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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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If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

—Exodus 21:2–6

Mine Ears Thou Bored

The judgments that God delivered to Israel through Moses opened with the year of release. Hebrew slaves were to “go out free for nothing” in the seventh year. The year of release was the beautiful gospel of our liberation through the finished work of Jesus Christ. In Christ and his cross, we slaves to sin and death “go out free for nothing.”

God immediately followed the gospel of the year of release with the gospel of the bored ear. The gospel of the bored ear is every bit as wonderful and liberating as the gospel of the year of release. Shall we look in for a moment on the scene that the Lord has described?

Over there is a Hebrew slave. He has served his master for the full term of six years. It is now the first day of the seventh year, and he is about to “go out free for nothing.” This slave was married when he became a slave. In such a case the slave's wife would accompany him in his freedom. “His wife shall go out with him.”

But over there is another Hebrew slave. He also has served his master for the full term of six years. It is now the first day of the seventh year; and he, too, is about to “go out free for nothing.” But this slave was not married when he became a slave. During the course of his term of six years, his master gave him one of the female slaves to be his wife. During his six years of service, the slave and his slave wife also had

children. In such a case the slave was to go out by himself the seventh year. His wife and his children would remain slaves to the master until her full term of six years of service was complete. “If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.” Because the man would go out by himself and the woman would remain with her master, the husband would be apart from his wife and children for the remaining term of her slavery.

Now, here is the gospel of the bored ear. The freed slave was able to declare that he wished to remain a slave in his master's house. The slave loved his master. The slave loved his wife. The slave loved his children. The slave did not want to leave them but to remain with them all as a servant of his beloved master forever, living with his beloved wife and his beloved children. “And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.”

What a glorious provision! For it is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the slave who loves his master, Jehovah. Jesus is the slave who loves

his wife, the church. Jesus is the slave who loves his children, the sons and daughters of Zion. Jesus is the slave who forever and ever remains the servant of Jehovah for our salvation. Jesus says, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8). As the testimony of his everlasting service to Jehovah on behalf of his beloved church, Jesus’ ear was bored. Not in the sense that Jesus had his physical ear pierced while he was on earth but in the

sense of the spiritual reality that Jesus ever lives to serve Jehovah.

Our Lord sings of his everlasting servanthood: “Mine ears hast thou opened” (Ps. 40:6, King James Version). The word *opened* is literally *bored*, as the metrical psalms translate it: “Mine ears thou bored” (Ps. 40:6, Scottish Metrical Version). That is the gospel of Jesus’ everlasting service to God and his everlasting love for his church. It is the blessed gospel of the bored ear.

—AL

FROM THE EDITOR

Wintery February is upon us. And a wintry month it is, at least for many of our readers. Even this month’s full moon is named for winter—the Snow Moon. Our God, according to his purpose, opens his storehouses and bestows the treasures of the snow. God casteth forth his ice like morsels, and who can stand before his cold? Amidst the continuing winter and the coming Snow Moon and ice and storms, a warm greeting to our readers, near and far.

Speaking of our readers, near and far, I noticed this week that the *Reformed Pavilion* website has regular visitors from many interesting places. At least one visitor from six of Earth’s seven continents has visited the site in the last month: Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, South America, and North America. The only continent unaccounted for is Antarctica. However, there was one visitor from “Unknown.” I like to imagine that our unknown reader was from Antarctica, perhaps a visiting scientist. He came in from a long day of counting penguins, made himself a steaming pot of coffee, and caught up on the latest *Reformed Pavilion*. Ah, well, perhaps that is hardly likely, but one never knows.

The issue this month features two articles by Mrs. Connie Meyer. It is probably no secret to readers of *Reformed Pavilion* that the Reformed Protestant Churches (RPC) have been convulsed these past months by great ecclesiastical violence.

