

Supralapsarianism and the Free Offer of the Gospel.

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What theological convictions have led some to espouse a hyper-Calvinistic position as to the free offer of the Gospel? Does supralapsarianism necessarily contribute to this viewpoint?

Though the second question is posed secondarily and subsequent to the first, I will take it as indeed more foundational to the first. It is my contention that in explicating this question, one will discover some of the reasons why some “Reformed” theologians have come to deny the well-meant offer of the gospel, otherwise known as the free offer of the gospel. The aim of this third position paper will be to delineate or define what is considered classic supralapsarianism and contrast that with the very modern and innovative supralapsarianism of Herman Hoeksema. The aim will, therefore, be to show that while it is not true that classic supralapsarianism necessarily leads to a denial of the free offer, the modern version of it as taught by Herman Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Churches of America (PRC) does. The aim of this paper will be to demonstrate the unorthodoxy of Hoeksema’s supralapsarianism and that of his denomination.

The order then, will be to define supralapsarianism, identifying its key components and advocates as understood in classical Reformed theology. After highlighting some key areas in which classical supralapsarianism has points of continuity with classical infralapsarianism, I will seek to demonstrate how on these key points, the supralapsarianism of Hoeksema is a departure of great import from the orthodox position. From this it will be self-evident that the supralapsarianism of Hoeksema (and certain others) does necessarily lead to hypercalvinism. The elements of discontinuity between classic supralapsarianism and Hoeksema’s supralapsarianism will then form the theological basis of his denial of the free offer of the gospel, which is to answer the question, *what theological convictions have led some to espouse a hyper-Calvinistic position as to the free offer of the Gospel?* The answer to that will be self-evident.

What is Supralapsarianism and how does it differ with Infralapsarianism?

No doubt, one of the best treatments of the *ordo decretorum* Dei (the order of the decrees of God) comes from B.B. Warfield’s *The Plan of Salvation*.¹ Supralapsarianism is the idea that in the logic of the ordering of the decrees of God, with respect to creation, election, reprobation and the deliberation to send Christ to die for the chosen, the decree to elect and reprobate precedes the decree to create and to permit the Fall. Thus the ordering in the supralapsarian schema appears as follows: Election of some to eternal life with God, Permission of the Fall, the gift of Christ to redeem the elect and ground the offer to all.² The infralapsarian ordering is as follows: Permission of Fall, Election of some to life in Christ, Gift of Christ to redeem his elect and to ground the offer to all.³ Warfield’s schemas are helpful, but they have some weaknesses. There are, I think, two deficits in Warfield’s: 1) he does not make explicit, when it ought to have been, the decree to create. Warfield merely subsumes it under the decree to permit the Fall; 2) The schema does not locate the decree of reprobation in the ordering of either the infralapsarian or supralapsarian schemas. The issue of reprobation is a major problem for supralapsarianism, as the ordering, simply considered, does seem to imply that reprobation is irrespective of sin considered in the logic of the decrees. Thus, it would appear that men are reprobated absolutely irrespective of sin, foreknown or decreed. The paper will come back to this point later.⁴ Generally speaking, then, the supralapsarian ordering has God electing (and passing by) some men to eternal life in Christ, then decreeing to create and permit the Fall of mankind, and then the decree to send Christ to die for those elected.

Who were the Supralapsarians and Infralapsarians?

¹B.B., Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984). C.f., Berkhof’s discussion in his *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1984), pp., 118-125.

²Warfield, taken from his chart on p., 31.

³Ibid.

⁴Briefly stated, the problem hinges on the grounds of precondemnation also known as predamnation. The classic supralapsarian rightly affirmed that predamnation was on account of sin, while preterition was sovereign and unconditional. These points agree with the infralapsarian understanding of reprobation. But then the question comes to this, where does one place predamnation in the ordering of the decrees?

Berkhof lists as supralapsarians, Beza, Gomarus, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Zanchius, Ursinus, Perkins, Twisse, Trigland, Voetius, Burmanus, Witsius and Comrie⁵. Added to this should be such as John Gill, Arthur Pink, Herman Hoeksema, G.H. Kersten and Gordon Clark. The Infralapsarians were, says Berkhof, Rivet, Walaeus, Maastricht, Turretin, a⁷ Mark, and de Moor.⁶ I cite these names in order to establish a base line of comparison, for it is from this baseline that I want to demonstrate the departure of Herman Hoeksema in his formulation of supralapsarianism.

