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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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MEDITATION

Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: and he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD's. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God. And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled. But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they were not grown up. And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

—Exodus 9:18–35

Seventh plague: Hail.

What shall one call the seventh plague? One could call the plague *hail*, since that is the first word that God used to describe it: “I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail.” But the seventh plague was a hail the likes of which the earth had never seen before and has never seen since. The seventh plague was a hailstorm with no meteorological explanation. The seventh plague was not merely a terrifying thunderstorm that included devastating hail. The fire that

came with the hail was not merely a tremendous amount of lightning. The fire that ran along the ground was not St. Elmo's fire or any other atmospheric phenomenon that man has seen before. Rather, the seventh plague was a special storm that came directly from God's throne in heaven, which storm he hurled upon the land of Egypt.

That the fire mingled with the hail means that the hailstones themselves were ablaze. The burning hailstones were huge boulders that were

big enough to break full-grown trees in half upon impact. That the fire ran along the ground means that the burning hailstones hit the ground like bombs and ignited the vegetation, so that uncontrolled fires went racing along the surface of the earth. All the Egyptian servants and all the Egyptian beasts that remained in the fields were smashed by the burning boulders of hail. All the flax and barley in the fields were crushed or incinerated. And above the pained screams of broken men and burning animals, above the deafening crack of the fire-and-ice boulders thudding into the earth, above the rushing hiss of the fires blazing through the fields, there was the constant, inescapable, creation-shaking roar of Jehovah's thunders in the heavens.

What shall one say about the awful seventh plague? This sobering thing: the hail storm was a hell storm. From heaven God spoke his word of curse upon Egypt, and hell came crashing down. The wrath of God was revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (see Rom. 1:18). The wrath of God came down upon the children of disobedience (see Eph. 5:6). The deafening thunder and the incinerating fire and the smashing hail were the tokens of God's wrath upon a wicked and disobedient nation.

Pharaoh's nation was broken by God's wrath. The trees were splintered, the crops of the season were wiped out, and the bodies of the dead lay in the fields. Pharaoh's nation began to divide against itself. Some of Pharaoh's people began to listen to the Lord's warnings. Pharaoh finally feigned that he had had enough. "Intreat the LORD!" But, as Moses and Pharaoh and all of Egypt well knew, Pharaoh's heart was still hard. He sinned yet more. He hardened his heart, he and his servants. And he did so exactly as the Lord had spoken by Moses.

Now behold Goshen. No hell stones fell upon the children of Israel. Why not? Not because they were righteous in themselves. Israel then—and the true Israel of God now that is the church—always deserved hell according to its own deeds. But Israel has a savior, who is Christ the Lord. Behold your Lord! His heart is not hard toward God but warm and obedient. Behold your Lord's work! He willingly was lifted up above the earth on the cross that the hell storm of God's wrath might strike him in your place. From heaven God hurled the fire and thunder and hail of his curse for our sins upon his only begotten Son until the storm was spent, having been fully borne by our savior. And for Jesus' sake, who has borne our hell, we enter into his heaven. Hallelujah!

—AL



A Fine Tomb

Reformed Believers Publishing (RBP) held its annual meeting in October, and the December special issue of *Sword and Shield* carries the report.

This year the proceedings of the annual meeting included remarks by the chairman, Mr. Henry Kamps, about a former board member of Reformed Believers Publishing and about the former editor in chief of *Sword and Shield*. The former board member was Mr. Neil Meyer, and the former editor in chief was the undersigned. The chairman's remarks, as published in *Sword and Shield*, are reprinted here in full.

Failed Runners: Chairman's Remarks

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?—Galatians 5:7

Sadly, Reformed Believers Publishing had two defectors this past year that must be mentioned. One is Neil Meyer, who faithlessly deserted his post on the board. The other is Rev. Andy Lanning, who resigned his post as editor in chief of *Sword and Shield*.

Our meeting tonight would not be complete without saying a few words regarding Reverend Lanning. He was one of our founding champions, and he was instrumental in our reclaiming of the pure gospel of particular, sovereign grace and the truth of the unconditional covenant. We are thankful for his past leadership and instruction in the truth. God used him wonderfully to help so many of us come to a renewed understanding of the pure gospel.

