



# REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 10

JUNE 17, 2023

*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

# CONTENTS

3 MEDITATION

---

4 FROM THE EDITOR

---

5 BOOK REVIEW  
*Sing the Lord's Song*

---

8 THE SCRIVENER  
Remnant Reformed Church

---

14 HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S BANNER ARTICLES  
Article 11: Mankind's Relation to the Fallen King (continued)

---



Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning  
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

See [reformedpavilion.com](http://reformedpavilion.com) for all contact and subscription information.

## MEDITATION

And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

—Exodus 2:23–35

**G**od remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God’s remembering his covenant explains all the events in the land of Egypt, the house of bondage.

Why was Israel in Egypt? Because God “hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.” So “Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham” (Ps. 105:8, 23).

Why did Israel grow into a nation in Egypt? Because God “hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.” So “he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies” (Ps. 105:8, 24).

Why did Pharaoh and the Egyptians enslave the Hebrews? Because God “hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.” So “he turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants” (Ps. 105:8, 25).

Yes, God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob! And God remembered his covenant even though all men had forgotten.

Pharaoh did not remember God’s covenant. Pharaoh knew not the Lord. And when, in process of time, the king of Egypt died and a new Pharaoh arose, he knew not the Lord either. The new king oppressed the Hebrews so harshly that the children of Israel sighed and cried by reason of their bondage.

But what of the children of Israel? Surely they remembered God’s covenant! Ah, but remember what the Hebrews did to Moses the man of God. Mocking and chiding him, they drove Moses away into Midian, where he became a stranger in a strange land.

If the mighty kings of Egypt did not remember God’s covenant, and if the children of Israel did not remember God’s covenant, then who would remember God’s covenant?

God! Only God! God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

And what did the God of the covenant do? He listened with a father’s ear to his helpless children. The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage. The children of Israel cried. There was no strength in their sigh, only weakness. There was no fullness in their cry, only emptiness. And God heard their groaning.

What else did the God of the covenant do? God watched his helpless children with a father’s eye. They were not lovely. They could not draw his love. But God looked upon the children of Israel anyway, and God had respect unto them. For though they were not lovely and could not draw his love, God drew himself to them and them to him in his powerful love and mercy.

God, the Father of the children of Israel, heard them and looked upon them. God was their strength. God was their fullness. And God remembered his covenant.

Thus it always is with the church. What can the church do? Sigh and cry. That is, the church

can do nothing! She can only be killed all the day long. She can only be counted as so many sheep for the slaughter. But what can God do? What does God do? God remembers his covenant and loves his children.

Would you see the proof of such covenant love? Then behold Jesus Christ and the blood of

the everlasting covenant, in which blood God's covenant with his children is established.

Oh yes, God remembered his covenant indeed!

—AL

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to another issue of *Reformed Pavilion*. The first issue of the magazine rolled off the presses two months ago. It is a testimony to God's goodness that he has granted us a little space to publish *Reformed Pavilion* despite the overwhelming opposition of many. God truly is our pavilion in Christ.

For a brief time in these past months, writing for *Reformed Pavilion* was basically the full-time "job" of the undersigned. Now that the Lord has restored his church and has restored

the undersigned to the ministry, the magazine will probably look a little slimmer. There may even be weeks when the magazine makes no appearance. We are entirely dependent upon the Lord, and we thank him for what opportunity and strength he gives.

Thank you to our readers for your interest in the magazine. Whether you devour the entire magazine or skim an article or two, we are thankful for an interested audience.

—AL



REFORMED  
— PAVILION —

## BOOK REVIEW

*Sing the Lord's Song: Biblical Psalms in Worship.* John W. Keddie. Second edition. Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2003. 80 pages, paperback, \$7.00. [Reviewed by Rev. Andrew Lanning]

John W. Keddie's book *Sing the Lord's Song* is a brief, sound plea for exclusive psalmody in the worship of the church. Having noted that almost all churches today have abandoned the singing of psalms in their worship, Keddie states the purpose of his book thus:

The basic thesis is that reformation is widely needed in this area of worship. It is maintained that a return should be made both to a responsible and God-centered "regulative principle" of worship in general, and, in particular, to the use in sung praise of materials of God's inspiration and appointment. (10)

Keddie deals with all the major issues and questions related to exclusive psalmody, including the meaning and application of the regulative principle of worship, the question of using other scriptural paraphrases than the psalms, the question of liberty in the New Testament, the question of historical precedent, the question of the relationship between free prayers and psalm singing, and the main texts to which both supporters and opponents of exclusive psalmody appeal.

