



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 19

AUGUST 16, 2025

*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.
—Psalm 27:5*

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And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it...And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount...And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount...As it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

—Exodus 25:1–9, 40; 26:30; 27:8

The Pattern of the Tabernacle

On top of Mount Sinai, God showed Moses the pattern of the tabernacle that Moses and the children of Israel were to build. And what a breathtaking tabernacle they would build! God showed Moses the vibrant colors: blue, purple, scarlet, and the radiant rainbow hues of the gemstones. God showed Moses the precious metals: gold, silver, and brass. God showed Moses the worthy fabrics: fine twined linen, sheepskin, goatskin, and the exotic seal-skin (the word *badger* seemingly being used in those days to describe the creature that we know today by the name *seal*). God showed Moses the lovely wood: shittim, that is, acacia hardwood. God showed Moses the special recipe for the oil of anointing and the forbidden blend of incense for burning. God showed Moses the boards and the sockets, the curtains and the couplings, the furniture and the vessels, the garments and the bells. And all in such exquisite detail! Five boards here, four golden rings there, loops of blue everywhere. Bars and bowls, spoons and censers, cubits and spans—all meticulously laid out by God and shown to Moses. What a wonderful tabernacle Moses would build!

Oh, it is more wonderful than we can fathom. For in the mountain God showed Moses heaven. The meaning of *pattern* is not *blueprint*, as though God showed Moses a lifeless blueprint from which he was to fashion a lovely tent. Rather, God told Moses to make the tabernacle “after the pattern of the tabernacle...which was shewed thee in the mount” because the tabernacle that God showed Moses in the mount was heaven itself. The tabernacle that Moses built on earth was the model of what he beheld in the mountain, and what he had seen in the mountain was heaven.

Oh, it is more wonderful yet than we can fathom. For the tabernacle that Moses built exactly reveals what heaven is like. The tabernacle was “the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:5). The tabernacle was “the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true” (9:24). The tabernacle was the model of what heaven looks like, so that, knowing the model, we know the reality.

And what does the model reveal? Not this, that heaven is measured cubit by cubit, is joined by mortise and tenon, or is gilded and bronzed. Rather this, that heaven is God’s sanctuary! That is, that God is pleased to make a place where his people might dwell with him. “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8).

How lovely is God’s sanctuary! How breathtaking! For it is his covenant with his people in Christ. “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:3).

—AL

THE CANONS OF DORDT

Translation Comparison: Head 2, Rejection of Errors

Corrected Translation	Current Translation	Original Latin
Rejection of Errors. The true doctrine having been explained, the synod rejects the errors of those:	The true doctrine having been explained, the Synod <i>rejects</i> the errors of those:	Rejectio Errorum, <i>Exposita doctrina orthodoxa, rejicit Synodus errores eorum:</i>
Error 1: Who teach that God the Father has ordained his Son to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save anyone expressly, so that the necessity, profitableness, and worth of what Christ accomplished by his death could have stood intact and in every respect perfect, complete and whole, even if the accomplished redemption had never in fact been applied to any individual.	Error 1: Who teach that God the Father has ordained His Son to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save any, so that the necessity, profitableness, and worth of what Christ merited by His death might have existed, and might remain in all its parts complete, perfect, and intact, even if the merited redemption had never in fact been applied to any person.	I. Qui docent, ‘Quod Deus Pater Filium suum in mortem crucis destinaverit, sine certo ac definito consilio quemquam nominatim salvandi, adeo ut impetrationi mortis Christi sua necessitas, utilitas, dignitas sarta tecta, et numeris suis perfecta, completa atque integra constare potuisset, etiamsi impetrata redemptio nulli individuo unquam actu ipso fuisset applicata.’ Hæc enim assertio in Dei Patris sapientiam meritumque Jesu Christi contumeliosa, et Scripturæ contraria est. Sic enim ait Servator: <i>Ego animam pono pro ovibus, et agnosco eas.</i> John 10:15, 27. Et de Servatore Esaias propheta: <i>Cum posuerit se sacrificium pro reatu, videbit semen, prolongabit dies, et voluntas Jehovæ in manu ejus prosperabitur.</i> Isa. 53:10.
Rejection: For this doctrine is an insult to the wisdom of the Father and to the merits of Jesus Christ, and is contrary to scripture. For thus saith our Savior: <i>I lay down my life for the sheep and I know them</i> (John 10:15, 27). And the prophet Isaiah saith concerning the Savior: <i>When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand</i> (Isa. 53:10).	Rejection: For this doctrine tends to the despising of the wisdom of the Father and of the merits of Jesus Christ, and is contrary to Scripture. For thus saith our Savior: <i>I lay down my life for the sheep, and I know them</i> (John 10:15, 27). And the prophet Isaiah saith concerning the Savior: <i>When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand</i> (Isa. 53:10).	Denique, articulum Fidei, quo Ecclesiam credimus, evertit.