His departure is a grief to us. We marvel at the devil, that the devil sidetracked Reverend Lanning, so that Reverend Lanning defected from such an important post and is now become useless in the battle for the gospel of sovereign grace and the unconditional covenant—the very cause for which *Sword and Shield* and Reformed Believers Publishing began. In this connection we do not reject his articles or instruction in the truth that he gave on the pages of *Sword and Shield* while he was editor in chief. His articles can be read with great spiritual profit, and we recognize that God used him mightily in behalf of the recovery of the gospel of sovereign grace in our midst.

Even though Reverend Lanning has left us, thankfully, by God's grace, *Sword and Shield* has not skipped a beat in its content. The Lord has blessed us with a new, very capable editor in chief and even with additional capable writers. It is still just as exciting to get another issue of *Sword and Shield* in our mailboxes each month. In fact, I want to say that every issue is better than the previous one. We are grateful that the Lord has helped us and given to us the ability to continue in this witness to his truth.¹

About the chairman's remarks, a few observations. First, the chairman confused serving on the board of Reformed Believers Publishing with serving in office in the church of Jesus Christ. Mr. Neil Meyer resigned from the board of RBP. Since membership on the board of RBP is voluntary, Mr. Meyer had every right to resign from

¹ Henry Kamps, "Failed Runners: Chairman's Remarks," *Sword and Shield* 4, no. 8 (December 15, 2023): 21.

the board for any reason that he saw fit. But the chairman described Mr. Meyer's resignation using language from the Church Order regarding office in the church: faithless desertion.² It is impossible for a man faithlessly to desert board membership in RBP. Even if a man would resign from the board for reasons that every member of RBP would object to, still, the most that could be said of that man would be that he resigned his board membership.

But the chairman was and is confused. The chairman equates resigning board membership with faithlessly deserting one's office in Christ's kingdom. The chairman imagines that board membership, and being editor in chief, for that matter, are official posts in Christ's kingdom. Posts that are "important." Posts so important that if a man leaves them, he becomes "useless in the battle for the gospel of sovereign grace and the unconditional covenant," though the man remains a minister of the gospel or an elder in the church.

The chairman's confusion about board membership and office in Christ's church is ominous for Reformed Believers Publishing. It reveals that the chairman views RBP as a little kingdom that is analogous to the kingdom of Christ. But RBP is an association of men. An association of men can only be made into the kingdom of Christ by usurping the rule of Jesus Christ to suit the will and good pleasure of men. Let members of Reformed Believers Publishing take heed what your chairman makes RBP do to Christ.

Second, the chairman's contempt for Mr. Meyer is astonishing. The chairman chucked Mr. Meyer in the ditch without a backward glance. This is reprehensible for the chairman of an association that prides itself on being a brave champion of the truth. RBP congratulates itself on its firm stand for the unconditional covenant of grace and God's sovereignty in salvation, but today's RBP can barely get a dozen words past its lips regarding the man who stood alone for that truth before RBP even got off the ground. Where were all the great lovers of the truth for

all those years when Mr. Meyer was being savaged by the Protestant Reformed Churches as an antinomian? Where were all the courageous warriors of God when Mr. Meyer—alone but for his wife and also but for his Lord—was dying for the cause of the gospel? Wherever we were, we certainly were not banging our swords on our shields and going out to die with Mr. Meyer. Most of us—if not every last one of us—were sleeping and even hiding. Now that the Reformed Protestant Churches have joined their mother in killing the one man who stood alone against the tide of the entire Protestant Reformed denomination, the most that Reformed Believers Publishing can be bothered to say about Mr. Meyer is that he "faithlessly deserted his post on the board." It would have been better for the chairman to say nothing at all about Mr. Meyer. Every member of RBP who ever cried bitter tears about what you did to Mr. Neil Meyer while you were members of the Protestant Reformed Churches, you have been exposed as hypocrites. Your tears are now shown to be false. May God make you ashamed. And may God turn you, if there be yet a season of turning.