How about some highlights to give the flavor of Keddie's book. On the question of singing other passages from scripture than the psalms—like the prophecies of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon, for example—Keddie writes,

To this writer there are two main objections to the adoption of such materials. (1) *There is no clear warrant in Scripture for putting into verse for singing parts of the Bible not originally recorded in the form of song;* and (2) *It is rather presumptuous for any person or group of people to take upon*

*themselves the responsibility for selecting passages to be adapted for singing.* After all, if the Lord has not caused such passages to be expressed in the form of songs nor indicated that such passages should be paraphrased for singing, by what authority do men take on this responsibility? (11; emphasis is Keddie's)

On the question of whether the New Testament church has liberty to invent her own worship, including her own songs for worship, Keddie writes,

It can be maintained that in passing from the Old Testament to the New Testament, whatever discontinuity was involved, there is no evidence whatsoever that God has surrendered the right to determine acceptable worship. For the New Testament Church, too, the concern must be: What is sanctioned in the Word of God? (22)

On the question of whether psalm singing is commanded, Keddie writes,

Singing praise to the Lord is a distinct element in the worship of God. Naturally the question has to be asked: What does the Lord require of His Church in this regard? What has He commanded? What has He provided? Does this matter? At least in one respect there does not seem to be any doubt about what the Lord has provided and commanded in the matter of His praise. The psalms of Scripture are to be sung by His people. There is ample evidence for this in the psalms themselves, but also, and not least, in the New Testament. (24)

Keddie spends a significant amount of space exegeting Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” It is no surprise that Keddie carefully exegetes Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19, for a careful treatment of these passages is characteristic of those who hold to exclusive psalmody. It has been alleged that those who hold to exclusive psalmody are shy about these passages, but this is simply not the case. Every proponent of exclusive psalmody has had to answer questions about these passages early and often. So far from being shy about these passages, proponents of exclusive psalmody have devoted a tremendous amount of study and care to these passages. About these passages Keddie observes,

It seems perfectly reasonable...to take the references to psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as referring collectively to the Psalter. The various Greek words would be familiar to the New Testament Church as being found in the Old Testament Greek translation (the Septuagint or LXX) which was commonly in use. In the Septuagint the psalm titles frequently contained these terms. In many cases more than one of the terms is used in a title, and in at least one instance all three terms are found in the title (Ps. 76)! (33)

The strength of Keddie’s book is Keddie’s high view of God’s will as determinative for worship. Over against the trend in the church to exalt man’s will as determinative, Keddie calls the church back to God’s will for worship. In the Reformed faith the doctrine that God’s will is determinative for worship is known as the *regulative principle*. Keddie devotes all of chapter 4 to the regulative principle, with both a positive explanation of the regulative principle as well as a defense against objections to the regulative principle.

Keddie’s treatment of the regulative principle is just as timely today as it was in 1994, when

the book was first printed. It has been this reviewer’s observation that the regulative principle of worship has fallen on very hard times today. Even in Reformed churches, which are bound by the regulative principle as taught in Lord’s Day 35 of the Heidelberg Catechism, one can find officebearers disparaging the regulative principle as the “*so-called* regulative principle.” There are even men who have a great name for being Reformed but who dismiss the regulative principle altogether. For example, the very morning of the day that the undersigned would be suspended from office for teaching exclusive psalmody, a Reformed Protestant man came to my study to urge me to throw away the idea of the regulative principle. He claimed that it was not Reformed. That Reformed Protestant man is not alone in his sentiment. Even those who will pay lip service to the regulative principle get the principle confused when they demand that their victims show them where it is *forbidden* for the church to sing something other than a psalm. But, as Keddie shows, it is an entirely different principle that looks for what is forbidden. Rather, the regulative principle “states that only what is *prescribed* in the Word of God is warranted. This was the approach of the Reformed churches” (44; emphasis is Keddie’s). Yes, this was and is the approach of the Reformed churches indeed.

Q. 96. What doth God require in the second commandment?

A. That we in no wise represent God by images, nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in His Word. (Lord’s Day 35)

In light of the general misunderstanding of and even hostility toward the regulative principle of worship in Reformed churches today, chapter 4 of Keddie’s book is highly, highly recommended.

Regarding the remainder of the content of the book, the chapter titles tell the topics:

Chapter 1: Setting the Scene

Chapter 2: Frequently Asked Questions

- Chapter 3: The Biblical Material
- Chapter 4: The Regulative Principle
- Chapter 5: The Historical Testimony
- Chapter 6: Sing the Lord's Song! Conclusions

This reviewer does have one criticism of Keddie's book. There are times when Keddie leaves the impression that psalm singing is *unto* God's blessing instead of *because of* God's blessing. For example, "What can be said is that there is a relationship between the Lord's blessing and a people's faithfulness" (16). The impression is left that a church should obey God in psalm singing in order to receive God's blessing. The truth is that the church should obey God in psalm singing because she has received God's blessing. The law of psalm singing is not the way unto God's blessing but the rule of gratitude because of God's blessing.

Although Keddie's error is not prominent in his book, it is an error, and it does mar the book. Let the reader read with discernment.

With that correction noted, Keddie's book admirably makes the case for exclusive psalmody in the worship of the church. And amazingly, Keddie does all this in a brief book. Readers of all abilities and attention spans will easily be able to read through Keddie's book. Some subsections are only half a page long, but all the major topics of exclusive psalmody are addressed. If you are looking for a brief but compelling plea for

exclusive psalmody, this is your book. If you are looking for a book to explain exclusive psalmody to your teenagers, this is your book. If you are looking for a pleasant and edifying couple of hours' reading on a summer's evening, this is your book.

