



# REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

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

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And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

—Exodus 32:25–29

### Who Is on the Lord's Side?

**W**ho is on the Lord's side? There were many in Israel who were not on Jehovah's side. Instead, they were on the side of the golden calf. They were on the side of their lusting flesh. Even now, they lay naked before Moses in a spectacle of public fornication. Remember, Jehovah's fire still burned atop Mount Sinai! Remember, Jehovah's pillar of cloud still towered in the midst of the camp! Remember, Moses had broken the tables of the law; burned the golden calf, ground it to powder, and scattered the powder upon the water; and made the Israelites drink the gold-strewn water! While all of that was happening, these Israelites did not snatch their clothes and flee in shame but carried on in their sin! The full measure of their wickedness was revealed. They were not on the Lord's side.

It is a sobering truth of the wilderness. Not all who are of Israel are truly Israel. Not all who march under the Lord's cloud are on the Lord's side. Though they had Israelite names, the name of the Lord was not on them. Though they had Israelite blood, the blood of the Lamb did not cover them. Only the elect of God are on the Lord's side, for only they have God's promise (Rom. 9:8), and only they have been given to Christ (John 10:29). For the rest, they are of Israel, but they are not Israel (Rom. 9:6).

Who is on the Lord's side?

It was a call to separate. There were Israelites who had not worshiped the golden calf. And there were Israelites who had gotten swept up in the image worship but who now abhorred their sin. These were all on the Lord's side, and they must now separate from their impenitent brethren and come to Moses. "Let him come unto me" (Ex. 32:26). It is hard, this separation. It is very, very hard. Brother departed from brother, father from son, and son from mother. So also today, there is a spiritual cleaving of brother from brother, father from son, and son from mother. This is the cost of being on the Lord's side.

What was next was hardest: the excommunication of the impenitent. In the Old Testament excommunication was accomplished by death. The sons of Levi who gathered to Moses were sent into the camp with swords drawn. Who must they slay? Every man his brother, his companion, and his neighbor (Ex. 32:27). Who must they slay? Every man his father and his mother, his siblings, and his children (Deut. 33:9). Whoever—whenever!—continued impenitent. The Levites obeyed, and three thousand men died. So also today, the impenitent must be barred from the life-nourishing table of the Lord and thus be put out of Christ's church and the kingdom of heaven. "With such an

one no not to eat” (1 Cor. 5:11). This too is the cost of being on the Lord’s side.

Ah! Such a cost! One must deny himself and lose his heart and his life and his whole world! It is another truth of the wilderness. It is a truth very difficult to learn but very blessed. There is nothing—nothing!—as precious as Jehovah’s glory in Christ. And there is nothing—nothing!—happier than to be on the Lord’s side. For Christ is on the Lord’s side—indeed, at God’s right hand (Ps. 110:1).

And Christ infallibly brings his own to God. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (I Pet. 3:18). On the Lord’s side is the loss of all one’s life, but on the Lord’s side is the finding of eternal life by faith in Christ. “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt. 10:39).

Who is on the Lord’s side?

—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.

**Contacts:** *WhatsApp*, 8960 4637      *Email*, [sgchristian137@gmail.com](mailto:sgchristian137@gmail.com)

**Website:** <https://www.remnantreformedchurch.org/>

## NOTES ON HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

### A Significant Hiatus

In the reprint of Herman Hoeksema's *Banner* articles this week, Hoeksema continues his exposition of Revelation 2:1–7. These articles mark a hiatus from Hoeksema's regular treatment of Reformed doctrine that he was pursuing in the *Banner*, for the articles on Revelation were reprints of articles that Hoeksema had prepared earlier. The explanation for Hoeksema's hiatus is that the 1922 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) was meeting. The major item on synod's agenda was the case of Prof. Ralph Janssen, who was teaching higher critical views of scripture in the Christian Reformed seminary. Janssen had been exonerated of the charges against him in 1920 and had continued teaching in the seminary. But a committee that included Herman Hoeksema had been investigating new charges against him, and the committee was presenting its report at Synod 1922. The result of the committee's report would be the expulsion of Professor Janssen from the seminary.