Both the perpetrators and the victims of the violence claim that the convulsions in the RPC are a doctrinal controversy over the antithesis. In her first article Mrs. Meyer shows that the convulsions are not really because of the doctrine of the antithesis but because of the will and the violence of men.

In her second article Mrs. Meyer addresses the doctrine of the antithesis very beautifully, spiritually, and soundly. Thus God has caused the evil of men in the RPC to turn to the advantage of his church by advancing our understanding of the glorious gospel of the antithesis. This reader found both articles to be of great profit.

Also in this issue is Herman Hoeksema’s next *Banner* article. The reader will notice that Hoeksema gave the entire space of his rubric over to Prof. Ralph Janssen. Janssen used the space to labor with might and main to deflect attention from his own higher criticism and to direct attention to Hoeksema’s denial of common grace. It was a dishonest tactic on Janssen’s part because it ignored the real issue of whether scripture was divine and trustworthy. Nevertheless, in his own perfect time, God would use Hoeksema’s controversy with Janssen to bring the doctrine of God’s particular grace to the foreground.

With that, come in from the cold and settle in for a bit with the new issue of *Reformed Pavilion*.

—AL

Why Is the Antithesis an Issue Right Now in the Reformed Protestant Churches?

The current controversy in the Reformed Protestant Churches (RPC) involving the idea of the antithesis has a context. A quarrel this severe about how the truth of the antithesis ought to be applied in the lives of Reformed Christians does not occur in a vacuum. The question is, what is that context? Why has this particular doctrine become an issue in those churches?

As is often the case, the matters involved are complex, and perhaps not all of the pieces of the puzzle have been overturned. Jigsaw puzzles are more difficult when there are more pieces to fit together. Nevertheless, some of the pieces we do have to work with include such things as tyranny, pride, and putting one's own will above all.

But to see such things, we need to back up to when everything in the RPC appeared to be going very well. There had been some controversies rocking the boat, such as proximity to the sanctuary in worship and the reasons behind Christian school education, but neither of those issues had threatened to overturn the newly formed church institution. Only two years after the Reformed Protestant Churches were born as a denomination, however, there was another controversy that did capsize those churches. Exclusive psalmody became a major source of contention and did so very suddenly and intensely.

I will not recount the details of the history of that time. Such information can be found elsewhere. My purpose is to recount the significance of those events. A minister and an elder were suspended, and two elders were deposed. In a denomination consisting of only several churches with two experienced ministers, one candidate for the ministry, and a couple of seminary students on the horizon, that represented a major loss. But the loss was not primarily in numbers. The Reformed Protestant Churches

appeared on the surface to nevertheless survive and float along in a fine manner. But their boat had suffered a serious hemorrhage in the course of those events, a fatal leak. The sovereignty of man's will in worship would let through all the water and sludge required to sink the vessel to the bottom of the sea just as decisively and quickly as it had capsized earlier.

Pride and tyranny came sluicing in through the fatal leak that had been sprung. No one can deny that for one to lord it over another one is tyranny, and no one can deny that such lording occurred in that denomination. Some will argue that this group was guilty of the tyranny, and some will argue that that group was guilty of the tyranny; but that tyranny was present all can agree. Also, regardless of such opinions, the tyranny continues. Tyranny and pride go hand in hand. They will both naturally bubble forth out of the hole called "man" that is in the bottom of one's boat. Man's will is decisive in the RPC. The gaping hole is there.

When the judgment was made in the RPC that the songs that are to be sung in the official worship of Jehovah God must be those of men's choices, that was death to those churches. That is not to use too strong of language. It was death because that carnal insistence represented a rejection of Christ's songs, which was to reject Christ himself, which was to reject the gospel. No, the numbers they lost are nothing. The RPC lost Christ; and losing Christ, they lost everything.