We shall let Keddie conclude for us, from page 65:

There is nothing more important than the worship of God. The continuing challenge for the Church today, in this matter of how and with what it ought to worship God, is simply that the truth should have its way, however much that may cause recently developed traditions and practices to be overturned and reformed. The modern Church must be willing to let the truth have its way, specifically in this matter of song and the place of the psalms in worship. What is the Lord's song? It is the song He has given, that He has appointed and provided in His Word.

O come, let us sing to the Lord:  
 come, let us every one  
 A joyful noise make to the Rock  
 of our salvation.

Let us before His presence come  
 with praise and thankful voice;  
 Let us sing psalms to Him with grace,  
 and make a joyful noise.

(Ps. 95:1–2, 1650 *Psalter*)

—AL



And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

—Ezra 9:8

## Remnant Reformed Church

The topic of tonight's doctrine class, our first doctrine class as a congregation, is the name of our church: Remnant Reformed Church.<sup>1</sup> The occasion for this doctrine class on this topic is our church's adoption of that name at our congregational meeting last week. It was striking that the congregation chose the name *Remnant Reformed Church* because, to my knowledge, that name had not been in any of the suggestions leading up to the council's work to make some proposals for a name for the congregation; and, if I remember correctly, the suggestion for that name actually came off the floor of the congregational meeting. God was at work, I believe, in giving us that name and leading us to it even though none of us were necessarily looking for that name.

As we begin this doctrines class, then, it is appropriate for a few comments to be made in general regarding the name. First, the name *Remnant Reformed Church* is new to us. We have only had that name for one week. Probably we haven't heard it spoken that much. And every time we have a new name, it is going to seem strange to us. We are going to be able to find problems with that name. That is going to be the case in our midst too. *Remnant Reformed Church* sounds odd to us yet; perhaps it doesn't fit yet as our name. And *Remnant Reformed Church* is not only a new name for us, but it is also a relatively new name in the church world in general. There are not many churches that have the name

*Remnant*. You can find names like *Zion* or *Bethel* or *Trinity* everywhere, but *Remnant* is a fairly rare name in the church world. And that might even add to its strangeness to our ears. So if there is anyone who is still not sure about that name or feels uncomfortable with that name, part of that may be just the newness of it. Give it some time; be patient; and we will come to appreciate that name, I believe.

Second, the goal of a name of a church is to express some truth about the church. That is true with regard to the name *Church*. *Church* is a name. In fact, of *Remnant Reformed Church* we could say that the name *Church* is the most important of those three words because *church* describes this body as those who have been gathered by the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of his word and Spirit, those who have been established upon him as the cornerstone, those who have been established upon the doctrine of the Bible as the foundation of the church, and those who exist as the body of Christ to the glory of God. All of that is encapsulated in the name *Church*. And even though many churches today reject many of the things that the name *Church* teaches, the name *Church* nevertheless expresses a truth about what the church is in this world. She is the gathered ones; she is the body of Christ as it is manifest in this world.

That is true also for the name *Reformed*. *Reformed* is a name that expresses the doctrinal

<sup>1</sup> This is a copyedited transcript of a speech given June 14, 2023, for Remnant Reformed Church, which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFsSTdKVjgw>.

heritage from which we come and the doctrinal standards to which we hold. We are not a Lutheran church that holds to Lutheran standards; we are not a Presbyterian church that holds to Presbyterian standards; we are a Reformed church that holds to the Reformed standards. Instantly by the name *Reformed* we are identified as those who hold the three forms of unity and the liturgical forms of a Reformed church, which means that our doctrines as a church are the doctrines of grace. And even though many churches today that are called *Reformed* depart in all kinds of ways from the meaning of *Reformed*, the significance of the name *Reformed* remains doctrinal. Remnant Reformed Church takes the name *Reformed* because we believe and confess the doctrines of the Reformed faith. We are deliberately a Reformed church.

So also then with the name *Remnant*. The name *Remnant* is intended to teach some truth with regard to the church in her life upon the earth. The goal of the church name is *not* to gain the favor of men. That may be one of the things that causes us concern with regard to the name *Remnant Reformed*. We can imagine conversations that we might have to have with people when they ask, “What church do you go to?” and we answer, “Remnant Reformed Church.” Right away we imagine all the objections that will come against that, how upset men will be, and the accusations that will come: “You think you’re the only elect people of God in the world” and so on. But our goal in having a church name is not to please men. And if we would start to go down the path of making a name that men can tolerate and that is palatable to them, then we will end up with something like *Community Church*. We will abandon any declaration of being Reformed and eventually have to abandon any declaration that we are the church. Really, *Reformed Church* ought to be offensive to men. The fact that the names *Reformed* and *Church* have been so watered down today does not take away from what those names represent. Those names represent that man is nothing and that God is everything, and that ought to be very, very offensive to men. So the

fact that *Remnant Reformed Church* might be offensive to some is just fine. That name was not chosen to get in anyone’s face or to be a goad to anyone. That name was chosen as a believing expression of the nature of the church.

If the name of the church expresses the truth of the church as that truth is revealed in scripture, then that name is a good name for the church of Jesus Christ. And *Remnant Reformed Church* does that. *Remnant Reformed Church* is a good name, expressing truth regarding the church on this earth.

