



# 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 he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

—Exodus 31:18

## Two Tables

**A**t the end of forty days and forty nights, God gave Moses two tables of testimony. The word *testimony* means *law*. God gave Moses two tables of the law. The law that was written on the two tables was the ten commandments (Deut. 4:13). God also gave Moses many other laws, which Moses wrote in a book; but the ten commandments were written by God on the two tables.

The two tables were made of stone, for God’s law is as permanent as stone. Kingdoms rise, and kingdoms fall; but the stone upon which they are built and then crumble remains. So God’s law endures, generation after generation. The two tables of stone condemn all relativism, which says that what is right and what is wrong changes with time and place and circumstance. Over against the shifting sands of relativism stand the two tables of stone, permanent and unyielding.

The two tables “were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written” (Ex. 32:15). God’s law is complete and perfect. There is no room to add a law according to man’s pet cause of the day. There is no possibility of removing a law to accommodate man’s insatiable lawlessness. Over against the corruption of the second commandment in will worship and the discarding of the fourth commandment in sabbath desecration and the ignoring of the seventh commandment in rampant fornication and the despising of the ninth commandment in toleration and love of the lie stand the two tables, written on both their sides.

The tables were two in number, for there are two great commandments of the law (Matt. 22:37–40). The first table is the first and great commandment: love the Lord thy God by having no other gods, worshiping as he commands, reverencing his name, and keeping his day. The second table is the second commandment, which is like unto the first: love thy neighbor as thyself by honoring authority, not murdering, not committing adultery, not stealing, not lying, and not coveting. The law of God is love, and love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10).

The two tables were written by God (Ex. 31:18; 32:16), not by Moses. With his finger God engraved the characters and words of his decalogue into the tables of stone. The fact that the law was written with the finger of God means that the law is not arbitrary, not a set of ten rules that could have been any other ten rules. Rather, the law had to be these ten as the reflection of the glory of God. God is love (I John 4:8), and when the finger of him who is love writes the law, his law is love. Indeed, the characters and words of the law glowed and burned and flamed with fire as God engraved them with his finger in the stone (Deut. 33:2). They shone with the same glory as Jehovah! He whose glory was a devouring fire on the top of Sinai (Ex. 24:17) sent forth from his right hand a fiery law for his people (Deut. 33:2).

The two tables were the tables of the covenant (Deut. 9:11). God declared unto his people his covenant, which he commanded them to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them

upon two tables of stone (Deut. 4:13). It is preposterous to interpret this as if God's covenant is conditioned on our keeping God's law, for the law begins with God, not with man: "I am the LORD thy God" (Ex. 20:2). What is more, Christ has fulfilled the law on behalf of his people: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17). Rather, God's law is his rule of gratitude for his people in his everlasting covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. God has saved his people in Christ

from their sin and death and made them his covenant children; in thanksgiving, as the fruit of that salvation, God's people are to love and obey him. Thus God's law serves God's everlasting covenant of grace in Christ.

And our love for God, which is the fruit of faith and salvation? Even that fruit is God's gift. For the law that God wrote with his finger on two tables of stone he now writes by his Spirit in the fleshy tables of our hearts (II Cor. 3:3).

—AL

## HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

*The Banner*

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(pp. 357–58)

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

### Article CLXI: The New King and His Kingdom: The Son of Man

"Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."—Heb. 2:17

If it is important that we maintain the distinctive divine sonship of the Mediator, Jesus Christ, it is of no less import that we also adhere to the confession that he was truly man. He is the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, possessing all the divine attributes. Neither does he dispossess himself of these attributes while he is in the world. In that sense he surely does not empty himself while he walks on earth as the servant. No, he is and remains the person of the Son and retains eternally all the attributes of the divine nature. But he is also the Son of Man, and as Christ possesses a human nature, real flesh and blood he assumed, he became like unto his brethren in all things.

This is already expressed in the name Son of Man. Jesus himself employs that name with application to his humanity very often. It is true that the name denotes far more than the mere fact of

his dwelling in human nature. It is most probably derived from Dan. 7:13. There the name Son of Man, or "one like the Son of Man" also occurs. And it is employed there in connection with the judgment that is to come upon the world-power. The Ancient of Days sits on his throne. And the one like unto the Son of Man approaches the Ancient of Days and receives an everlasting kingdom and dominion. In that connection, therefore, the name Son of Man rather denotes the glory and power the Mediator receives from the Father than his state of humiliation. It is the servant glorified that is denoted by this name. But although this is so, the fact remains that also in this name it is expressed most significantly that he is truly man, born of a woman.