Finally, this overthrows the article of faith according to which we believe the church.

Error 2: Who teach that it was not the purpose of the death of Christ that he should in actual fact establish the new covenant of grace through his blood, but only that he should acquire for the Father the mere right to enter once more into such a covenant with man as he might please, whether of grace or of works.

Rejection: For this is repugnant to scripture, which teaches that Christ has become the *surety of a better testament*, or covenant (Heb. 7:22), and *the mediator of the new testament* (Heb. 9:15); and that *a testament is of force after men are dead* (Heb. 9:17).

Error 3: Who teach that Christ, by his satisfaction, did not actually merit for anyone salvation itself, or the faith whereby this satisfaction of Christ is effectually applied unto salvation; but that he only acquired for the Father the full authority and discretion to deal with man again, and to prescribe such new conditions as he might wish, the fulfillment of which would depend on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill them.

Rejection: For these adjudge too contemptuously of the death of Christ, do in no wise acknowledge the most important fruit or benefit gained thereby, and summon again out of hell the Pelagian error.

Finally, this contradicts the article of faith according to which we believe the catholic Christian church.

Error 2: Who teach: That it was not the purpose of the death of Christ that He should confirm the new covenant of grace through His blood, but only that He should acquire for the Father the mere right to establish with man such a covenant as He might please, whether of grace or of works.

Rejection: For this is repugnant to Scripture, which teaches that Christ has become the Surety and Mediator of a better, that is, the new covenant, and that a testament is of force where death has occurred (Heb. 7:22; 9:15, 17).

Error 3: Who teach that Christ, by His satisfaction, merited neither salvation itself for anyone, nor faith, whereby this satisfaction of Christ unto salvation is effectually appropriated; but that He merited for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as He might desire, obedience to which, however, depended on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill these conditions.

Rejection: For these adjudge too contemptuously of the death of Christ, do in no wise acknowledge the most important fruit or benefit thereby gained, and bring again out of hell the Pelagian error.

II. Qui docent, 'Non fuisse hunc finem mortis Christi, ut novum gratiæ fœdus suo sanguine reipsa sanciret, sed tantum, ut nudum jus Patri acquireret, quodcunque fœdus, vel gratiæ, vel operum, cum hominibus denuo ineundi.' Hoc enim repugnat Scripturæ, quæ docet, Christum *melioris*, id est, novi *fœderis Sponsorem et Mediatorem factum esse*. Heb. 7:22. Et, *Testamentum in mortuis demum ratum esse*. Heb. 9:15, 17.

III. Qui docent, 'Christum per suam satisfactionem, nullis certo meruisse ipsam salutem et fidem, qua hæc Christi satisfactio ad salutem efficaciter applicetur, sed tantum Patri acquisivisse potestatem vel plenariam voluntatem, de novo cum hominibus agendi, et novas, quasunque vellet conditiones, præscribendi, quarum præstatio a libero hominis arbitrio pendeat, atque ideo fieri potuisse, ut vel nemo, vel omnes eas implerent.' Hi enim de morte Christi nimis abjecte sentiunt, primum fructum seu beneficium per eam partum nullatenus agnoscunt, et Pelagianum errorem ab inferis revocant.

Error 4: Who teach that the new covenant of grace, which God the Father made with man through the mediation of the death of Christ, does not consist in this, that, inasmuch as faith embraces the merits of Christ, we by faith are justified before God and saved; but in this, that God, having revoked the demand of perfect obedience to the law, regards faith itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith, as perfect obedience to the law, and graciously esteems it worthy of the reward of eternal life.