That doesn’t mean that all of us will be in love with the name right away. Some of us may love it already; some may be indifferent; some may just tolerate it; there may even be some who are upset with that name. As we continue to use that name, we’ll be patient with each other, love the brethren, look on the things of each other. Our unity as a congregation is not found in our evaluation of our church name; our unity as a congregation is found in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Having said that, I do believe that this name will become very precious to this church. *Remnant Reformed Church*. That really is a beautiful name because the doctrine of the remnant is a very beautiful doctrine. It expresses things that are hard for us to get our minds around because they are so profound and so high.

The purpose of this speech tonight, then, is to teach the doctrine of the remnant as that doctrine applies to our church’s name. So tonight we take up the glorious, grand doctrine of God’s remnant.

The key to understanding the remnant is to understand God. The key to understanding what *remnant* means and why the church is a remnant is to understand the life that God lives as a triune God. And what we can say about that life of God, because he reveals that life to us, is that God is a merciful God. God’s mercy, his love, characterizes his life as the triune God. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is merciful toward the Son in the Spirit, and the Son is merciful toward the Father in the Spirit. The Father loves the Son in the Spirit, and the Son loves the

Father in the Spirit. The life of Jehovah God is a life of covenant love and covenant mercy for himself in himself.

This is where the truth of the remnant becomes so deep and so high that our minds can hardly comprehend it. In the truth of the remnant, we deal with God and his love. What is it for God to love God? What is it for God to be merciful to God? It is that God, from eternity to eternity, at every moment, has absolutely perfect delight in himself. God at every moment has powerful affection for himself. If we can speak this way, God is drawn to himself. The Father is drawn to the Son in the Spirit, and the Son is drawn to the Father in the Spirit. There is an eternal delight among the three persons of the Trinity, an eternal affection among them, so that it is God's chief delight to dwell with himself, to behold himself, to live this life of the covenant.

You and I can hardly fathom that. We certainly cannot plumb the depths of it. We can hardly even understand it because in all of our relationships, there is always a waxing and a waning of affection. Affection grows cold, and there are times when we simply don't delight in fellowship or don't delight in one another. But with God that is never the case. There is never a waning of his delight and his affection, but there is an eternally perfect mercy and love of God for God in God.

That love of God in his triune life is powerful. It is strong. That is implied in the fact that there is never any waning of that love. That love is a power of affection and a power of delight of the three persons of the Godhead for one another. That love is a powerful bond of the three persons together. That love is a constant desire for the others in that trinitarian life. There is a power to the mercy of Jehovah God, a power that is unstoppable. There is no one in heaven or on earth who can stop the love of God for God. There is no deceit that the devil or anyone else could introduce into the mind of God in order to cause that love to wane or to be misdirected. There is nothing that can stop the love of God for God in the Trinity. It is a power.

That truth of God's life of love in himself as the triune God, that life of powerful love, is the explanation for the remnant. The reason there is a remnant is because of that powerful love of God. And we think of that this way, that God, in his perfect, eternal love, has been eternally pleased to reveal that love outside of himself. There would have been nothing missing in that love if God had never revealed that love outside of himself. That love would not be incomplete without a revelation outside of himself. God's love for himself is complete. But such is the mercy of God that he determined in his good pleasure that he *would* reveal that powerful mercy outside of himself.

Now we are moving from the life of God himself in God to the eternal decree of God with regard to revealing that love. And God in his eternal decree determined that he would show that love in all of its power to those who could not give him anything in payment for that love. That shows the power of that love. That shows the magnitude of that love. God did not say and determine this: "I will find someone worthy of my love, and upon those who are worthy will I reveal this power of my love." No, God decreed, "I will set my love upon those who are unworthy and by that show the power of my love to take these helpless, unworthy ones into my covenant life." That is the theological explanation for the existence of a remnant. It is the love of God, which is all-powerful, which he has determined to set upon his chosen people in Jesus Christ.

Having seen the being of God and the love of God as the triune God, and having seen the decree of God to show that love, we now see the object of that love; and the object of that love is the remnant.

As far as the term itself goes, the word *remnant* means *a portion*. That is the normal use of *remnant* in our everyday language. If you have a carpet remnant, that is a portion left over after you have laid the carpet in the house. A remnant is a portion. That is the way the word is used in scripture too. In scripture the word *remnant* does not always refer to God's elect people. There are

places in scripture where *remnant* refers to a portion of some other people, and God then speaks of the remnant to say, “Just as I destroyed the main part of that people, so I’m going to destroy the remnant. There will be nothing left, no portion left whatsoever.” The normal use of the word *remnant* in everyday language means a *portion*.

When we start to get more specific about the meaning of *remnant*, first, a remnant is a *small* portion. The remnant is never the main portion. The remnant is always a small portion. The carpet remnants, to use that illustration again, are the small portions left over after the main carpet has been laid. The remnant is small.

Second—and now we begin to get into the theology of the remnant—the remnant is an *unworthy* portion. It is not just a small portion; it is an unworthy portion. And now think of the portion that is left over when you prepare food. You have the good, nourishing portion of the food that is prepared and set on the plate, and you have the stalks and the husks of the food that you cannot use that are the leftover portion, the small portion. And those are unworthy. They are unworthy to eat. That is the idea of the portion. Not only is it small, but it is also unworthy.