What are the points of contact between Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism?

Some of the points of contact, or lines of continuity, between the two systems are more explicit than others. The first major line of continuity between the two systems has to be the Doctrine of God's goodness. Both systems saw God as essentially and naturally good. God is naturally inclined to deal bountifully with mankind. This natural goodness is not denied on account of God's sovereign election. For example, while God, in terms of his decretive will, determines the spiritual destiny of all men, his revealed will (otherwise known as his preceptive or signified will) is an expression of his essential goodness and natural disposition to do good, to love, and to be merciful to all men. Here is where one can see these baseline concepts of supralapsarianism. For example, assuming Berkhof's list to be accurate, it can be easily demonstrated that supralapsarians saw no need to deny God's general love to all men.⁷ Ursinus, for example:

⁵Berkhof, p., 118. That Berkhof cites Zanchius in this company baffles me. For it is beyond doubt that in his *Absolute Predestination* his terminology and theology is explicitly infralapsarian.

⁶Ibid.

⁷It is noted and admitted that there is a problem of locating extant English translations of supralapsarian works, for they are few and far between. I will, therefore, assume certain points of continuity. By this I mean I will rest on the assumption of silence. It can easily be demonstrated that the noted infralapsarians freely taught that God loves all men, and is naturally well-disposed to all men. The documentation of this fact is undeniable and overwhelming. It is hard to imagine that the orthodox supralapsarians differed from the infralapsarians on this point and yet the issue never surfaced as a point of contention between the opposing lapsarian advocates. Therefore, the burden of proof is on those who deny that God loves all men to document this claim from the Orthodox Reformed.

Calvin for example:

But I will content myself with dwelling on one point only, and let that suffice. Proofs of the love of God towards the whole human race exists innumerable, all of which demonstrate the ingratitude of those who perish or come "to perdition." This fact, however, forms no reason whatever why God should not confine his special or peculiar love to a few, whom he has, in infinite condescension, been pleased to choose out of the rest.

John Calvin, *The Secret Providence of God*, published in *Calvin's Calvinism*, (Grand Rapids, Mi: Reformed Free Publishing Association, n.d), p., 268. The irony here is that this book is now published by the Protestant Reformed Churches of America.

John Owen:

That God is *good to all men*, and bountiful, being a wise, powerful, liberal provider for the works of his hands, in and by innumerable dispensations and various communications of his goodness to them, and may in that regard be said to have a universal love for them, is granted; but that God loveth all and every man alike, with that eternal love which is the fountain of his giving Christ for them, and to them, and all good things with him, is not in the least intimated by any of those places of Scripture where they are expressed for whom Christ died, as elsewhere hath been abundantly manifest.

John Owen, *Vindiciae Evangelicae or The Mystery of the Gospel Vindicated and Socinianism Examined*, in Works, vol 12, p, 552. And Owen again:

God is said to be bountiful; 1. Because he creates and preserves all things. 2. Because he confers benefits upon all, even upon the wicked. 3. Because of his free and boundless love which he exercises towards his creatures, especially to man. 4. Because of his love which he cherished towards his church, and in giving eternal life and glory to his people.⁸

Ursinus is also freely able to say that God is “more inclined to mercy than to wrath.”⁹ Further, he also says that God extends “great clemency, for instance, to the reprobate, for he defers the punishment which they deserve, that he wills the salvation of all men insofar as he rejoices in the salvation of all men,¹⁰ and that “he invites them to repentance by strong and powerful motives.”¹¹ What is more, Ursinus is willing to say that God “does not rejoice in the destruction of man, but would rather that he be saved.”¹² In all this, Ursinus echoes the same themes found in the writings of the Infralapsarians.¹³

Witsius, too, is able to express the same idea regarding God’s general love to mankind. When speaking of God’s provision to the elect, in the Lord’s Prayer, he is able to say:

When he bestows all those things on believers, not from the ordinary love which he bears to mankind, but from the Fatherly love which he regards them in Christ.¹⁴

