



REFORMED

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

—Psalm 27:5

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And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

—Exodus 32:1–6

The Golden Calf

Up, make us gods,” said the children of Israel to Aaron.

On the top of Sinai, the glory of Jehovah was a devouring fire. In the center of the camp, the pillar of Jehovah was a towering cloud. In jars in the Israelites’ tents was the day’s supply of bread from heaven. In their packs and rolls were the treasures of Egypt that Jehovah had delivered to them. Ringing in their ears was the thundering trumpet-voice of God, who had spoken ten commandments. Fresh off their tongues was the promise, “All that the LORD hath said will we do” (Ex. 24:7). Around the base of the mountain were the bounds that reminded them of what holy ground the mount was.

With Jehovah’s presence and gifts among them and around them, the children of Israel wickedly, foolishly, brazenly, unbelievably said to Aaron, “Up, make us gods.”

When they said “gods,” they did not mean that they wanted brand-new deities to worship. They meant that they wanted Jehovah God in image form. When Aaron proclaimed a feast, he called it a feast to Jehovah (Ex. 32:5). The people

were asking for a graven image of Jehovah that they could worship and follow.

Aaron obliged them. He gathered their golden earrings, melted them, and fashioned the molten gold into a calf. He skillfully wrought it with a graving tool so that it was pleasant and beautiful to look upon. He proclaimed a feast to it on the morrow. And did the people ever feast! They offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. They sat down to eat and to drink. They rose up and took off their clothes to dance and play and fornicate. Pagan worship in the name of Jehovah! Before the eyes of him who is a consuming fire!

We must learn. Oh, must we learn! We are meant to: “Now these things were our examples... Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” (I Cor. 10:6–7). But what must we learn? This: the will of man does not know how to please God but only knows how to please man. This: the true worship of God can never be discerned from what appeals to man’s will. For at Sinai Israel did what excited and pleased man. But Israel’s worship at Sinai was

sinful will worship (Col. 2:23). It was a rejection of God's will, which was his law, delivered to the people of Israel by Moses. They were finished with Moses! "As for this Moses...we wot not what is become of him" (Ex. 32:1). In place of God's will, they imposed their own will: "Up, make us gods." Let us learn that the will of man is no discerner of truth and right. Man's will is not to be trusted in holy things. Man's will can only lead us astray. Away with the will of man!

But blessed be the will of God! For the will of God is that Jesus deliver us from our sin and bondage. "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4). And blessed be Jesus Christ, who has done all God's will on

behalf of his people. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). Indeed, "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). And Jesus has performed all this obedience on our behalf, for God "grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had had nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me; inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart" (Lord's Day 23, Q&A 60).

"Up, make us gods," said the willful children of Israel to Aaron.

But Jesus said to his Father, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. 40:8).

—AL



You are cordially invited to:

Two free Public Lectures

First Lecture:

GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE

God said to Noah, "I establish my covenant with you" (Gen. 9:9). God said to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). God said about Isaac, "My covenant will I establish with Isaac" (Gen. 17:21). God speaks about his "covenant with Jacob" (Lev. 26:42). The Bible calls the New Testament "a new covenant" (Heb. 8:13). The covenant must be very important, since God so often speaks of it. But what is God's covenant, and what does it mean for God's people?

God's covenant is the relationship of friendship that he establishes with his people in Jesus Christ. The truth of God's covenant is good news for us who are sinful and lonely and unsatisfied here on this earth. For the truth of the covenant means that God, in Jesus Christ, graciously makes his people his own children and dwells with us in blessed fellowship forever. How wonderful is God's covenant!

We cordially invite you to join us for a public lecture explaining and rejoicing in God's everlasting covenant of grace.

Second Lecture:

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ADAM

God's covenant with Adam is a much-discussed but little-understood truth of God's everlasting covenant of grace with his people in Christ. Was God's covenant with Adam a covenant of works? Or was it a covenant of grace? Or was it something else? Was God's covenant with Adam a covenant under the law? Or was it a covenant of promise? Could Adam merit with God? Can Christ? The questions multiply and many answers are proposed, and confusion sets in. But what is the truth of God's covenant with Adam?

We cordially invite you to join us for a public lecture in which we seek to bring the clarity of the gospel to bear on the truth of God's covenant with Adam.

Speaker: Rev Andrew Lanning
Date: 20 June 2026 (Saturday)
Time: 10 a.m.

Speaker: Rev Andrew Lanning
Date: 27 June 2026 (Saturday)
Time: 10 a.m.

Programme: Each lecture will be followed by Q&A, fellowship and refreshments.

Venue: 51 Cuppage Road, #03-03, S(229469). Room: **Valor**.

Directions: **Somerset MRT station**, Exit D; and it is behind The Centrepoint.