Third, the portion is *despised*. The portion, or the remnant, is not an object of love. No one says about the sweet corn that he eats, “Oh, how I love gnawing on the empty cob!” People love the corn, but they throw the cob and the husk away. That is always the remnant: the part you throw away. It is the portion that is not fit for use. It is unworthy and therefore despised.

Fourth, when it comes to *God’s* remnant, which is his church, the portion is a *beloved* portion, a beloved remnant. God does not operate the way man operates. Man operates by exalting the worthy and the beloved. But God operates by loving the unworthy and the despised.

Fifth, the portion that is the remnant is a *determined* portion. That is, God set his love upon his elect according to his will and good pleasure. God was not coerced to set his love upon any, but he determined to set his love upon his people.

Whereas all men determine to set their love upon what is lovely, what is useful, what is beloved to them, God determined according to his good pleasure to set his love on the unworthy. There was nothing in the husk or in the remnant that drew his love or affection. His will and his good pleasure drew him to that remnant, which he sovereignly chose.

And then sixth regarding the remnant, it is a *rescued* portion. This remnant is to be thrown out. That is what you do with the husk, the carpet remnant, and whatever else: you throw it out. God comes and rescues that remnant. He takes that remnant to himself, delivering that remnant for his own. That is the remnant: the rescued portion.

And now to apply all of that to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is what the church always is.

She is a small portion. That is all she is as a remnant. We in our folly have the idea that the church needs to be very large or needs to have a certain critical mass. We think that the church has to be constantly growing, growing, growing. And if the church splits and splits again, then we begin to think, “Now, something is wrong. Something is either wrong with us, or something is wrong with them; but something is wrong here.” But this is why God so often describes his church as the remnant: it is a small portion.

The church also is always unworthy. There is nothing in the church in itself that draws the love of God. The church has broken God’s commandments, and therefore the church ought to be, by rights, as we calculate it, a despised portion, a remnant that is cast away. And indeed, that is what is always done to the church by men. She is always cast away. The church never lives in this world with the acclaim and praise of men. Your flesh and my flesh crave that acclaim of men. We think we need it. We think that if things are going to go right for us in this world, then men need to applaud us and say to us, “Good job. Good job, Remnant Reformed Church. You did the right thing in the split with

the Protestant Reformed Churches when you stood for the truth of God's sovereign grace. You did the right thing in the split with the Reformed Protestant Churches when you stood for the truth of God's will being sovereign in worship." We think that we need men—and probably men who have been important in our lives, men we have looked up to, men with whom we have walked—to confirm us and tell us, "Good job. You did the right thing." That is never the way it is going to go for the church in the world. The church is not going to have the acclaim and the praise of men. In fact, the church, standing for the truth, is going to be told again and again, "You're doing it all wrong. Can't you see what happens when you make a big deal of this, that, or the next thing? Can't you live with those doctrinal errors?" The church is going to be despised and cast out.

And especially she will be a despised remnant because her testimony over against all men, including all men in the church, is that man is nothing and God truly is everything, that man's will is nothing in his salvation or his worship, that God's will is everything in man's salvation and man's worship. And for that message the church will be despised. That is the life of the remnant—a despised portion.

The comfort for the remnant is that God does not calculate as man calculates. Whereas all men take hold of the church and cast her out as a thing to be refused, God comes in his everlasting love and shows his church the power of that love, which power cannot be thwarted by anyone. God's love for himself cannot be thwarted. No one can turn God's love for himself away from himself. And so powerful is that mercy of God for his remnant, for his church, that no man can turn God's love from his people. No lie can be whispered in God's ear to convince God that he ought finally to throw this remnant away like everyone else has. So powerful is that mercy of God for the remnant that *not even the remnant* can cast away God's love or cause God's love for his church to break. God's love for his church is eternal. God in his everlasting mercy does not turn away from his remnant. Even your sin and

mine cannot turn away the love of God for his church.

And in that love, then, God rescues his church. He rescues his church from the guilt of her iniquities; he rescues his church from the oppression of the enemy that weighs on her; he rescues his church from all her doubts and fears; he rescues his church from death, including the continual death that is this life. He rescues his church by giving her the life of heaven, the promise of her inheritance. Jehovah God rescues his remnant.

That is the remnant. That is what the church always is. And all of that is described in the verse we read, Ezra 9:8. "And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage." You see the nothingness of the remnant there, how little she is, how nothing she is? All she is is bound. That is all she ever is in this earth. But God comes to her in his love to give her escape, to lighten her eyes, and to give her a little reviving in her bondage. That is the mercy of God for his remnant. That is the comfort of the church too, that God does not reckon the way man reckons but that he reckons according to his everlasting love.

Now, there is one thing yet about the doctrine of the remnant that comes out in Ezra 9 that we haven't really mentioned yet, and that is in that interesting description of what the church is given. "To give us a nail in his holy place." The idea of the nail there is not a small construction nail. But that nail is an iron stake. *Nail* is the word for a tent stake or a post by which one would stretch and hold the fabric of a tent in place. Or *nail* is the word for the stake that Jael drove through the temple of Sisera to kill him and nail him to the ground. It is a huge iron stake.