Rejection: For these contradict the scriptures: *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood* (Rom. 3:24–25). And these proclaim, as did the wicked Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole church.

Error 5: Who teach that all men have been accepted into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant, so that no one is liable to condemnation on account of original sin, nor shall anyone be condemned because of it, but that all are free from the guilt of this sin.

Rejection: For this opinion is repugnant to scripture, which teaches that we are *by nature the children of wrath* (Eph. 2:3).

Error 6: Who usurp the distinction between accomplishing and applying, to

Error 4: Who teach that the new covenant of grace, which God the Father, through the mediation of the death of Christ, made with man, does not herein consist that we by faith, inasmuch as it accepts the merits of Christ, are justified before God and saved, but in the fact that God, having revoked the demand of perfect obedience of the law, regards faith itself and the obedience of faith, although imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law, and does esteem it worthy of the reward of eternal life through grace.

Rejection: For these contradict the Scriptures: *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood* (Rom. 3:24, 25). And these proclaim, as did the wicked Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole church.

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Rejection: For this opinion is repugnant to Scripture which teaches that we are *by nature children of wrath* (Eph. 2:3)

Error 6: Who use the difference between meriting and appropriating, to the end that

IV. Qui docent, ‘*Fœdus illud novum gratiæ, quod Deus Pater, per mortis Christi interventum cum hominibus pepigit, non in eo consistere, quod per fidem, quatenus meritum Christi apprehendit, coram Deo justificemur et salvemur; sed in hoc, quod Deus, abrogata perfectæ obedientiæ legalis exactione, fidem ipsam et fidei obedientiam imperfectam pro perfecta legis obedientia reputet, et vitæ æternæ præmio gratiose dignam censeat.*’ Hi enim contradicunt Scripturæ, *Justificantur gratis, ejus gratia, per redemptionem factam in Jesu Christo, quem proposuit Deus placamentum per fidem in sanguine ejus*. Rom. 3:24, 25. Et cum impio Socino, novam et peregrinam hominis coram Deo justificationem, contra totius Ecclesiæ consensum, inducunt.

V. Qui docent, ‘*Omnes homines in statum reconciliationis et gratiam fœderis esse assumptos, ita ut nemo propter peccatum originate sit damnationi obnoxius, aut damnandus, sed omnes ab istius peccati reatu sint immunes.*’ Hæc enim sententia repugnat Scriptura, *affirmanti nos natura esse filios iræ*. Eph. 2:3.

VI. Qui impetrationis et applicationis distinctionem usurpant, ut incautis et

the end that they may instill into the minds of the unwary and inexperienced this notion, that God, as far as he is concerned, had willed to confer upon all men equally the benefits acquired by the death of Christ; but that, while some obtain the pardon of sin and eternal life and others do not, this difference depends on their own free will, joining itself to the grace that is offered indiscriminately, but does not depend on the singular gift of mercy, working efficaciously in them, so that they rather than others should apply to themselves this grace.

Rejection: For these, while they feign that they present this distinction in a sound sense, seek to instill into the people the pernicious poison of Pelagianism.

Error 7: Who teach that Christ neither could die, nor should die, nor did die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life, since such do not need the death of Christ.

Rejection: For they contradict the apostle, who declares: *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me* (Gal. 2:20). Likewise: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died* (Rom. 8:33–34), namely, for them. And they contradict the Savior, who declares: *I lay down my life for the sheep* (John 10:15). And: *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:12–13).

they may instill into the minds of the imprudent and inexperienced this teaching, that God, as far as He is concerned, has been minded of applying to all equally the benefits gained by the death of Christ; but that, while some obtain the pardon of sin and eternal life and others do not, this difference depends on their own free will, which joins itself to the grace that is offered without exception, and that it is not dependent on the special gift of mercy, which powerfully works in them, that they rather than others should appropriate unto themselves this grace.

Rejection: For these, while they feign that they present this distinction in a sound sense, seek to instill into the people the destructive poison of the Pelagian errors.

Error 7: Who teach that Christ neither could die, needed to die, nor did die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life, and did not die for these, since these do not need the death of Christ.