The Belgic Confession also emphasizes the importance of this truth. It devotes an entire article to the human nature of the Mediator, and another to the relation and distinction between the two natures of the Savior (Art. XVIII):

"We confess, therefore, that God did fulfill the promise which he made to the fathers, by the mouth of his holy prophets, when he sent into

the world, at the time appointed by him, his own, only begotten and eternal Son, who took upon him the form of a servant, and became like unto man, really assuming the true human nature, with all its infirmities, sin excepted, being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin, Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without the means of man, and did not only assume human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul, that he might be a real man. For since the soul was lost as well as the body, it was necessary that he should take both upon him, to save both. Therefore, we confess (in opposition to the heresy of the Anabaptists, who deny that Christ assumed human flesh of his mother) that Christ is become partaker of the flesh and blood of the children; that he is a fruit of the loins of David after the flesh; made of the seed of David according to the flesh; a fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary, made of a woman; a branch of David; a shoot of the root of Jesse; sprung from the tribe of Judah; descended from the Jews according to the flesh; of the seed of Abraham, since he took on him the seed of Abraham, and became like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted, so that in truth he is our Immanuel, that is to say, God with us.”

Art. XIX:

“We believe that by this conception the person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature, so that there are not two sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in one single person: yet, that each nature retains its own distinct properties. As then the divine nature hath always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life, filling heaven and earth, so hath also the human nature not lost its properties, but remained a creature, having beginning of days, being a finite nature, and retaining all the properties of a real body. And though he hath by his resurrection given immortality to the same, nevertheless, he hath not changed the reality of his human nature, forasmuch as our salvation and resurrection also depend upon the reality of his body. But these two natures are so closely united in one person that they were not separated even by his death.

Therefore that which he, when dying, commended into the hands of his Father, was a real human spirit, departing from his body. But in the meantime the divine nature always remained united with the human, even when he lay in the grave. And the Godhead did not cease to be in him, any more than it did when he was an infant, though it did not so clearly manifest itself for a while. Wherefore we confess that he is very God and very man: very God by his power to conquer death, and very man that he might die for us according to the infirmity of his flesh.”

These articles leave no doubt as to the Reformed conception of the human nature of Christ and its relation to the divine in the person of the Son of God. The Son of God assumed a real human nature. This fact is very strongly emphasized in these articles. The reason is partly to be sought in the fact that the Anabaptists denied this truth of the reality of the human nature of Christ in the sense that it consists of flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. It is in Art. XVIII that at the same time we obtain a glimpse of the meaning of Anabaptism, a name the sound of which must have gradually become familiar among us, though it is at least doubtful whether its meaning is known to many. It is the name of a violent, mystical sect that separated itself from the movement of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Of late the impression has been left that their distinctive error was the denial of “common grace”; whence it was further deduced with a slight twist of logic that all that deny “common grace” are Anabaptists; upon which basis it was sufficiently established that the writer of “Our Doctrine” was an Anabaptist, a conclusion that finally found a rather broad application, so that all he did and wrote and every fight he fought for the maintenance of sound Reformed truth was in last analysis to be traced clearly to his Anabaptistic convictions. Surely, it is not a very desirable name to have, even though the brethren that so Anabaptize us cover their action in a sugar coat of brotherliness. For apart from the question whether Thomas Munzer and John of Leyden and Melchior Hoffman, leaders of this fanatical

movement, or their followers in the sixteenth century, actually denied “common grace” as it was developed in the first part of the twentieth century, fact is that they were guilty of a good many bad heresies that are perfectly horrible. I doubt that it is doing them justice when it is said that they taught separation of nature and grace. The root of their error seems to lie just one step further back, and it appears to us that they identified nature and sin. It seems that from this fundamentally wrong conception must be explained their attempt to separate literally and locally from the world and to establish a kingdom of God right in the midst of the world, though literally separated from it. From this principle must be explained their view of the church and of baptism (Ana means “again”; anabaptist meaning “Wiedertauffer,” Wederdooper). And from this principle you can also understand that they denied the oneness of the human nature of Christ with our nature. They did not so much deny that Jesus’ human nature was real as that he assumed our flesh and blood. He is not from us according to his human nature. That which was conceived through the operation of the Holy Spirit in Mary’s womb was not flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, but it was something essentially new. Mary simply was the channel through which the Son of God passed in assuming a human nature, but he did not assume her flesh and blood, he did not take upon himself our nature as it was in Mary. And it is over against this fundamental error that our confession expresses itself very strongly.

He is become partaker of the flesh and blood of the children. He is a fruit of the loins of David after the flesh. He is made of the seed of David after the flesh. He is a fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary. He is made of a woman. He is a branch of David, a shoot of the root of Jesse. He is sprung from the tribe of Judah and descended from the Jews according to the flesh of the seed of Abraham. He is become like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted.

Thus, our confession maintains not only that Christ’s human nature was more than an appearance of flesh and blood, but also that the human nature of Christ is from us. According to the flesh Christ is out of us, even though brought forth miraculously through the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing Mary. The church of the old dispensation, as Rev. 12 has it, stands in the sign of the woman that is about to be delivered of the manchild. She brings forth the holy seed all through the time of the old dispensation. In Seth and Noah, in Shem and Abraham, in Israel and Judah and Jesse and David that holy seed appears. And this holy line, brought forth by the church of the old dispensation, finds its culmination in the Son of Man, our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his human nature he is from us.

But by implication the confession also takes a stand against the notion that the human nature of Christ was not a specific but a general human nature. But this we hope to discuss a little more fully next week.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