The idea of this might be that God has given us a nail in his holy place in the sense that he has made our dwelling secure, the way you would take a stake and stake down a tent, so that now we have a secure place to dwell with God. There

is nothing wrong with that explanation of the text; that would be doctrinally sound. Or this might mean, looking at Isaiah 22, a large peg in a wall upon which a heavy mantlepiece could be set, which mantle could support many vessels. Then the idea would be that God has given us a place *inside* his temple where we may sit and have fellowship with him. There would be nothing doctrinally wrong with that explanation of the text either.

But it seems that the best explanation of the text is that the word *nail* refers to the nails of your Lord, the stake that was driven through his feet and the stakes that were driven through his hands. Then you could imagine the scene this way, that there is the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and immediately behind that cross is the temple of God, or heaven. And when the Lord's hands were nailed to that cross, that stake drove right through into heaven, so that you and I are taken through the Lord Jesus Christ by his atoning sacrifice into the temple of the Lord our God. Then the passage in Ezra is a prophecy: God hath given us "a nail in his holy place" in the sense that he has secured our place in heaven through the blood of his Son. When Christ died upon the cross, his hands nailed and his lifeblood drained, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, signifying that God's people, through the veil of Christ's flesh, now have entrance into the fellowship and presence of Jehovah God.

This is the remnant. This remnant was taken by the Lord Jesus Christ as the high priest and carried by him through his cross, where he bore our curse, right into the holy place of God, into God's eternal dwelling and fellowship. This remnant, who was nothing of herself—nothing but sinful, cast off, unworthy—has been carried by the Lord into the very presence of Jehovah. That's *remnant*.

That name, then, becomes a beautiful name for a church: Remnant Reformed Church. That name is not a declaration of our worthiness. That name also is not a declaration of our superiority. Those are probably going to be the main objec-

tions to that name. The name *Remnant* sounds like we are saying that we are the only elect ones in the world; it sounds like we are saying that no one else is saved. That is not at all the meaning of the name *Remnant Reformed*. That name doesn't speak to our worthiness or superiority. In fact, that name speaks to our *unworthiness*. *Remnant Reformed Church* means *these are the unworthy ones*. That is who we are. We are the unworthy ones. We are the despised ones. And we can understand why. We are the weak ones, the miserable ones, the cast off ones. *Remnant Reformed* does not exalt us in any way as worthy or superior. *Remnant* debases us. It puts us down, puts us in our place as the lowly.

That is an important name for this church. This church is going to struggle with pride. We know that because we are human, and man is always proud over against God. We are going to struggle with pride. We all know the way that pride looks, the shape it takes in our hearts. We all felt that pride in the Reformed Protestant Churches, where, though we would recognize that we were the publicans and the sinners and the harlots, nevertheless our flesh exalted itself and began to think, "But there has been no one better than us and never shall be." And that pride is already here. It is already in this church. It is already in our hearts. We carried that pride with us and will carry that pride in our flesh all our days, so that for all our days we must hear this truth: you are the remnant. You are low. You are the thrown-away part. You are small and despised and unworthy. That is what you are. You are Remnant Reformed Church.

That also, then, is the offense that this name will cause when rightly understood, because *remnant* means *no man is anything in himself*. *Remnant* means *man is nothing*. That is all man ever is: nothing. That name will be the offense.

And that term *remnant*, then, also declares that the only explanation for our deliverance and our rescue is God's mercy in Christ—God's everlasting mercy, which he set upon us solely of his good pleasure, not because of anything in us—so that the name *Remnant* is not only a

constant testimony to us of our lowliness, but it is also a constant doxology of praise to God and to his mercy. There is one thing that has delivered us, one thing that has rescued us when we weren't even looking for rescue. That one thing is the mercy of Jehovah.

That is how the name *Remnant Reformed Church* can be a beautiful name for a Reformed church.

Let us hear again the mercy of God for his remnant. "And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage."

—AL

## HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

*The Banner*

November 14, 1918

(Pp. 823–24)

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

### Article XI. Mankind's Relation to the Fallen King (continued)

How are we to explain the phenomenon of the universality of sin?

You remember, this was the question we had to table last week because of limited space. I do not want to abuse the courtesy or the leniency of our Editor-in-chief or Publication Committee, or both, by asking too much space. And in this connection I might as well express my appreciation of their courtesy to allow me as much space as they do; and at the same time I would ask them to continue these privileges. I do not know, of course, whether my readers are of the same mind in this respect, but they must have noticed by this time that it takes me a long time to say things. I know, this is a weakness, but it can't be helped. And, therefore, just as my audience on Sunday often bears with me in this weakness by patiently listening five minutes over time, our Editor, I hope, will continue to show his tolerance by allowing me the same privileges in regard to space as heretofore.

But now about this question of the universality of sin. How must it be explained that all men are sinful both according to the testimony of Scripture and the voice of all experience?