I can hear protestations against that contention, of course. Satan has quite effectively managed to poison the Reformed Protestant denomination against singing the songs of David—of Christ—in worship as a glorious fruit of gratitude, according to God's will. "Exclusive psalmody is legalism!" "I have the Holy Spirit in me, so I know what is good to sing, and I can sing

what I like!” To quote a recent document born out of the present chaos in the denomination, “We have the freedom to apply the distinctive doctrines of the Reformed faith with our spirit-directed consciences.”¹

I believe that statement would ring true with every member of the RPC who rejected exclusive psalmody as God’s will for worship and maintains his own will when it comes to singing in church. When God’s will is rejected in any element of worship, there must be an underlying justification for such a rejection. Here it is. We have the Holy Spirit in us, and we can decide these things for ourselves, thank you very much. The statement above was meant to be directed toward one’s freedom to apply the antithesis to one’s own life; but it sets forth a dangerous principle, nevertheless, a principle that also arises out of the Reformed Protestant view on singing in church. What will happen when someone with the Spirit over here wants to sing something different than another person with the Holy Spirit over there? It is bound to happen. There is no ground left to stand on in that case, except for man’s will. And man’s will means pride and tyranny. Those are the only possible options left. Someone will insist on getting his own way, and someone is going to have to bend to the lord insisting on getting his own way. Or else. Only in that manner will such a system work in that world.

Also, when God’s will is rejected with regard to worship, the rejection of God’s will cannot possibly stop there. That is also where the antithesis question comes in. According to one faction, you must shun and belittle anyone who does not belong to your church and agree with you on every point of your doctrine. If you do not, you are liable for discipline in your church.

According to another faction, well, you need not go quite so far as that. The complaint of the second faction is that legalism has now been applied to the antithesis, so that the antithesis has become a matter of the law instead of a matter of the gospel. I believe that assessment is correct. Such an application of the doctrine of the antithesis has, then, indeed become a man’s invented law. You must say this and do that, exactly as prescribed. The doctrine has become legalistic at that point.

What needs to be seen, however, is that this legalism, as it is being applied now to the antithesis, arises out of the denomination’s legalistic view of psalmody, a view that was adopted when the RPC officially rejected exclusive psalmody. Why do they sing the psalms of David at all in church? Because they want to. Because that happens to coincide with the freedom of their consciences—at the moment. Not because it is God’s law that coincides with the freedom that God’s laws represent. What does that leave them with? Man’s will and man’s laws...and a big mess. Legalism has indeed occurred in the RPC but not on the part of the exclusive psalmodists. Exclusive psalmody has been grievously falsely accused.

The doctrine of exclusive psalmody arises from the gospel of the psalms themselves. God’s psalms have brought us more blessing and more gospel than we could have ever imagined. We did nothing to get that blessing. We did not even know that blessing was there in the psalms to get. But God knew it was there. The psalms that Christ sings are ours! He gave them to us to sing. That is true blessing. That is true freedom. That is true gospel. By God’s grace, no man shall ever take that gospel away.

—Connie L. Meyer



¹ “A Call to Freedom and Unity in Christ,” 1. This was the document distributed by those who have just left the RPC. Copies are available upon request.

The Antithesis in Real Time

A controversy is presently swirling around us regarding what the antithesis between the church and the world actually looks like. That there is an antithesis is not a question. Genesis 3:15 makes clear that God has put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. That is the antithesis we are talking about. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” But what exactly does that enmity look like in real time in our lives? That has become a question, a burning question in some circles and a question with sad answers in some cases. Let us make a few key observations to begin to unpack the practical implications of the antithesis, as it is revealed in God’s word.

What exactly is the antithesis? In Genesis 3:15 all of its defining elements are already there. The rest of scripture develops the antithesis and gives further details about it; but everything we need to know, God told Adam and Eve immediately after their fall into sin. In short, the antithesis, which is the contrast between light and darkness and between elect and reprobate, has everything to do with God’s covenant and the salvation of his people. The antithesis is not only an evidence or a manifestation of God’s covenant and gracious salvation; it is also part of God’s covenant and salvation, an integral part. Genesis 3:15 not only tells us that there is an antithesis, but that same text is also known as the “mother promise,” the first declaration to mankind of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The relationship among the antithesis, the covenant, and our salvation bears more examination, therefore. Those are all rolled into one in this verse. That is significant.