Buses to *Concorde Hotel*: 7, 14, 16, 65, 77, 106, 111, 174, 175, 190, 972. Walk to Koek Road, keep left through to the end (total distance, approx. 330m).

Organisers: Remnant Reformed Church (USA), with Remnant Reformed Fellowship of Singapore.

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Article CLXII: The Seven Churches of Asia: The Church That Lost Its First Love

(Synod approaching, we will temporarily run some material we had prepared for the press some time ago. It contains sketches from the book of Revelation, particularly on the seven churches addressed in the letters John is commanded to write.)

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: I know thy works, and thy toil, and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary.

But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works: or else I come to thee and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.—Rev. 2:1–7

The first vision of the book of Revelation covers the passage from chapter 1:9 to the end of chapter 3. It comprises two main parts, namely, the vision of the Lord in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks and the seven letters to the different churches of Asia Minor. The latter passage, comprising chapters 2 and 3, we are now to discuss. Its division is most naturally

determined by the various messages that are sent to the seven congregations addressed. We have already remarked with respect to these seven churches that they must be taken first of all in the historical sense of the word as really existing at the time when John is commissioned to write to them, but that at the same time they must serve as being typical of the condition of the church of Christ in general throughout this dispensation. They are selected from numerous other churches situated in the same community at that time for the simple reason that their sevenfold picture offered the clearest and most complete portraiture of the church in general. The question, however, may be raised and has been raised and disputed frequently by interpreters, whether we must understand the totality, the completeness of the church, as symbolized undoubtedly in the number seven, as being a contemporaneous, simultaneous, or a successive totality. Both views have been defended by commentators in the past, and both still find their champions today.

There are those who advocate the view that in these seven messages, picturing seven different conditions in the church of Christ on earth, we must discover a portraiture of seven distinct phases in the history of the church. According to this view it is possible to discern in history the same order of different dominant conditions in the church of God as the one in which the seven epistles of Christ to the seven churches of Asia are recorded in Rev. 2 and 3.

Each of these seven messages, then, must be applied to a period in the history of the church in this dispensation, from John's time to the second coming of Christ. But this view is plainly untenable. Already the fact that at the time when these

letters were written the church revealed itself not as presenting only one prominent feature, but under a sevenfold aspect, would contradict this view. All the seven congregations mentioned in the text existed simultaneously, and it cannot be maintained that one condition was dominantly, still less exclusively, the condition of the church in general. But besides, the history of the interpretation that is based on this successive view plainly justifies, as Godet remarks, that "One may doubtless, by taking up this latter standpoint, succeed in bringing out some ingeniously conceived points of harmony, but they always have a somewhat arbitrary character." Hence, we will not proceed from this standpoint whatsoever. Yet, it is our conviction that there is an element of truth in this view. As a whole the seven churches, no doubt, must be taken as typical of the church in its totality as it exists at any period of this dispensation. Every one of the seven types may, no doubt, be discovered at most any period. But the truth in the former standpoint is undoubtedly this, that these seven types or seven conditions are not all equally prominent and vivid in every period of the history of the church.

It goes without contradiction that in the history of the church different features appear on the foreground during different periods, according as it is a period of intellectualism or emotionalism or practiciness, a period of peace and luxury or of persecution and distress. In times of persecution, for instance, it will be the condition of the church in Smyrna that is dominant, while in times of material prosperity the churches of Sardis and Laodicea will most probably be reproduced in history. And on this basis there is, indeed, reason to believe that although the typified totality presented in these seven churches

must on the whole be taken in the simultaneous sense of the word, yet there is also succession, a succession which may very readily be understood in the order in which the churches are addressed, so that shortly before the completion of the kingdom and the second advent of Christ the church of Laodicea is most easily recognizable. And hence it is our view that we must neither find in these seven messages a historic record of seven rather definitely limited phases in history, nor a mere picture of a simultaneous totality, but that they are both simultaneous and, in a sense, successive.

As to the formal side of the seven letters to the churches in Asia, it may be remarked that they present much the same aspect. Each epistle begins with the address of the angel of the church, upon which follows immediately the self-announcement of him that sends these messages to the various congregations, the Lord of his church. Characteristic of these self-announcements of the Savior is that they are clothed in terms derived from the vision of 1:9–20. And with every salutation the Savior is careful so to express himself that the announcement is significant with a view to the condition of the church addressed. To the church that lost its first love and that is threatened with the removal of the candlestick of its place, he introduces himself as the one that walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks; to Smyrna, the church in tribulation, whom he promises a crown of life, he presents himself as the first and the last, who was dead and is alive again, etc. The announcement assumes its peculiar form every time in harmony with the condition of the church addressed.

(To be continued)