Third, the chairman revealed the hypocritical spirit of the scribes and the Pharisees that our Lord condemned in Matthew 23. The chairman stood as the most pious of Pharisees and engaged in the most ridiculous charade of building the tomb of the prophet that his magazine had just helped brutalize. The sheer audacity of the hypocrisy beggars belief. Standing before the tomb of Lanning—Lanning having been slain in cold blood by the Reformed Protestant Churches with the vigorous and heartfelt approval of *Sword and Shield*—the chairman of Reformed Believers Publishing spoke glowing words about Lanning. With great skill the chairman built a fine tomb for Lanning to lie in. Lanning was "one of our founding champions." Lanning "was instrumental in our reclaiming of the pure gospel." With cloying flattery the chairman garnished Lanning's tomb with pretty garlands. RBP is so very thankful for Lanning's "past leadership and instruction in the truth." RBP will

² See Church Order 80.

surely remember Lanning fondly as they read his past articles “with great spiritual profit.” The chairman even watered Lanning’s tomb with feigned grief over Lanning’s untimely demise. What a performance it was! If only every dead prophet could receive such a lovely funeral from the thieves and robbers who murdered him!

But the chairman’s performance was a sham. What gives the chairman’s performance away as a sham is that the chairman would not so much as mention the doctrinal issue for which the undersigned was lynched by the chairman’s magazine and butchered by the chairman’s churches. The doctrinal issue was nothing less than the proper worship of God in the church of God according to the command of God in God’s scriptures and according to the sound doctrine of God set forth in the Reformed confessions. The doctrinal issue was nothing less than the church of Christ singing the songs of Christ with Christ their head by the Spirit of Christ in gratitude for Christ in harmony with the example of Christ and according to the command of Christ by Christ’s apostle. The chairman waved all that away as Lanning’s getting “sidetracked.”

Sidetracked? Since when is the worship of God a sidetrack? The worship of God is the very purpose of our salvation (see II Kings 17:35–36).

Sidetracked? Since when is the regulative principle of singing a sidetrack? The regulative principle is the second commandment of God’s law (see Lord’s Day 35).

Sidetracked? Since when is singing the psalms in church a sidetrack? Singing psalms in church was the institution of Jesus (see Matt. 26:30) and the command of the apostle (Col. 3:16).

Sidetracked? Since when is the gospel of Christ’s perfect worship of God on behalf of his church a sidetrack? Christ’s perfect worship of God on the church’s behalf is the basis of, reason for, and power of the church’s grateful worship of God (see Ps. 27:4).

What the chairman really meant by “sidetracked” is that Lanning brought a word of God that was not according to the will and good pleasure of some men in the Reformed Protestant

Churches. It was not well pleasing to some men in the RPC to hear that they might have a golden calf. It was not convenient to some men in the RPC to consider that they and their fathers before them might have sinned from their youth. And anything that is not well pleasing to these men—even though it is well pleasing to God—must be relegated to a sidetrack.

So the Reformed Protestant Churches slew God’s prophet, with the enthusiastic support and exceedingly eager cooperation of *Sword and Shield*. And when a few months had passed and the dust had settled a bit and some of the people started to remember that a prophet had once been in their midst, Reformed Believers Publishing was there to have a nice little memorial service for him. They could finally build a beautiful tomb in which to memorialize—and seal off—Lanning. Having murdered him, they now had the brazen gall to chisel the epitaph upon his tombstone: “God used him mightily in behalf of the recovery of the gospel of sovereign grace in our midst.”

A skilled and imaginative author could not have scripted a more blatant modern-day example of what our Lord meant when he said, “Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets” (Matt. 23:31). Members of Reformed Believers Publishing assure themselves that if they had been in the days of 1924 and 1953, they would have stood for sovereign, particular grace. Members of RBP assure themselves that if they had been in the days of 1924, they would not have been partakers with the Christian Reformed Church in the blood of Herman Hoeksema. But God gave the Reformed Protestant Churches—and Reformed Believers Publishing—a prophet of their own. Though he was but a shadow of a shadow of other theological giants, he spoke the word of God. And what did Reformed Believers Publishing do with him? They partook in his blood and then built him a fine tomb.

Members of Reformed Believers Publishing, turn from your hypocrisy. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

And for the rest, the Lord rebuke thee.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be

witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt. 23:29–33)

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

June 12, 1919

(Pp. 374–75)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article XXXVI. The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)

The history of the first world and the destruction is very instructive, even for our own time, and for the position of the children of the kingdom in the midst of the world in the present day.