From the doctrine of God’s goodness and love to all men as men, it must be assumed that the supralapsarians were able to consider that at some point in the divine mind, God can and does consider man undifferentiated in Adam. Naturally, this seems to run counter to the supralapsarian idea that differentiation occurs at the outset of God’s logical consideration of the elect and non-elect. This undifferentiation is echoed in the “same lump” Paul speaks of, from out of which, some are elected to life and some are ordained to condemnation. Indeed, even in the 20th C, supralapsarian G.H. Kersten, we see, side by side with his supralapsarianism, his affirmation of common grace, general mercy and general longsuffering.¹⁵ Kersten is also able to affirm,

Love toward all mankind in general we acknowledge to be required of us, and we are debtors in the fruits of it to the whole creation of God: for he hath not only implanted the principles of it in that nature whereof we are in common partakers with the whole race and kind, whereunto all hatred and its effects were originally foreign, and introduced by the devil, nor only given us his command for it, enlarging on its grounds and reasons in the gospel; but in his design of recovering us out of our lapsed condition unto a conformity with himself, proposeth in an especial manner the example of his own love and goodness, which are extended unto all, for our imitation, Matthew 5:44, 45. His philanthropy and communicative love, from his own infinite self-fullness, wherewith all creatures, in all places, times, and seasons, are filled and satisfied, as from an immeasurable ocean of goodness, are proposed unto us to direct the exercise of that drop from the divine nature wherewith we are intrusted. *Works*, vol 15, p., 70.

⁸Zacharius Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharius Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (New Jersey: P&R, 1994), p., 126.

⁹Ibid., p., 81.

¹⁰Ibid., p., 294.

¹¹Ibid., p., 69.

¹²Ibid., p., 70. The PRC, it should be noted, deny, expressly, that God in any way wills the salvation of all men. To them, such an idea is nothing more than disguised Arminianism.

¹³For example, c.f., Turretin’s *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (New Jersey: P&R, 1992), vol 1, p 241, and Wilhelmus a’ Brakel’s *Reasonable Service*, (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992) vol 1, pp., 122-127. It is beyond the range of this paper to document point for point the continuities between the classic supralapsarians and the infralapsarians.

¹⁴Herman Witsius, *The Lord’s Prayer* (Escondido, California: Den Dulk Foundation, 1994), p., 278.

¹⁵G.H. Kersten, *Reformed Dogmatics*, (USA: Netherlands Reformed Book and Publishing Committee, 1994), vol 1., pp., 78-82.

Neither does the decree of reprobation conflict with the earnest and sincere invitation of salvation to sinners, as it takes place in the preaching of the Gospel... The invitation of God in the Gospel is true, even though God decrees to withdraw his grace of repentance from the reprobate.¹⁶

The next point for consideration is the supralapsarian doctrine of Reprobation. Stated simply, the issue is, what are the grounds of Reprobation? In Orthodox Reformed Theology, Reprobation consists of two parts, unconditional preterition, and conditional predamnation. To a man, the Orthodox Reformed affirmed that while preterition is an unconditional sovereign act of God, not grounded in the actions, decreed or foreknown, of men, predamnation is always grounded in the foreknown and decreed sin. The Reprobate are only ever damned on account of their sin, and the predamnation decree images this conditionality. Here the orthodox supralapsarians affirmed, in full accord with the Synod of Dort, that God decrees to damn the reprobate on account of sins. Gomarus, for example, affirmed that ‘no one taught that God rejected man absolutely without regard to man’s sin.’¹⁷ Indeed, the Synod of Dort expressly rejects:

That God, by a mere arbitrary act of his will, without the least respect or view to any sin, has predestinated the greatest part of the world to eternal damnation, and has created them for this very purpose; that in the same manner in which the election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety.¹⁸

Dort also expressly states that the *decree* to dam is on *account* of sin:

What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is the express testimony of sacred Scripture that not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of His sovereign, most just, irreprehensible, and unchangeable good pleasure, has *decreed* to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but, permitting them in His just judgment to follow their own ways, at last, for the declaration of His justice, *to condemn* and *punish* them forever, not only *on account* of their unbelief, but also *for all their other sins*. And this is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the Author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares Him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous Judge and Avenger thereof.¹⁹