The first and perhaps most obvious thing we can notice in Genesis 3:15 is that God alone establishes the antithesis. God said, “I will put

enmity...” God made that enmity of which the antithesis consists. Adam did not. And one thing we can learn from that observation is that it is not our job nor prerogative to make sure the antithesis exists. God will take care of that without our help, even as he did not need Adam to bring about the enmity in the first place. God *alone* made the enmity. The enmity, in fact, was news to Adam and Eve. It was good news! It was news they never could have imagined on their own. The serpent was the real enemy? Adam and Eve didn’t understand that yet. They had been hiding from God as if he had become their enemy. What? God still wanted them to draw near to him? God was still their friend? God would speak to them, clothe them with skins of animals killed on their behalf, and fight for them? There would be enmity between the world of wickedness, led by Satan, and another kingdom, led by the seed of the woman, who would have certain victory over the wicked seed? Oh, this was good news, good news indeed! Not that some “Plan B” was now necessary to rescue the situation for Adam and Eve. The victorious Seed was the plan all along. Jesus Christ was ever and always and eternally the only plan God ever decreed to bring his glory to full manifestation. Christ is *the* Elect, *the* Seed of the woman, in opposition to, at war with, and victorious over the seed of the serpent. Therein is our salvation. All of that was news to Adam and Eve. It is news to us. May we never grow weary of that news. It is the gospel.

But now we may ask, exactly what does that kind of salvation in connection with the antithesis look like? Put simply, what it looks like is that God establishes the war, he fights for us in that war, and he wins that war through Jesus Christ. But how does that happen? How does God fight for us? Does he use us and need our help to do it? We have already seen that God did not

need Adam to establish any enmity. The enmity was all news to Adam. But what about God's Old Testament, militant church? Didn't God need Israel in this warfare? The Israelites were involved in fighting many battles on God's side, so let's consider that. Some of their battles are particularly instructive.

One evening the people of Jerusalem went to bed trembling in fear, under siege by the massive Assyrian army that had completely encamped around the city. The next morning they woke up, and that same huge army that had surrounded them was completely dead. *Dead*. Second Kings 19:35 reads, "And when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." Behold, indeed! The angel of the Lord had utterly destroyed Sennacherib's mighty army in the night. That victory speaks volumes. Sometimes the Israelites were given the victory when they did have to swing their swords and shoot their arrows in grueling combat, but the odds were always impossibly against them. Every one of their victories was a miracle. No, God did not need Israel's help to win any battles, and he certainly does not need ours. Imagine the atmosphere there that morning inside the city: the astonishment, the relief, and the thanksgiving. God fought for them, and God won. Period. It was a wonder.

That is our salvation. God alone fights, and God alone wins. Satan cannot steal us out of God's glorious kingdom of grace and righteousness. In I Samuel 17:47 we read, "The battle is the LORD'S." Those words of David to Goliath speak volumes as well. The battle is God's alone, and so is the victory. And those words were spoken directly to the enemy. David there, as a type of Christ, faced that wicked giant alone. The battle truly is the Lord's. We'll come back to that well-known event directly; but for now, what happened there between one ruddy young man and one seasoned monster of a warrior makes abundantly clear that God alone saves.

This Reformed truth is relatively easy to state: God alone saves. It is not so easy to follow through with that truth in real time, however.