A rather favorite hypothesis to explain this phenomenon is that which elucidates this mystery by the tendency to imitate which seems to be inborn in man. This theory is really Pelagian, but for that very reason also quite modern. You know that Pelagius exerts after all a noticeable influence upon modern life, don't you? And this is perfectly natural; just as perfectly natural as the fact, that Calvin will never succeed to fascinate the minds of the masses in the world. Pelagianism is humanistic to the core, and so is our age. Man is the great author and purpose of all that exists, and for that reason we must be very zealous and filled with holy enthusiasm to defend his glory and to guard his privileges against being encroached upon. With regard to the subject under discussion this naturally implies that man must be guarded against the evil influence of the doctrine of original sin. Man is not born with an innately evil nature, he does not enter into the world as a slave of sin. On the contrary, we are all born just like Adam before he fell into sin. Inherently our nature is good. The child when it enters into the world, still possesses that original knowledge, righteousness and holiness. His soul is undefiled and his mind as pure as

gold refined by fire. The only difference between Adam and such a modern child is that the former was placed in Paradise, in a sphere and in surroundings where sin was unknown, while the latter is born in a world of sin. Except for the voice of the serpent, there was nothing that spoke to our first father of sin and evil; but except for the voice of its own conscience all things in the world speak to the child of today of transgression and crime. And this being the only difference, there is but one theory that may serve as an explanation of the universality of sin in the world, and that is the theory of imitation. Cain was born in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. You can easily imagine what an innocent and sweet little child it was when his mother nursed him, or as a boy he would help his father on the farm. But Adam sinned once in a while. Perhaps Cain noticed how raving mad he could be sometimes when things did not exactly suit his taste. He would lose his temper. And Cain imitated his father; he naturally did the same thing. And in the midst of such a fit of madness, when his temper got the best of him, he killed his brother and became the first fratricide. And this example of Cain simply illustrates the universal rule. The universality of sin as a phenomenon in the world must be explained on the basis of the innate tendency of one generation to imitate the preceding. This theory, I say, is more widely propagated in our modern world than we imagine. It really permeates the modern theories of education and civilization. It is the theory that began to control modern education ever since the time of Rosseau. He, too, taught that the child was inherently good and that sin could be explained only from the presence of evil surroundings. And therefore, it was his theory that in educating the child we must remove him as much as possible from the evil influence of his surroundings and of the past, bring him up in isolation and the result will be a perfect man. If the theory of imitation is true, the human race can gradually improve itself by eliminating from the environment of each succeeding generation more and more of the evil influences that make for a bad humanity. In that case, of course,

Christ must serve as the great example, not as the Deliverer who saves us from sin by the blood of atonement, and by fighting the battle against evil surroundings and influences with the example of the Son of Man before our eyes, the human race will gradually reach perfection and usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.

Of course, this theory, no matter in what form it is presented, cannot be accepted. In the first place it is directly against Scripture. Scripture tells us that there is not one good, no not one and that includes the child from its earliest infancy. Scripture informs us that we are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity and that there is no hope for man unless the chain of sin is broken by the power of Christ. And of this imitation hypothesis the Word of God knows nothing. Mark, this does not mean that evil examples have no evil influences upon an already sinful child. That is an entirely different question. But it does mean that imitation is not the root of the universal sinfulness of the human race. And it does imply, that you cannot perfect one single individual by lifting him from his evil environments. In the second place this theory offers no exception to this rule: Jesus Christ. He also grew up in the midst of the same surroundings in which we all are born and brought up. He was tempted as none of us ever will be. And yet, He remained sinless and undefiled. If the influence of sinful surroundings are so strong that it leads the child irresistibly on to a sinful life, so that he already is lost in sin even before he has reached the years of discretion, how then is this unique exception of Jesus Christ to be explained? Evidently this is impossible. Still more. If this theory is true, we are living in a cruel world and our God can never be a God of righteousness as far as we are able to judge. On this basis a child, say of three months, or if you please, of three days, old, cannot very well be called guilty and worthy of suffering and punishment. Yet what does experience teach us? How many little sufferers that are in misery and pain before they ever had sufficient self-consciousness to imitate their parents or be influenced by their surroundings

even in the slightest degree! Children of a few months, of a few days even, die the physical death, though they may be as innocent as the good angels, and silent births are by no means such rare exceptions. Is this world, then, not a most cruel world and is God Himself guilty of crying injustice? But above all would we urge against this theory that it absolutely eliminates the need of Christ and His atoning sacrifice. If by imitation we became sinful, by imitation we can deliver ourselves from sin, and the blood of Christ has lost its atoning character. And, therefore this explanation, false and dangerous as it is, we must not accept.

There is, however, another theory, which I am afraid is much in vogue even among Reformed people, and which more or less consciously is accepted by many. If you ask how our sinful condition must be explained, many will answer that this is due to our birth from a sinful father. Adam was our father and we inherit sin from him, and that is all they know about it. Sin transmits itself from generation to generation. The sinful nature is perpetuated in humanity from father to son and grandson; in a word, we inherit our sinful condition. Now mark, I do not deny that there is an element of truth in this explanation. In as far as it means to be nothing else than an interpretation of the manner in which we receive our sinful condition, it certainly is correct. But the trouble is that for many people this explains all and solves the entire problem. And this it does not. Mere inheritance does not lie at the root of the problem, the mere theory of hereditary or inherited sin does not explain anything at all, is confusing and dangerous, and for that reason we should be careful even in our terminology and rather speak of original than of hereditary sin. We can speak in a sense of hereditary pollution and defilement, but surely we can never speak of hereditary guilt.