Gomarus and other supralapsarians at Dort expressed a complete unity of opinion in this matter. And yet in direct opposition to this, the theologians of the Protestant Reformed Churches expressly assert that the predamnation decree is an equally unconditional act of God. Homer C. Hoeksema:

God decreed to damn them and to punish them forever. Notice, too, that the phrases, “not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins,” does not modify the verb ‘hath decreed,’ but modifies the infinitives, “to damn and to punish.”²⁰

And again he says:

...it must be carefully understood. The Canons really view this attribute of the righteousness of Reprobation not from the point of view of the righteousness of the act of sovereignly decreeing, but from the point of view of the righteousness of the contents of the decree of reprobation... But do not forget that this is not a judicial

¹⁶Ibid. Vol 1., p., 141.

¹⁷Cited by Simon Kistemaker, in *Crisis in the Reformed Churches* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Reformed Fellowship, 1968), pp., 43-43.

¹⁸From the Conclusion.

¹⁹First Head of Doctrine, Art., 15. [Emph., mine.]

²⁰Homer C. Hoeksema, *The Voice of our Fathers*, (Grand Rapids, Mi: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1980), p., 237.

reason for God's sovereign decree as such: for then the decree would be no more sovereign. But it is a judicial reason for the contents of the decree, namely that they should be left in common misery... That they are damned and punished both on account of "their unbelief, but also for all their other sins." Here it is of crucial importance once more that we clearly understand that this is not a judicial ground for the sovereign decree, but a judicial ground for the contents of that decree.²¹

Later he says: "God is absolutely sovereign from the beginning to end in the salvation of the elect and in the damnation of the reprobate."²² His father, Herman Hoeksema had earlier said: "As to reprobation, there is no verb that expresses directly the notion of sovereign eternal rejection *unto* damnation."²³ The PRC expressly reject the usual depiction by the Reformed that in regard to unconditional election, God elects as absolute sovereign, but in regard to predamnation, God only predamns as righteous Judge, never as absolute sovereign.

The PRC exhibits great confusion here. Every Orthodox Reformed theologian affirmed that if it is asked "why has God reprobated this man and not that man," the only answer can be "the sovereign pleasure of God." But if it is now asked, "on what grounds does God predamn this particular man," the answer can only be grounded in that particular man's sin and unbelief.²⁴ The decree to predamn is always conditioned by the sin of man, and this has always been the Reformed position. For example a' Brakel says, "Sin is the only reason God has decreed to damn specific individuals."²⁵

The next departure from orthodox supralapsarianism is the PRC's denial of permission of sin. Simply stated, at the bottom of every orthodox Reformed discussion of God's ordination of sin, God never immediately or effectively or efficiently causes sin, but only willingly permits sin. It is granted that he guides and governs sin, but in the final analysis he never efficiently causes it, but only willingly permits it. Beza:

If by the word permission is meant this distinction (to wit, since God does not act in evil, but gives them up to Satan and their own lusts) that I repudiate not in the least. But if permission is opposed to will, this I reject as false and absurd; its falsity appearing from this, that if God unwillingly permits anything, he is not certainly God, i.e., Almighty; but if he is said to permit anything as not caring, how much do we differ from Epicureanism? It remains, there fore, that he willingly permits what he permits. Will then is not opposed to permission.²⁶

And yet once again, Herman Hoeksema, as with his son Homer C, expressly repudiates the idea that God in anyway permits sin. He says:

We realise, of course, that the motive of speaking of God's permission rather than his determined will in regard to sin and the evil deeds of men is that God may never be presented as the author of sin. But this purpose is not reached by speaking of God's permission or his permissive will: for if the Almighty permits what he could just as well have prevented, it is from an ethical viewpoint the same as if he had committed it himself. But in this way we lose God and his sovereignty: for permission presupposes the idea that there is a power which God that can produce and do something apart from him, but which is simply permitted by God to act and operate.

²¹Ibid., p., 241.

²²Ibid., p., 500.

²³Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966), p., 161. [Emphasis mine.]

²⁴Consult Heinrich Heppe's *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Baker, 1950), pp 182-184 and surrounding discussion.

²⁵a' Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, vol 1, p., 221.