That is the problem in understanding the antithesis too. News of the antithesis is also news of the covenant and news of our sure salvation in Jesus Christ. With which one of those things does God require our help? Certainly not with salvation in Jesus Christ: Christ did enough; Christ did it all and finished it all. Certainly not with the covenant: God alone establishes the covenant of friendship that he has with his people, and he alone maintains and perfects that covenant relationship with them. Nothing depends on us. Many people who consider themselves to be Reformed will agree with those contentions. But what about the antithesis? God made a vast spiritual gulf to exist between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. That was his work. But still, don't we also have a calling to maintain that antithesis and to live out that antithesis in our lives? Doesn't the antithesis in that way depend at least somewhat on what we do? That is the question we need to consider.

I have often heard that it is our calling to maintain the antithesis in the midst of this world, but the meaning of that instruction can be taken in at least two ways. It can be understood to mean that it is our calling to maintain the *truth* of the antithesis, the doctrine of it; or it can be taken more literally to mean that we must maintain the existence of the antithesis by what we do in this world. If the latter is true, the enmity of the antithesis becomes our responsibility to maintain and keep alive in this world. But is that perception true?

Examining all of this further in the light of Genesis 3:15 should help. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The first observation we have made is that we do not put that enmity there. Only God puts it there. That is clear. But now are we supposed to do something to keep the enmity there and to carry it out? Nothing in the verse indicates that notion either. In fact, if we understand the pronouns in this verse correctly, those words were not even addressed to Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve overheard those

words; God made sure they overheard them; but just like David specifically addressed Goliath on the field of battle, in this verse God only addressed Satan, declaring war with him and sure victory over him.

And just like Saul's army simply stood there watching David sling one smooth stone and then saw Goliath fall face down to the ground, Adam and Eve were on the sidelines, watching. That is all God's people ever do to save themselves. We do nothing. We watch God do it. Is that a blow to our self-righteous egos? It is. Adam and Eve did nothing to effect the victory that God would work out in all of world history to save his people by the seed of the woman, who is the Seed, Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). They had no idea such a thing was even possible. All they knew was that they had sinned, they were guilty and naked, and they were now very afraid of God. Neither do we have any other knowledge than that, except God reveals his salvation to us. God told Satan that he, Satan, would be involved in perpetual warfare between his own wicked children and the children of God. God also told Satan that the savior of God's people would crush the serpent's head. When God bruises the heads of his enemies, there is no remedy. Satan will be utterly destroyed. And at the same time, that destruction will be the salvation of God's people, a salvation decreed from all eternity, which can never be thwarted or undone. God is God. Satan ought to have given up in dread humiliation and terror from that moment on, but instead he has been determined in relentless fury to win over against God and God's promise ever since. The war, the antithesis, had certainly begun, just as God had said. And God made it happen. Satan was fulfilling all of God's purposes in spite of himself. Adam and Eve just stood there and watched.

The implication of all of this is clear. God himself is our offense in the battle. In fact, God told Abram, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). God is both our offense and our defense. What about the armor of Ephesians 6 that God equips us with? Don't

we have to carry a shield, the shield of faith that is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph. 6:16)? Yes, we do need that, but that shield of faith is a very spiritual gift. Faith is not our work. To have faith as our shield is to have God as our shield. And doesn't God give us a sword, as well, for fighting offense in his battles? Ah, he does give us that too, but it is the word of God: "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v. 17). *The word of God* is our offense. That needs to sink in. David had no sword of steel in his hand when he confronted Goliath. Scripture makes a point of that fact in I Samuel 17:50: "So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David." The sling and stone were as nothing against such a mighty, armored soldier. That David had no sword in his hand was significant.

What is the significance? We might not go around swinging shining swords in our hands, but our personal actions and words might work just as well. The problem is that our actions and words were never meant to be offensive to anyone, no more than a real metal sword is our weapon. God's word alone is the only weapon of offense in this war, and that can be read as *off-ense* or *off-ense*. God's faithful soldiers are meek. Meekness is not weakness. It is a great spiritual strength in this world of sin and death. How did Jesus overcome the devil in those three hours of darkness in the fullness of time? In being as meek as a lamb. It was not what anyone expected, not even his disciples. No, Peter was told to put down his molten, forged sword. There was another sword operating there, the sword of the word of God, who was *the Word*. As the Lamb of God, the Word of God won. Now, we must ask, is the battle any different today?