The time of the destruction of that predeluvian world was the moment when the measure of iniquity had become full and the seed of the woman had diminished in number of representatives on earth till they were found exclusively in the family of Noah. Even as it will be, according to the clear teaching of Scripture, in the time of the end of this dispensation. The measure of iniquity must be filled, of course, also in this dispensation, the world must become ripe for judgment, before the judgment itself can come. Antichrist must have reached the height of his development. On the other hand, also at the end of this present world the condition of the children of the kingdom will be such, that it will require the personal appearance of the king to prove that they are really victorious. Scripture testifies that they will be few in number, and that their condition will be most precarious. So untenable their position will be, that unless the

days were shortened even the elect would not persevere. In this respect, then, the end of the first world is typical of the end of this dispensation. We will refer to this truth again. I mention it now to warn against the post-millennial and humanistic idea, as if in this dispensation the cause of Christ will have an outward victory by gradual development, before the parousia.

What is of greater importance, however, for our present time is to trace the historical cause that so quickly led the first world to this ultimate condition that demanded the judgment of the deluge. We have already pointed out that in the predeluvian period there was a more unrestrained flow of the outward blessings of the covenant also upon the seed of the serpent, a fact which naturally caused the seed of sin to develop very quickly. But this fact alone does not account for the ultimate condition of the first world. For the question would naturally arise: granted, that the seed of the serpent developed very luxuriantly under the influence of these outward blessings, the fact remains that also the seed of the woman must have developed under the same influence; how, then, must we account for the

fact that there were but so few of that seed of the covenant left at the time the deluge terminated the history of that first world? Also this question is answered for us in Scripture, and that in the one sentence: “the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose.” Or if you please, in one word, amalgamation was the cause of the decline of the seed of the woman.

What do we mean by amalgamation?

This is a most interesting question. It presents a problem that keeps many a mind busy among us, as may be inferred even from a single glance at the headlines in some of our papers. Subjects as “Wij en de Wereld,” “Isolatie en Separatie,” “Separatisme” etc. all refer directly or indirectly to the problem that is implied in the question: what is meant by amalgamation? That so many minds keep themselves busy with this one question already suggests that it must be both a difficult and a most significant problem, upon the solution of which, especially in our present time, much depends. And thus it is, indeed. Our answer to this question determines our relation to the world and in the midst of the world. It decides whether we shall be in the world and yet not of the world; or whether we shall refuse both to be of the world but also to be in the world; or whether we shall be both in the world and of the world. All three possibilities exist. All three possibilities are consciously or less consciously advocated. And yet but one of these possibilities is in harmony with Scripture: we must be in the world and yet not of the world. It decides whether we shall assume the attitude of the humanist of our day, and be of the world; or whether we shall assume the attitude of the anabaptist and be not in the world; or whether we shall assume the attitude of the Calvinist and maintain that all the world is ours and of our Christ. Such is the principle that lies back of the question: what do we mean by amalgamation?

But also practically the proper answer to this question is of great importance. In the light of what we said above this might be regarded a

truism, since whatever is of importance principally must be of importance from a practical point of view. Those that emphasize practice at the expense of principle are not conscious of what they are doing. But even so, our attention may well be called to the fact, that the question concerning “amalgamation” has not only value with a view to principle, but also with a respect to our practical life and the position in the world. It determines whether we shall have the courage to be a peculiar people in the Scriptural sense of the word in every sphere of life, or whether we shall surrender ourselves and adopt the platform of the world. It is here that our problem of the christian school, of the christian labor alliance, of all our christian action finds its root. For would we be in the world and of the world we must have no christian school, no christian labor alliance, we must not reveal any distinctive principle in any sphere of life, we must shout along with the masses, with the majority. Would we be neither of the world nor in the world, we ought to have neither school nor labor alliance whatever, nor try to exert any influence in any sphere of life. We must be nothing. But would we be in the world and yet not of the world we must have christian schools, the principal of the christian labor alliance was undoubtedly correct, and the synod of 1916 made a mistake when it refused to express this principle. But, however this may be, fact is that all these practical movements have to do with the question: what is amalgamation?