²⁶Theodore Beza, *A Little Book of Christian Questions and Responses*, Q. 179 [trans. K.M. Summers, 1986], pp. 72-73, cited from Turretin's *Institutes*, vol 1, p., 517. C.f. Ursinus, pp., 51 and 151, and Calvin's *Institutes*, 1.14.17; 1.16.8; 1.18.1-2; 2.4.1-5; and 3.23.7.

This is dualism, and it annihilates the complete and absolute sovereignty of God.²⁷

The significance of this can be noted when it is realised that for Hoeksema, God's causation of sin, is a "straight course," in that in this 'straight course' of God's providence, the sins of satan and men are but means to an end.²⁸ In this light, the fall is a means to the realisation of the purpose of election and reprobation.²⁹ In opposition to this straightline causation of sin, Bavinck affirms that we must not posit a straightline causation of history.³⁰ The implication of this in terms of Hoeksema's theology are startling. If God never permits sin, but causes sin in a straightline manner, how is God not the Author of sin? Hoeksema just avoids the consequences of this.

The next point of consideration takes us back to the first. As noted in the discussion of God's love and goodness to all men, it is implied, even in the orthodox supralapsarian schema, there is a point where God can and does consider man as undifferentiated in Adam. God loves man as man, as his image bearer. As already noted, this concept echoes Romans 9:21, where Paul says, from the same lump "ek. tou autou. phuramatos" he makes some to honour and some to dishonour.³¹ Yet, in the light of this verse, this election out of a common mass, the question may be rightly asked, "if election is out of something pre-existent, how does this comport with the supralapsarian point that election and reprobation denote a differentiation before the undifferentiated commonality of our collective creation in Adam?"

Hoeksema is not insensitive to this problem. But his answer is quite potent. First, he details the problem:

Against this presentation [i.e., his presentation of supralapsarianism] it has been objected that the word *election* is a translation of the Greek *eklegein*, which really means "to chose out." From this it is argued that if it shall be possible to speak of election or of choosing out, the multitude out of which the choice is made must be presupposed to exist. Applied to eternal election, this would mean the multitude of men out of which God elects his people must precede, in the decree, election, itself. And therefore it is concluded that the decree of creation and the permission of the fall certainly must precede the counsel of God's decree to predestination.³²

Now to this, his answer is:

And regarding the reasoning from the word *eklegein*, we may say that it rests on a misunderstanding. This misunderstanding consists in this, that one applies to God what is applicable only to men. When men elect, nothing comes into existence thereby. Only a distinction and separation is made. Hence when men choose, that out of which the choice is made must come first. But with God, this is exactly the opposite. With him election is causal, creative, divine. It is the same as the distinction between the divine Word and the human. God's Word is creative. That Word is first. And the same that comes into existence though the Word follows. The word of man can only be an imitation of the Word of God. Before man can ever speak, the created thing must first have come into existence. The same is true of election. When God in his decree *chooses out*, then through that decree the differentiation, or the differentiated multitude, comes into existence. In other words, the election of God is first of all fore-ordained unto salvation and to the glory of the covenant life in Christ.³³

²⁷Herman Hoeksema, *RD*, p., 158 This is the same position of Gordon Clark, see his *Religion, Reason and Revelation* (Maryland: Trinity Foundation, 1986), p., 204-206. The claim that permission does not remove God from the ethical dilemma is demolished, unequivocally, when one simply notes that at no point is God *obligated* to prevent sin and evil. If Hoeksema and Clark are right here, then how could it not follow that God must save all men? For salvation is the highest expression of prevention of evil! If they are right, then grace could no longer be grace, but obligation to an ethical debt. Their claims are naive, at best.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p., 239-240.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p., 262, 165,

³⁰Herman Bavinck *Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), p., 394.

³¹See also Jn 15:19 and 17:6.

³²Hoeksema, *RD*, p., 334.

³³*Ibid.*, p., 335.

This point is startling and bare. It is in direct opposition to what the Apostle Paul says. Thus, in Hoeksema's Supralapsarianism, at no point is man considered as an undifferentiated mass in Adam.