Rejection: For they contradict the apostle, who declares: *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me* (Gal. 2:20). Likewise: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died* (Rom. 8:33, 34), namely, for them; and the Savior who says: *I lay down my life for the sheep* (John 10:15). And: *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:12, 13).

imperitis hanc opinionem instillent: Deum, quantum ad se attinet, omnibus hominibus ex æquo ea beneficia voluisse conferre, quæ per mortem Christi acquiruntur; quod autem quidam præ aliis participes fiant remissionis peccatorum, et vitæ æternæ, discrimen illud pendere ex libero eorum arbitrio, se ad gratiam indifferenter oblatam applicante, non autem ex singulari misericordiæ dono, efficaciter in illis operante, ut præ aliis gratiam illam sibi applicent. Nam isti, dum simulant se distinctionem hanc sano sensu proponere, populo perniciosum Pelagianismi venenum conantur propinare.

VII. Qui docent, 'Christum, pro iis, quos Deus summe dilexit, et ad vitam æternam elegit, mori nec potuisse, nec debuisse, nec mortuum esse, cum talibus morte Christi non sit opus.' Contradicunt enim Apostolo dicenti: *Christus dilexit me, et tradidit seipsum pro me*. Gal. 2:20. Item, *Quis est, qui crimina intentet adversus electos Dei? Deus est is, qui justificat. Quis est qui condemnet? Christus est, qui mortuus est*. Rom. 8:33, 34: nimirum, pro illis. Et Salvatori asseveranti, *Ego pono animam meam pro ovibus meis*, John 10:15. Et, *Hoc est præceptum meum, ut diligatis alii alios, sicut ego dilexi vos. Majorem dilectionem nemo habet, quam ut ponat animam suam pro amicis*. John 15:12, 13.

Second Head of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors

Rejection of Errors. The true doctrine having been explained, the synod rejects the errors of those:

Error 1: Who teach that God the Father has ordained his Son to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save anyone expressly, so that the necessity, profitableness, and worth of what Christ accomplished by his death could have stood intact and in every respect perfect, complete and whole, even if the accomplished redemption had never in fact been applied to any individual.

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the fulfillment of which would depend on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill them.

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of sin and eternal life and others do not, this difference depends on their own free will, joining itself to the grace that is offered indiscriminately, but does not depend on the singular gift of mercy, working efficaciously in them, so that they rather than others should apply to themselves this grace.

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HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S BANNER ARTICLES

The Banner

July 14, 1921

(pp. 437–38)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article CXXIII: The New King and His Kingdom: Circumcision (continued)

With regard to the rite of circumcision, we found in the first place that Jehovah instituted it as a token of his covenant with Abraham. It is to be a sign between God and his people of the covenant Jehovah established with them. God is their God, and they are his people. God will be their party, their exceeding great reward and their shield, and they will be God's party in the world. Of this covenant God institutes the sign of circumcision. It is a token of his covenant with Abraham and his seed. In the second place, we found that this rite of circumcision must be performed upon the child when he is eight days old. The male child among Israel must be circumcised on the eighth day. Besides, their servants, they that are bought with money, must also be circumcised. Israel must be a circumcised people. And finally, we found that disregard of this covenant of circumcision was punishable with death. The soul of him that scorned this institution of circumcision was to be cut off from his people.

Now, critics assure us that the account of the institution of circumcision as we find it in Gen. 17 is not altogether trustworthy. It would leave the impression as if circumcision was a thing altogether new when Jehovah instituted it among Abraham's seed. Reading the account we would probably draw the inference that there was not such a thing as circumcision among other nations, and that it was a distinguishing token peculiar to Isreal exclusively. Other nations were uncircumcised, Israel was circumcised. But this impression is a wrong one, critics assure us. Circumcision was neither original with nor peculiar to Abraham and his seed. Long before Abraham received the command from Jehovah according to Gen. 17 to be circumcised and to have those that were of his house receive the sign it was a well known performance among other nations. According to the testimony of many ancient writers the custom of circumcision was prevalent among the Egyptians. Some admit that it is not quite certain whether it was universally