God's word is mighty to save, as mighty as his word was to bring all things into existence out of nothing and as mighty as it is to maintain that existence as long as he decrees. God's word of truth needs no defense. Augustine has been attributed with this quote: "The truth is like a

lion. You don't have to defend it. Let it loose. It will defend itself." In light of the mighty power of God's word (read Psalm 19 for one description), that is undoubtedly true. God doesn't need worms such as we are to rend the heavens for his glory. But how easy it is for us to think that he does! That is our nature.

To wield a bold and confident confession of and quick knowledge of God's word, along with the creeds that interpret that word, is good. That is where the power is—in God's word—and that word must be spoken in witness of his truth. Be ready to give an answer, scripture tells us. That means we are indeed ready to speak and do not remain silent. But the power is not additionally in our own personally directed sharp tongues, condescending attitudes, rude manners, or smug shunning. God's truth doesn't need our drama for defense. In our misdirected zeal, that is where we can err.

Looking at the closest possible relationship that exists on this earth, that of husband and wife, can be helpful here. First Corinthians 7:12–16 instructs us that in the case of an unbelieving spouse, the believing spouse is not to leave if the unbeliever permits him or her to stay. The believing spouse is certainly not to drive the unbelieving spouse away. "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (v. 16). In this passage we see a poignant example of what it means for believers and unbelievers to interact together in real time when the antithesis may be present even in one's own house. Our Lord mercifully makes an exception to that rule for when the gross sin of adultery is present. Separation may be necessary in that situation for a number of grievous reasons. But even then, leaving the sinning spouse is not commanded. And leaving an unbelieving spouse is certainly not commanded.

First Peter 3:4 also tells us what ought to adorn all believing wives. Such adornment will naturally be her witness to the world as well. What is that particularly beautiful piece of jewelry? A meek and quiet spirit is that precious

ornament of her life. And what does such meekness say, especially if she is married to an unbelieving husband? It says loudly and clearly that the power is not in me, not in my manipulation, not in my intimidation, not in my threatening, not in my calculation or attempts to change you, but in God's word and God's will alone. That kind of witness waits on God to work in hearts, which work only he can do. That principle applies not only to wives though. Paul also lays this out in Titus 3:1–3:

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived...

A true witness remembers that none of us is any better than anyone else.

In fact, the root meaning of *witness* in this biblical context is *martyr*. To be a martyr is to be persecuted by a wicked oppressor who wants to uphold the lie over against the truth, seeking to destroy the truth and you with it. The psalms brim over with this reality. We may ask, therefore, is my witness one of being persecuted for the truth or one of being a persecutor for, supposedly, the truth? An honest answer to that question can be very revealing. None of us are immune to falling on the wrong side of the fence. It is our nature to pick up a physical sword as quickly and as zealously as Peter ever did. A dark and lowered eye of disdain, a curled lip of contempt, and words toned with derision can constitute the sharpest of such earth-hewn daggers. We need to examine, in that case, where we think the real power lies.

Going back to Genesis 3:15 once more, how can we tell if we are personally offending others, rather than letting the word alone be the offense, or if our witness is one of genuine and proper zeal for God's truth? Genesis 3:15 minces no words. A real separation was established there. Two vastly different spiritual seeds would now be identified on the earth. But what was the

essence of that separation? What was the point of God's making that kind of enmity to exist? Was it so that God's elect people would live over here, and Satan's reprobate seed would live over there, and they would perpetually remain separated from one another? The sheep must be separated from the goats, after all. Ought we not see to it that such separation begins to happen already now? That physical separation will happen, but not yet. Jesus taught a parable to illustrate the truth that such separation must wait until the end. It must wait lest the wheat be pulled up with the tares (Matt. 13:24–30). If it would happen too soon, in fact, that would defeat God's purpose in making the enmity in the first place. It is not God's will to take us out of the world. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). We must remain in this world. Why? God's will is that we be witnesses of his glorious name to all the world. One has to be in the world in order to do that. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God" (Isa. 43:12). Another reason is that being involved in such warfare teaches us something. That was the picture when God purposefully left some heathen nations next to Israel in Canaan. "That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua" (Judges 2:22–23). If two opposing sides are completely separated from one another and are content to be thus separated, there is no need for any enmity or warfare to exist between them anymore.

