. And according to this theory, God makes a gracious offer of salvation to the elect and reprobate alike, for them to accept or reject at their will.

The Christian Reformed mother had been developing her pet theory of common grace for several years. At her Synod of Kalamazoo in 1924, the CRC made the doctrine of common grace official by her adoption of the “Three Points.” And even though the synod of 1924 called for more study of common grace, the mother had no intention of allowing her yet-unborn child to engage in that study. When Reverends Herman Hoeksema, Henry Danhof, and George Ophoff and others began the *Standard Bearer* near the end of 1924 in order to oppose the doctrine of common grace, leading men in the CRC called for the ministers and their consistories to be dealt with by the ecclesiastical assemblies. A storm of protests came to Classis Grand Rapids East at the end of 1924 and to Classis Grand Rapids West at the beginning of 1925.

The two classes held cruel instruments of death in their hands and used those instruments to pierce and to cut the ministers, the elders, and the members of Eastern Avenue, Hope (Riverbend), First Kalamazoo, and Coopersville. The instruments of death that the classes held were suspension and deposition from office. When a church suspends and deposes her office-bearers, she kills them in an ecclesiastical sense. Suspension and deposition from office are the New Testament, ecclesiastical equivalent of the Old Testament stoning of a prophet.

On Friday, December 12, 1924, Classis Grand Rapids East suspended Rev. Herman Hoeksema and severed the consistory of Eastern Avenue from any connection with the CRC. On Saturday, January 24, 1925, Classis Grand Rapids West deposed Rev. Henry Danhof and the consistory of First Kalamazoo, Rev. George Ophoff and the consistory of Hope (Riverbend), and the

consistory of Coopersville. On Thursday, January 29, 1924, Classis Grand Rapids East deposed the already-suspended Rev. Herman Hoeksema.

Thus the Christian Reformed mother sought to rid herself of her troublesome Protestant Reformed daughter by casting her away without pity or compassion, without care or provision. How lonely for the daughter to be cut off from her mother! How grievous for the daughter to be despised by her mother! How deadly for the daughter to be cast away by her mother! It was the ugliness, strife, and pain of ecclesiastical abortion.

But, behold, the PRC survived! By the power of God’s sovereign grace, according to his good pleasure, the PRC lived, for God wonderfully brought the rejected and wounded little daughter of the CRC to life. In the language of Ezekiel 16, God came to the small, bloody, stillborn PRC lying in the puddle of her own blood and caused her to live.

And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. (Ezek. 16:6)

And live she did! For one hundred years now, the Protestant Reformed denomination—which had no hope of survival in the day of her birth and nativity, the mighty and cruel powers of the Christian Reformed mother being set against her—has survived as an institution of churches upon the earth.

The heirs of the Protestant Reformed Churches must remember the denomination’s birth and nativity. For the denomination’s birth and nativity were not of man but of God alone. Of man there was only murder, as the CRC flung her baby from her. Of man there was only helplessness, as the PRC lay in her blood. But of God there was salvation, for he alone caused the dead, little, despised thing to live.

And to flourish.

To be continued...

—AL

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

**I**t is a rather strange coincidence that we are writing on the covenant established with Noah, concerning which we believe that it is the covenant of grace, at the same time that one of our seminary professors makes the attempt to raise the doctrine of common grace to one of the main doctrines of the Reformed faith. One cannot but stand aghast at the boldness of the statement that the doctrine of common grace constitutes one of the main doctrines which distinguish Calvin from others! Over against it we make the statement that there is room for debate on the question whether Calvin did teach anything at all that resembled the so-called doctrine of common grace, a debate in which I would be willing to take the negative side. But the matter becomes mockery when the professor knows to say nothing more in regard to one of the essential doctrines of the Reformed faith than that it is “presupposed” in the confession! In the first place I would deny even this. But in the second place does the professor seriously think that one of the most essential doctrines of the Reformed faith would be merely presupposed in the confession? But we will answer these statements in detail when the professor is through with his reply to us. If he wishes to prove nothing but that his views of Scripture as revealed by the dictations I mentioned are rooted in a certain view of common grace, all the worse for that conception of common grace. In the meantime we will continue our discussion of the covenant with Noah.