The synodical decision was as follows: Whereas it has become evident that the instruction of Prof. Janssen as reflected in his students' and individual notes is unreformed in character, and whereas he through insubordination on his part has made it impossible for Synod in its investigation to go back of the students' notes, Synod was called to the sad task of deposing Professor Janssen. One vote against it. No new professor will be chosen this year to take Prof. Janssen's place.<sup>1</sup>

Little did Hoeksema know at the time that the aftermath of the Janssen controversy would be Hoeksema's own deposition from the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in 1924. In his writings in the *Banner* against Janssen, Hoeksema had publicly disagreed with Abraham Kuyper's

doctrine of common grace. But the leaders in the Christian Reformed Church loved Kuyper's common grace. In fact, already at Synod 1922 was an overture from Classis Hudson that took aim at Hoeksema's rubric *Our Doctrine* in the *Banner*. Even though synod ultimately decided not to treat the overture because of its ambiguity, it was apparent that forces within the denomination already considered common grace to be an important part of Christian Reformed doctrine. And those forces were preparing to move against Hoeksema.

Classis Hudson overtured Synod to see to it that in the department "Our Doctrine" in The *Banner* no important parts of our doctrine shall be denied. Decided that Synod could not take up this overture because no evidence was furnished to substantiate what the Hudson Classis asserts.<sup>2</sup>

Although Hoeksema did not know what the future held, known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. God was working everything according to his eternal counsel to bring the truth of his particular grace to the foreground in the Christian Reformed Church. With the Janssen controversy being decided and quickly receding into the background, the attention of the Christian Reformed denomination would soon be focused intently on the doctrine of God's grace. In two short years from the Janssen decision in 1922, Synod 1924 would adopt the three points of common grace. The classes of the CRC would then expel Hoeksema and others from their offices, thus persecuting those who rebuked the CRC for her errors and thus taking on the indelible mark of the false church.

### A Significant Error

God was preparing Hoeksema to fight in the great doctrinal battle of the ages. But God was also revealing that the battle belongs to the Lord and not

<sup>1</sup> Henry Beets, "Synod in Session, June 26–30, 1922 (Continued)," *Banner*, July 6, 1922: 422.

<sup>2</sup> Beets, "Synod in Session," 420.

to man. For even as Herman Hoeksema was standing for the truth of the scriptures at Synod 1922, the articles that he reprinted in the *Banner* taught the error of covenant communion with God through the faithfulness of man. God had led Hoeksema a long way in understanding the truth of God's particular grace for the elect in Christ. But in 1922 Hoeksema still carried some erroneous theology of the Christian Reformed Church. Looking back on this today, the church of Jesus Christ is reminded that her hope cannot rest upon her theologians—not even upon such a gifted and orthodox theologian as Herman Hoeksema. Rather, the church's foundation and salvation is Jesus Christ alone.

Hoeksema's error in the article reprinted elsewhere in *Reformed Pavilion* today is the error of a conditional covenant. Although Hoeksema did not use the term *conditional covenant*, he taught the error nevertheless. Hoeksema taught this error in his exposition of the promise that God made to the church in Ephesus: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). Hoeksema rightly understood God's promise to be that of covenant fellowship. The tree of life represents communion with God: "The tree of life in Paradise was a seal and sign of, a sacrament of that pure and perfect communion with God."

But Hoeksema wrongly taught that such covenant communion with God was obtained by man's works. For Adam in paradise:

We all remember that the Lord God placed two special trees in the garden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Both trees were designed to be a blessing to man. The tree of knowledge would be a blessing in a negative way. It concentrated the battle against the evil one, and by refraining from the tree man would win the struggle and overcome the devil. The tree of life was a blessing to man in the positive sense of the word. It was the divinely appointed means through which man should become partaker of life eternal in the way of obedience.

For the believer today:

Even as the tree of life in Paradise was a seal and sign of, a sacrament of that pure and perfect communion with God, which is life everlasting, so shall he that is faithful, faithful also in his love, receive the blessing that he may taste in perfection of that real spiritual communion through Jesus Christ, his Lord.

The truth of Adam in paradise is that he already had life with God. There was nothing more for Adam to obtain in paradise. And if one would speak of the higher life that is eternal and the higher paradise that is heavenly, then one must not speak of Adam's obedience. Adam's way to eternal life and the heavenly paradise was not the way of Adam's obedience. Rather, the way to eternal life for Adam, according to God's eternal decree, was the way of sin and grace. It was the impossible way of falling into death and being redeemed unto life. It was the way of Jesus Christ. This way is impossible for man, but it is the only divinely appointed way of salvation. For Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Any other way than Jesus Christ to communion with God—whether it be perfect Adam's way or fallen man's way—is the way of conditions. It is the way of a conditional covenant of works. And therefore it is no way at all. "For there is one God, and one"—and only one—"mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5).

### **A Significant Correction**

God did not leave Hoeksema in the error that is reflected in his article reprinted today. God would use the common grace controversy, among other things, to bring Hoeksema to see the truth of God's unconditional covenant of grace in Christ. Hoeksema would come to repudiate the idea of a covenant of works with Adam, as he would also come to repudiate the idea of a conditional covenant with men today.