Against this theory of mere inherited sin we would urge in the first place, that if it were the whole truth, we would be objects of compassion and [not] wrath. Can I help it that sin transmits and perpetuates itself? I am not my own maker

and if I enter into the world with a sinful nature, though without personal guilt, I am to be pitied rather than condemned. You see, it does not explain our problem. What we want to know is not merely the fact that we enter into the world with a sinful nature. This is plain from Scripture and experience both. Our problem is not even expressed in the question how we come into the world with such a sinful nature, for that might probably be explained by the theory of inheritance. On what judicial ground do we receive this sinful nature? Why are we born in sin and iniquity so that we can do no good unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God? Where is the justice of the whole thing? Our sinful condition, so we saw, is a punishment, and, therefore, it presupposes guilt. It is death, spiritual death. And the question we must answer is: On what ground of justice and righteousness does the infant in the cradle bear the punishment of spiritual death? It is a judicial question in the first place. And this question is not answered at all by the mere theory that sin is inherited.

I hope you understand me, for it is of the highest importance that this be grasped clearly.

We may compare sin to a prison and the sinner safely locked behind the bars. And now we approach him and ask him: Why are you in this prison? The theory of hereditary sin explains partially how he got there, but it fails to explain the reason for his imprisonment. We want to know the crime committed by this prisoner. We want to understand on what judicial ground he was condemned to life imprisonment. And hence we must have something else.

But this is not all. Against this theory of hereditary sin may also be urged the Reformed view of the origin of every individual human being. With very few exceptions Reformed people have always been creationists, which implies that the soul in the case of every individual person is not generated and born, but comes from God. Perhaps you are aware of the existence of two main theories in regard to the question of the origin of the soul. The one is that of traducianism, maintaining that the human soul, like the body, is

produced by the act of generation. Not only our body, but our soul as well we receive from our parents at birth. Over against this stands the theory of creationism, which holds that a soul is specially created for every individual most probably from the moment of conception. There is also a third theory in this respect, which is, however, not very widely prevalent in our day. It is that of infusionism, holding that the soul is pre-existent and infused into the body at the moment of conception or birth. But what I mean to say is that Reformed people generally have favored the view of creationism. We shall refer to this later. Evidently, the question now arises: if the soul in case of every human being comes directly from God, what then becomes of the theory of inherited sin? Sin is surely not something material, it is no disease perpetuated by a germ in our blood from generation to generation. It is first of all spiritual. Even as regeneration is not first of all a change of the body, but of the soul, is first spiritual and then physical and finally also cosmological, first influences the soul, then the body and finally embraces the entire world, so sin is not first of all material and then spiritual, but it is spiritual through and through. But, then, once more, if the soul comes from God and the body only is regenerated and born, how is it possible that we inherit sin? You realize, this must be explained. And the mere theory of inheritance is insufficient.

And finally, this theory, no more than that of imitation, can explain the unique exception of Jesus Christ. Mind, we do not pretend to explain the mystery of the incarnation, which is the deepest and most sublime mystery of mysteries. Nevertheless, the question presents itself: If sin is inherited, and Christ also was born from man, received His human nature from the human race, how must it be explained that the law of inheritance did not maintain itself in His case? Also this question the theory of mere inheritance fails to answer. And, therefore, we should never imagine and say or teach in Sunday school or in the Christian day school, that the problem of universal sin is merely a question of inheritance, and that we are sinful simply because

Adam was our first father. Over against this I would urge the repeated statement of Scripture that the children shall not be punished for the sins of their fathers.

The positive answer to the question before us we must leave to future discussions. Let me, however, briefly indicate the line that is to be followed before I finish this article. It is this.

1. Adam is our covenant-head and we are reckoned to him. Because of that covenant relation we are responsible in him.

2. In that covenant relation his guilt is imputed to us, is imputed to the person of every Adamite.

3. This person, according to the conception of creationism slightly revised comes from God, and becomes guilty not by inheritance but by imputation on the basis of the covenant.

4. On the basis of this personal guilt we all are worthy of death; also of spiritual death, and therefore, worthy of receiving a sinful human nature, which we receive by means of our conception and birth from our first father.

5. This sinful nature and pollution becomes the source of sin within us, so that we can do no spiritual good.

6. To all this Christ is an exception for the simple reason that he did not stand in the same covenant relation to Adam as we. He was the Son of Adam, surely, but He was no human Person, and, therefore, the guilt of Adam could never be imputed to Him.

This line we will follow in the future. And if we are able to grasp these truths we will also understand that the covenant of works was adapted to the covenant of grace and that man was created so that he might be saved by grace. And in adoration of our God we are forced to exclaim: "O, the depth of the riches, both of the knowledge and the wisdom of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

—Holland, Mich.