In the support of his contention that the covenant with Noah is not the covenant of grace, Dr. A. Kuyper mentions that in the entire passage

that speaks of this covenant, the name God and not the name Jehovah is used. Whenever the covenant of grace is mentioned, thus is the contention, the name Jehovah is employed. It is God’s covenant name. And, therefore, since the name of God is used in connection with the establishment of the covenant with Noah, the conclusion is that here we have another, a general covenant, not the covenant of grace. Now, this contention would hold if it actually were true that the name of God were never employed when the covenant of grace is mentioned. If throughout Scripture the name Jehovah is employed in connection with the establishment of the covenant, it would be unlikely that in a passage that uses only the name of God we could expect the covenant of grace. But this contention is not based on facts. Not at all. I refer you to Gen. 17. There surely is no question about the fact that in this chapter we have an account of the establishment of the covenant of grace with Abraham. Yet we read: “And when Abraham was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am God Almighty; walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.” Already here we notice that the Lord introduces Himself to Abram, not as Jehovah, but as God Almighty. Yet that God Almighty here reveals his covenant to Abram. Again we read: “And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee. And I will make thee

exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee” (Gen. 17:4–7). Also in connection with this important passage the name God, not the name Jehovah, is employed. Again we read: “And God said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee throughout their generation” (17:9). In short, throughout this important chapter the name God and not the name Jehovah is used. But surely, then the contention of Dr. A. Kuyper loses all force. The name Jehovah is not constantly used in connection with the establishment of the covenant of grace. In one of the classical chapters for this doctrine we find the name God throughout. Hence, it stands to reason that no argument can be based on the use of the name God in connection with the establishment of the covenant with Noah. The fact that this name is employed in that connection proves nothing.

A second argument that esteemed theologian advances is that the covenant with Noah is general, is established emphatically with Noah and his sons and their seed, with every living thing, yea with the earth. Now, we do not deny the general character of the covenant with Noah. We do not deny that this covenant is established with all nations and peoples of the human organism. No more than I deny that the glorified church shall once consist of members from all peoples and tongues and tribes under the sun. But this is not the question. The question here is not whether the covenant established with Noah embraces the whole of the human race, organically considered, but rather, whether this covenant embraces all men individually, every single member of the race as it develops in the world, good and evil, righteous and wicked alike. And then we deny that this can be deduced from the text. True, the covenant is established with Noah, and his three sons, and their seed. But in the first place it should not be forgotten that Noah’s three sons here appear as the progenitors of the

organism of the human race after the flood. They carry all God’s people in their loins. If it were true that God’s people were to spring only from the sons of Shem, or from Shem and Japheth both with the exclusion of Ham, there might be something in this argument of Dr. Kuyper. But if you believe with me that the multitude which no man can number, that shall once glorify the God of heaven and earth, shall consist of representatives from the whole race, so that not part, but the whole of the race as an organism shall be saved, there is nothing strange in the fact that with all three sons, as progenitors of the entire elect race, the covenant of grace should be established. This would not be so if the term “seed” implied all the descendants individually of a certain progenitor. But this is not the case. With Abraham and his seed God also establishes his covenant. But Ishmael and Esau, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah also belong to the seed of Abraham. Yet at the time the covenant was not continued with them. Only in Isaac the seed was called. That is, not the seed according to the flesh, but the seed according to election is the seed of Abraham. But if this is borne in mind, the covenant that is established with Noah and his sons and their seed is, after all, not necessarily anything else than the covenant of grace embracing in its scope the whole of the human race, and finding its fullest realization in the multitude that no man can number, from all peoples and nations and tribes and tongues of the earth. The generality of this covenant cannot be an argument against the contention that it is the covenant of grace.