Genesis 3:15 is not about a separation of distance. The separation God intends on this earth is spiritual. That is played out in the earliest example of this enmity given in the Bible. Cain and Abel were brothers, and they worshiped together, but they did not worship in the same way. The separation was not one of physical proximity at all. They were of the same household—until Abel's body was buried in the

ground. But Cain wanted to worship how Cain wanted to worship, and Abel worshiped God how God wanted to be worshiped. That was the difference. In the God-ordained division between Cain and Abel the two seeds were evident, two different seeds who lived together on the earth, one being elect and one being reprobate. That decreed difference was the essential difference between them and, in fact, would be the only real difference that ever exists between people on this earth. All races, tribes, and tongues will be united in Jesus Christ. Whether one is in Christ or not is the only factor that matters. The real enmity is not outward at all but spiritual. That is significant.

Jacob and Esau were two men also of the same family yet of two completely different spiritual seeds. In fact, God had revealed to Isaac and Rebecca that their twin sons would illustrate in an extraordinary way the antithesis he had made. Esau was the reprobate, and Jacob was the elect. The older shall serve the younger. But now I ask you, if you had been a servant seeing the events that unfolded in that household, who would you have judged to be the holier person there? Without an explicit prophecy given by God, would not we conclude that Jacob, with all of his conniving deceit, was the more likely candidate for reprobation? Esau was admittedly a profane and worldly person, but he also appeared to be a "nice" guy outwardly. Isaac even preferred him, at least for some time.

That illustrates that of those whom we personally encounter in this life, we cannot judge who are elect or who are reprobate, nor may we. God knows who are his, and that is all we need to know for now. God will separate the sheep from the goats when the time comes. Until then, it truly is not our business to know; else God would tell us. God is God. That he knows who is who is his glory. Think for a moment what it would be like if we did know who was who. It would be horrible for at least three reasons. First, because not all loved ones in all families are elect, as much as we would wish them to be. God is the potter, the wise potter. We are the clay. Only by God's grace can we leave it there. This life is not

the time for us to have such knowledge. Second, no elect is any better in himself than any reprobate. Being lifted up in pride as an elect over against others would always be a temptation. Third, if we could look honestly at the situation and see that all are sinners, including ourselves, such knowledge would also be a source of too great a grief for us, as we would know that we deserve to be reprobated just as much as any reprobate. What has made us to differ? Nothing, nothing but grace. Without the theodicy to come first (which is God's public justification of himself in all of his dealings with men in Jesus Christ, showing how and why it is just and right that the elect are in heaven with him and the reprobate are in hell), we would be tempted to despair of the justice of God in saving us, when we are just as undeserving in ourselves as any reprobate. We can thank God that we do not know who is who in this life. We could not handle it.

But Isaac and Rebecca knew. God had revealed why there was such turmoil within Rebecca's womb when she was pregnant. Severe warfare was going on there, warfare that didn't even pause for her sons' birth. Jacob held onto Esau's heel through the whole ordeal, and it wasn't out of endearment. He was fighting for God's covenant blessing even then. He never stopped. All of this is instruction to us that the enmity that God has put in the world between elect believers and reprobate unbelievers is real. It is no myth and no legend. Isaac and Rebecca knew how real it was.