The word itself is, perhaps, understood by all of us. It simply denotes the mixing or compounding of different elements. Thus you can amalgamate one metal with another, you can speak of amalgamation of different peoples and races. The American nation, for instance, is the product of such an amalgamation of different nations. Amalgamation, then, literally denotes the operation or process of blending different elements into one.

In the spiritual sense it denotes, of course, the blending and mixing of the people of God with the world. But it is exactly this last sentence that requires explanation.

And, then, we wish to emphasize in the first place that amalgamation is not identical with the maintenance of principle and the exertion of our influence for every sphere of life. The children of Seth would not have become guilty of amalgamation if they also had built cities, invented organs and harps, worked in iron and brass and explored different parts of the world. In a word, they would have made no mistake had they caused their influence to be felt, or if this were impossible, had they expressed and maintained their principle for every sphere of life. Neither does a child of the kingdom of our own day amalgamate if he fights to manifest himself in every sphere of the life of the world. This is even his plain calling. In business and industry, in science and art, in state and society the subject of God's kingdom must not be found wanting, in order to simply secede into the narrower sphere of the church proper. Then he would have to go out of the world, while it is his calling to be right in it. And, therefore, when we would learn the lesson from the history of the predeluvian period that we must not amalgamate, we would not for a moment advocate such a position.

The christian is no Nazarite! He does not flee into the desert! He is not afraid of life! He is not afraid to cast himself right in the midst of the life of the world. On the contrary. In the midst of the world he claims to be its light! He says that he knows it all. He maintains that if the world will only listen to him she would be saved! To be in the world is no amalgamation.

Neither is the child of the kingdom afraid to come into contact with the children of the world. He is not afraid to rub elbows. Also this must be understood very clearly. Not he is a separatist. Amalgamation is not identical with mere contact with the children of the world and their principle. If this were the case, separation in the literal and local sense would be the principle of the children of the kingdom. They would have to avoid timidly every contact with the "seed of the serpent." And it must be most positively maintained that this is not the case. We are not afraid of contact with the children of the world, but the

world is afraid of contact with us. Not we are the separatists but the children of the world are! This we must maintain also with regard to our christian schools, with regard to our christian labor alliance, with regard to our christian action in every sphere of life. You may think that it sounds paradoxical, but I maintain most positively, that our christian schools do not separate themselves from the public schools, but the public school separates itself from us! In our christian schools the true principle of education is maintained. They stand on a true and sound basis. These christian schools are open to any child. We refuse no children. Any child of the world can send its children to our schools. And if the children of the world refuse to have their children educated along the positive line of the covenant, you must never admit that we separate ourselves from them, but that they are the separatist is the truth! The same principle must be most positively maintained in regard to the union question. In the christian labor alliance the true principle is maintained, not in the worldly labor union. These christian labor alliances open their doors to anyone that will subscribe to its constitution. And they should never grant that they themselves are separatistic, but maintain that the general labor union separates while they, the christian alliances, maintain the positive line. I say once more, you may think that this is paradoxical, for the simple reason that the overwhelming majority is against us. But never forget that in the time of Noah it was the same thing. Millions and millions of people laughed at Noah. He built his ark. He preached repentance. He told the people that they were separatists if they did not come into his ark. But they mocked, till Noah was justified in the flood. Not Noah was the separatist, but the whole world was. And, therefore, amalgamation is not identical with mere contact. The christian is not afraid to deal with any child of the world, nor with all of them together.

But spiritual amalgamation consists in this, that the child of the kingdom surrenders his own principle, wholly or in part, leaves his own basis,

in order to adopt the platform of the world. Most generally the process along which this is brought about will be thus, that it may seem at first as if a compromise were possible. There is a liking for the truth in both the life-view of the world and the life-view of the children of the kingdom, and an attempt to mix the good elements in both. But in principle, this already constitutes a surrender on the part of the

subject of the kingdom. And the actual result will be, that the child of the kingdom disappears in the midst of the world.

As I heard it the other day, it is the story of the cat and the mouse. The cat says to the mouse: “Don’t be such a little mouse. Become part of the cat! That’s much bigger!”

—Holland, Mich.