God was merciful to Hoeksema in leading him to understand the truth more clearly, and he is merciful to us. For we who live more than a century after these articles were written are the

beneficiaries of the truth that God led Hoeksema to see so many years ago. How empty is man. How gracious is our God!

Let today's reader take up Hoeksema's article with discernment and understanding. And may

the God who preserves his truth generation after generation so preserve it among us yet today. "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Ps. 100:5).

—AL

## HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES

*The Banner*

July 13, 1922

(pp. 437–38)

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

### Article CLXVI: The Seven Churches of Asia: The Church That Lost Its First Love (continued)

**N**ow, this illustrates what we mean when we say that the congregation in Ephesus partly lived and labored on tradition at the time this epistle was written to her. What the engine power is for the boat is the power of love for the life of the church. That power had been abundant in the church of Ephesus; in the strength of that love, impelled by it from within, it had set out on its course of strong development in doctrine, in discipline, in works, in patience and cross-bearing and forbearance.

Gradually, however, the motive power of love in the bosom of the congregation had lost its original force. The first love was no more. What now was the result? Did the church show a noticeable indifference with regard to doctrine immediately? Did she of a sudden abandon all her labors and indolently sit down in partial or complete idleness? Not at all. For a time the church continued on the old way mechanically, forced onward by tradition. Mechanically she emphasized doctrine; mechanically she tried those that opposed the truth; mechanically she labored and toiled and had patience. But the original motive power, the real personal initiative, was found no more. Outwardly the change was hardly perceptible. Partly on the strength of those members that still possessed the old love, partly because of its former love, the church manifested almost the same energetic spirit, the same ardent enthusiasm as of old. It still was a church that might be considered ideal by many a looker-on,

possessing many an enviable feature, strong in doctrine, faithful in discipline, abundant in works and toil. But inwardly it was fast on the decline, dying for lack of spiritual strength. And I imagine that already at this very time there were some of the older members that considered the condition of the church as being very precarious. They would notice the soundness in regard to doctrine and be fully assured of its necessity; they would watch its labor and toil and judge it beautiful and commendable, and yet they would be aware of its lack of spiritual life and anxiously shaking their gray-haired heads would say: The real thing is wanting! It's going wrong!

III. Naturally, however, such a condition cannot be lasting. No more than the boat can perpetually keep on running after the power of the engine has ceased to force it ahead, no more can a church ultimately exist and labor from her own resources, drifting on tradition. And therefore the Lord comes to the church of Ephesus with his earnest admonition and warning to repent. "Remember, therefore, whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works," so the Lord rebukingly warns her. She must remember whence she is fallen. She must recall her former estate. She must call before her consciousness a picture of her former condition, when she still lived and labored in her first love. And drawing a conscious comparison of the past and the present she must be struck with the sad contrast and repent in dust and ashes, lay stress

once more on that original love, and return to the first works. And if the question is asked: Can the church recall and cultivate that love in her own strength; is it within the limits of her own power to instill in her own bosom that love she lost? we answer: No, not in the absolute sense of the word. We love because he loved first. Our love of Christ depends upon himself as he walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

But we must remember once more that the address is to the church as a whole. Surely, also to the individual covenant child the message may be addressed, “Repent and do the first works,” but here the situation is considerably different nevertheless. Here it is the church that is admonished. That church had laid all emphasis exclusively on doctrine and works and rather disregarded the true spiritual knowledge of the truth, the love that is of Christ Jesus. And that was not sufficient. In its preaching, in its pastoral labors, in its instruction, in its reception of members the church must, no doubt, also lay stress on the true love that is rooted in faith in Christ Jesus. It is surely not sufficient when members are received in the full communion of the church that they are acquainted with the doctrine of Scripture intellectually, or that they abound in church work. They must have knowledge of sin, knowledge of salvation, of their personal relation to Christ Jesus, spiritual knowledge. True, “*de intimis non judicat ecclesia*,”<sup>1</sup> the hypocrite cannot be discovered by the most scrutinizing investigation, but, nevertheless, sufficient stress must be laid on the subjective condition of the congregation.

It was exactly this that had been neglected by the church and its angel at this time. Intellectual attainments and practical Christianity were beautiful features of the church at Ephesus. But if you would make a house to house visitation of the families throughout the church, you would perhaps find that most of the members could keep up a lively conversation on all kinds of points of doctrine and on their work in the slum district of the city, but of a sudden they would be struck with a suspiciously profound silence the moment you would touch the question of personal faith and love.