And neither can the other fact be maintained against this view, that, namely, it is a covenant with every living thing and even with all the earth itself. This would exactly be the case if our conception of God’s covenant were Anabaptistic. We are no Anabaptists, neither at all inclined to the Anabaptistic view. We challenge anyone, rather than make some mere statements without proof, to point out where our Anabaptism comes in. I am bold to say that no one is able to do this. We have made this challenge before, and no one

ever answered. And we call it child's work to come with that same accusation again without substantiating it. Characteristic of Anabaptism is that it separates nature and grace. But we establish a connection between nature and grace, more intimate than any doctrine of common grace can ever do. We believe that not only the souls of a few elect, but the elect organism of the human race as a whole shall be saved by grace. We believe that to this elect organism of the human race in Christ Jesus belong all things, belongs the entire kingdom, in order that it may with Christ eternally reign over all creatures. We believe that through the power of that same grace in Christ Jesus heaven and earth are to be reunited, we shall see a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell. And, far from believing that godliness has no fruit for this present life, we believe that ever since the fall, even to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, every living thing is borne by this grace. And so it is nothing strange to us, indeed, that the covenant of grace should embrace all things, every living creature, in time and eternity. That is exactly what we are contending. The covenant with Noah is, to us, exactly the clear proof, that if it were not for God's covenant the human race should not have multiplied again after the flood.

And lastly, Dr. Kuyper contends that the covenant as it was established with Noah implied nothing more than the promise that the flood should no more come over the earth. Now, this we deny. True, for his covenant's sake the Lord God promises that no flood shall ever destroy every living thing again. But this one promise does not exhaust the covenant as such; it is not the essence of this covenant. What a strange representation this is! To instill calm and quiet into the hearts of all human beings the Lord promises that the flood shall no more destroy the world! As a testimony of this promise only He places His bow in the heavens! That bow is not a testimony to His people, but to all men. And the purpose of that bow is to give to every human being a certain tranquility of mind and heart that no flood shall come again! That is the covenant. But are there after all any outside of

the people of God that ever believingly look at that bow in the heavens and derive this comfort? Or, if you think that this is up to them, is it so much greater comfort that the world may at any time be destroyed by fire, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, than to think that it might possibly be destroyed by a flood again? But the text does not present the matter as if the promise that a flood shall not come again and the covenant were absolutely identical. Already in chapter 6:18 we read: "But I will establish my covenant with thee." Nothing further is said. Now notice that this is exactly the same expression that is used when the covenant is established with Abraham. "And I will make my covenant between me and thee" (Gen. 17:2). "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee" (Gen. 17:4). "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). Every time, the Lord says: I establish my covenant with thee. From that covenant flow blessings from Abraham. He shall become great, many nations, even kings shall come from his loins, he shall have the land of Canaan for a possession. These blessings flow from the covenant. But they do not exhaust that covenant. The essence of the covenant is, after all, that God is Abraham's God and that Abraham is God's party through faith. Thus it is also with the covenant with Noah. Nowhere do we read that the covenant is exhausted in the promise that it shall not rain again as it did at the time of the deluge. As we have said, the matter is left entirely general in 6:18. God will establish His covenant with Noah. That is why he must be saved. And in chapter 9:8-17 the preservation and undisturbed development of all creatures in time is indeed mentioned as a blessing that flows from this covenant, but it is never identified with the covenant itself. He establishes His covenant, the covenant of grace, with Noah and his seed and every living creature. As a token of that covenant He places the rainbow in the heavens. That rainbow, therefore, speaks to God's people of his covenant in its all-comprehensive

sense of the word. It brings the joyful message that all creation is to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and that the people of God shall inherit all things. But as God remembers this covenant, Himself beholds the rainbow

as a token of it, He does not again destroy all things for the wickedness of man. Because of His covenant He preserves all things in time and allows all creatures to develop organically till the day of our Lord Jesus Christ!

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