Finally, in regard, to the Gospel Offer, and inasmuch as it is an expression of the Gospel Call, for Hoeksema, it is restricted only to the elect. For the PRC, the external call is not general to all men, but merely the external outworking of the internal call.³⁴ Homer C. Hoeksema is painfully explicit when he notes that the Call of the Gospel is one call with two aspects. For him, the Reprobate are never properly called, for they only hear the sound of this calling, of which the elect are only ever the proper objects.³⁵ John Gerstner later modified his doctrine of the Calling of God, adopting this exact same idea.³⁶ And yet this is contrary to Orthodox Reformed theology. Kersten says, for example, that there is an external calling to all men, which is different from the internal call, and yet which exhibits the goodness of God and bestows upon many of the reprobate many gifts.³⁷

Now we are ready to bring all this together. Berkhof sums up Hoeksema's position well when he notes:

Another objection to the doctrine of common grace, is that it presupposes a certain favourable disposition in God even to reprobate sinners, while we have no right to assume such a disposition in God. This stricture takes its starting point in the eternal counsel of God, in his election and reprobation. Along the line of his election God reveals his love, grace, mercy and longsuffering, leading to salvation; and in the historical realisation of his reprobation he gives expression only to his aversion, disfavour, hatred and wrath, leading to destruction.³⁸

Berkhof has pinpointed the heart of the issue. If in the decretal ordering, God never at any logical point considers man as man, never as undifferentiated in Adam, and if divine causation of the events of the world works in a straightline manner, wherein sin and evil are merely straightforward means to an end, then it's most logical that the positive moral attributes of God be limited to the elect, that it is only of them that God wills salvation, that he is only favourably disposed towards, and only these does he invite to salvation. Hoeksema falls into the error of letting his "system" dominate his Biblical Theology. He errs when he will only allow men to be viewed by God in terms of their final ends. He errs when he refuses to allow that there is complexity even within the Godhead.³⁹ For as Turretin, Bavinck, and Berkhof well note, sin must be considered a real disruption to the created order. Furthermore, it must be noted that in terms of God's dispositions, God can be angry, even wrathful to the elect, and also, conversely, loving and well-disposed to the non-elect. To paraphrase Bavinck, 'there is, here on earth, a criss-cross of grace and wrath, of election and reprobation, whereupon the elect can be the objects of wrath and the non-elect can be the objects of grace and love.'⁴⁰ He can say this, because in some sense and in some manner, albeit inscrutable to us, God can continue see mankind as an undifferentiated mass in Adam. Hoeksema starts with a speculative decretal *a priori*, from which he spins out his web of an equally ultimate election and reprobation which ends in a fully articulated hypercalvinism.

Classic supralapsarianism was a system that was modified by a commitment to a balanced Biblical Theology. Their "systematic" theology was moderated by a more Biblical understanding of God's goodness. Classic supralapsarians took full cognizance of God's unwillingness to inflict suffering, for judgement was God's strange work. In contrary manner, Hoeksema is able to say that God only expresses a displeasure in the death of the elect or finally penitent sinner. While it is true that in no way does supralapsarianism necessarily lead to hypercalvinism, it does lay down the sufficient

³⁴Hoeksema *RD*, pp., 476-477.

³⁵Homer C. Hoeksema, *Voice.*, p., 491.

³⁶John Gerstner *Wrongly Dividing the Word of God* (Brentwood, Tenn: Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publ, 1991), pp., 119-120.

³⁷Kersten *RD*, vol 1, pp., 366-367. On this point, Kersten reflects the universal teaching of the Reformed in regard to the free offer of the gospel to all men, in that it is an expression of God's goodness and compassion to all to whom the offer comes.

³⁸Berkhof, p., 445.

³⁹C.f., Hosea 11:6.

⁴⁰Bavinck, p., 400.

preconditions for hypercalvinism. For it is unlikely that Hoekseman hypercalvinism⁴¹ could ever have developed apart from the conceptual background of supralapsarianism.⁴² Thus the opening questions can now be answered. All that is needed is a careful delineation of what is meant by supralapsarianism. Once that is detailed, the answer to the second question is self-evident, and the answer to the first is immediately explicated.

⁴¹Or any variety for that matter.

⁴²I know of only one hypercalvinist, personally, who professes to be an infralapsarian, and yet who self-consciously denies common grace and the free offer. I am convinced he does so because he is unaware of what is implied in infralapsarianism. That is, that God does and can, in some manner, consider man as an undifferentiated mass, which can be the object of his non-electing love. This Infralapsarian hypercalvinist has been influenced by Turretin's critique of supralapsarianism.

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