<sup>1</sup> English translation: “the church does not judge what is within.”

Of this the congregation must repent, the minister first of all, and return to their first works.

Nor would I hesitate to say that the church may heed the same warning as also applying to her. True, many of the excellent qualities of the Ephesian church she possesses no more. True and sound knowledge of the truth are fast disappearing from her midst. Only work, work, work, is still the clamor of the time!

But besides neglecting the knowledge and the study of the Scriptures, the church of today is also characterized by a sad lack of true spiritual knowledge, of love that is rooted in faith. And, therefore, also to her comes the warning: “Repent and do the first works”! This admonition is enforced in two ways. Indirectly it is urged upon the church by the manner in which the Lord appears to her in his self-announcement. He introduces himself to the church as the one “that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” If we remember the significance of this from a former discussion, the meaning of it for the church of Ephesus will be plain. The words imply for them both a warning and an encouragement. A warning that the church is absolutely dependent upon him for its light and knowledge, for its strength and energy. If the tie that binds the congregation to the Lord is cut, the church must cease to live, cease to know, cease to labor and toil, cease to exist. Without him she can do nothing. But a word of encouragement it is in as far as it assures the church that Christ is still walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, that the connection still exists, that he still supplies their light and their energy, that he still holds the stars in his right hand.

And in the second place this admonition is enforced directly by the threat of judgment: “I will come to thee and remove thy candlestick out of its place.” The meaning of these words is not ambiguous. They announce Jesus coming as the King-Judge to inflict punishment upon the church that lost her love, a punishment in harmony with the spiritual condition of the church that is addressed.

Of course, when Jesus in this connection speaks of his coming, we do not think of his final coming for judgment in the end of time, but of a coming for the church of Ephesus in the natural historical sequence of events. Ephesus was losing its first love; she was severing her connection with the one that walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks. If she did not repent and return to the first works and again emphasize true love and spiritual knowledge, the inevitable result would be that she would cease to exist. Her light and her strength, yea her very life would disappear for the simple reason that she would be separated from the Source of these, Jesus Christ. Ultimately she would cease to exist, and her place would be found no more. The candlestick would be removed out of her place. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The admonition assumes a general character, yet again limiting itself now to the spiritual children of God. Only they have ears through the grace of God, only they can hear and heed. But for the rest the Spirit doth not speak to the one particular church of Ephesus, but to the churches in general. Unto the churches of John's time, but also unto the church of our own age the message is directed. A church may be abounding in works, and this is beautiful. She may be strong in the truth, and this is indispensable. But after all, if the love of Christ is lacking, it will be of no avail. And, therefore, also this true spiritual love that finds its root and its strength in faith must be emphasized by the church of Christ today. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!

But the letter does not close with this threat of judgment. On the contrary, it culminates in a most beautiful and comforting promise to the faithful. Many there were still at this time that were faithful and that possessed the first love, that stood in real spiritual relationship with him that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. They were aware of the declining life of the church, they noticed its deterioration because of its lack of love. They still fought the good fight. Shall they also perish with the rest? Not at all! "To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God."

It needs no special argument to prove that this glorious promise is clothed in the garb of symbolism. The figure is derived from man's condition in Paradise before he fell into sin. We need not review that condition in detail. We all remember that the Lord God placed two special trees in the garden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Both trees were designed to be a blessing to man. The tree of knowledge would be a blessing in a negative way. It concentrated the battle against the evil one, and by refraining from the tree man would win the struggle and overcome the devil. The tree of life was a blessing to man in the positive sense of the word. It was the divinely appointed means through which man should become partaker of life eternal in the way of obedience.

The truth of this statement is plain from the words the Lord God spoke concerning Adam's relation to this tree of life after he had sinned. He drove Adam and Eve out of Paradise, placing an angelic guard at the entrance to keep the way of the tree of life, "lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever." To eat of the tree of life, therefore, signifies to be in touch with the source of life forevermore. Thus the meaning of these words is plain. "He that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life that is in the Paradise of God." Even as the tree of life in Paradise was a seal and sign of, a sacrament of that pure and perfect communion with God, which is life everlasting, so shall he that is faithful, faithful also in his love, receive the blessing that he may taste in perfection of that real spiritual communion through Jesus Christ, his Lord. Now he merely has a foretaste of that life, then he shall freely eat. Now he beholds as in a glass darkly, a faint image, then he shall see face to face. Now he knows in part, then he shall know as he is known. For faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these is love. Once love shall be perfected and fear be driven out and communion with God most pure and intimate, and we shall live and love and love and live, and know and work the works of God forevermore!

(To be continued)