practiced among the Egyptians or whether the priests only were circumcised. But certain it is that circumcision was a thing not unknown in Egypt. Neither is it probable that the Egyptian nation would have adopted this custom from Israel while the latter was living in the country of the Nile. And even with regard to many other tribes and nations it seems a well established fact that circumcision was known and practiced among them. The Syrians and Arabs most probably were acquainted with the rite, and it is beyond doubt that it was in vogue among many of the wild tribes of Africa. The conclusion which critics draw is that Gen. 17 leaves a wrong impression when it presents circumcision as original with Abraham and his seed, and as commanded to the patriarch by special revelation from God. We must conceive of the history quite differently. Fact is that circumcision was known to and practiced by many peoples even before Abraham's time. It was, perhaps, a religious rite or custom. Perhaps it was looked upon as a bloody sacrifice to pacify the gods and reconcile them to men. With many tribes it must have had this religious significance. And when Abraham came to institute the worship of Jehovah it was but natural that he also should adopt this custom of circumcision. You see, there is nothing new in history. There is only development of things already existing. Religion is old, as old, in fact, as the world. It is universal; among all men, nations, tongues, tribes. But there is a gradual purification, a gradual development, evolution of religious ideas, beliefs and practices. Among the heathen tribes these religious ideas were crude and primitive. But gradually, especially with the appearance of Abraham, of Israel as a nation on the stage of history; still more particularly with the rise of the prophets, religion assumed a purer aspect. Thus it is with circumcision. It was not something unknown to Abraham. On the contrary, it had been practiced all around him as a religious rite. But it was lifted to a higher level by him. It was purified, elevated, it became a sign of a better and purer form of religion. In short, the circumcision of Abraham and his

seed is to be explained as having its origin in a heathen custom.

Now, we do not care to deny that the custom to circumcise did prevail among other nations besides Israel. This may be readily granted, though probably its extent, the universality of the practice is greatly exaggerated by critics. We should not forget that Abraham was ninety and nine years old when he was circumcised, so that if the custom was known to him at all before that time he surely did not practice it. In the second place, if we recall the incident of Jacob's sons and the Shechemites, we must admit that in Canaan, at least, the custom was not universally practiced, if at all. And in the same direction points the fact that among the Philistines of a later date it was not known. They were designated among Israel as the uncircumcised Philistines. And, therefore, though the custom may have existed, its universality is very dubious. But the fact as such need not be denied. The bare fact that circumcision was known among some of the heathen tribes and nations even before Jehovah commanded that Abraham and his seed should be circumcised, that bare fact may readily be granted. But this does by no means warrant the conclusion that as a form of religion Abraham merely inherited the custom from the heathen nations round about him. If critics would place the institution of circumcision in such a light, we differ with them.

First of all let us remember that there is no proof at all that circumcision among nations outside of Israel was practiced as a religious rite. There are many indications to the contrary. Among the other tribes it was evidently performed not upon children, but rather upon persons of marriageable age. This would suggest that a reason must be sought in the physical structure of some of the oriental peoples why circumcision was in vogue among them. The ancient historical writers present the custom as a matter of cleanliness. However this may be, whether circumcision was considered a physical necessity or a matter of cleanliness, certain it seems that it was no religious rite among the other

peoples, and that it had no religious significance whatever. To Abraham and his seed, however, the covenant of circumcision is instituted as a token of the covenant between Jehovah and his people. It is not a matter of physical necessity for Israel, nor a matter of cleanliness. It is a sign, a token. It must distinguish Israel from the nations. It must signify that Jehovah has established his covenant with them, and that they are Jehovah's party in the world. Even though the custom to circumcise was known to other nations besides Israel, when God commanded Abraham that he and his seed should be circumcised the Lord instituted something new.

In the second place, as we already mentioned, it is a question in how far the nations with which

Abraham came into contact actually did practice circumcision. The history at Shechem and the appellation given the Philistines rather would make us think that the custom was not known among the Canaanitish nations at all.

And above all, Scripture presents it thus, that circumcision was instituted by way of special revelation to Abraham. This is, after all, sufficient. The Word of God reveals it thus. And, therefore, even though there is no objection to grant that the practice of circumcision was known to nations and tribes outside of Israel, as a matter of cleanliness or perhaps as a surgical operation, the fact remains that Jehovah instituted it as a token of the covenant between himself and Abraham and his seed.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