Now the question is, how did they as parents deal with that knowledge? Did they have any thought to treat Esau with contempt and disdain or to put him away from their midst? Far from it. Jacob was the one who left first, fleeing for his life from the murderous intentions of his brother. A physical parting did occur then, but it was not occasioned by anyone's thinking to cast out a reprobate. Persecution often necessitates physical separation. Jacob's impersonation of his twin brother was bad, but everyone knew afterward that it was God's will for Jacob to have the covenant blessing. With no regard for God's

will, twenty years later Esau was still intent on killing Jacob when Jacob returned to Canaan. A powerful man is not looking for a solicitous meeting when he gathers four hundred men to accompany him to it. He could taste Jacob's blood. It was only the mercy of God that tempered Esau's mind and saved Jacob and his household from certain slaughter. Because the land could not bear all of their cattle and possessions together, Esau took his tribe away to live on Mount Seir, while Jacob's family stayed in Canaan. They never meshed. They had nothing in common spiritually. Nevertheless, Jacob never set out to eradicate Esau and his family from off the earth. He exercised no personal vengeance against his brother Esau, even knowing that Esau was a dangerous and an evil man. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). Those are no idle words. God did repay Edom (Ezek. 25:13–14). Jacob himself did not. That is significant.

The antithesis for us is purely spiritual in nature. Continuing with the example of Jacob and Esau, can we say that Jacob was less of a sinner than Esau was? We cannot. That answer might seem surprising to us, especially if we have harbored a notion that sanctification can be equated with doing good works or being less of a sinner. But consider this: Paul confessed to be the chief of sinners, and he was quite possibly the holiest man alive. He wasn't lying. He was chief. The more we know, the more we have to answer for. Besides that, every elect on this earth still has a totally depraved nature residing within his flesh. God must save us not only from Satan's grasp and from the lies of wicked men but also from ourselves! The battle is intensely spiritual. There is no difference whatsoever between the elect and reprobate except for one thing—that is grace. We are chief of sinners, all of us. Grace is the only thing that separates us, grace that is shown to all those chosen to be elect in Jesus Christ, who is the Elect. Now, are we going to lift ourselves up above others in pride for our knowledge of the truth and faith in Jesus Christ, both of which are pure gifts of grace that we do not deserve any more than

anyone else, maybe even less, if such questions are even to be asked?

We do not judge who is elect and who is reprobate. We may not. In Jesus' parable the angels are not allowed to prematurely separate the wheat from the tares. Even the archangel Michael dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil (Jude 9), though such an accusation would undoubtedly have been true. We do judge between the truth and the lie, however. We do judge between godliness and ungodliness. We do judge between a true church and a false church. We must judge those things. Church discipline in a true church of Jesus Christ is a real judgment as well. Such judgments may require decisions to be made concerning physical circumstances. I will be present at this church for worship and not at that one. I will spend time in the company of these people, who live in the love of God's truth and his commandments, and not with those who do not. But we do not judge any individual heart or soul. That is another matter. We do not know who God might yet have reserved to pluck out of this world's darkness into his marvelous light. We were all children of darkness ourselves before God took us out of that mire. There may be no boasting in consideration of the doctrine of the antithesis. There is every reason for humility, though. God chooses us. God saves us. God fights for us. What have we done? Nothing.

Many more verses could be cited to explain what the antithesis might mean in our lives from a practical point of view, verses that demonstrate that even a separation of physical proximity will at times result out of the spiritual separation that the antithesis embodies. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" These words from II Corinthians 6:14 are a prime example. Again, the separation is real, whether physically seen or not. We need make no apology for being of a different mind, living a different life, and making a different confession. The separation that God has created between those of his kingdom of grace and those

of the kingdom of Satan will become evident in many ways. God will make it to be evident because it is the antithesis that he has made. Some are also rightfully set outside the kingdom of God and fellowship of the saints via faithful and true church discipline. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11). Nevertheless, excommunication is also called "the extreme remedy" in Church Order 76. Desire is still there to see the erring brother turn from his evil ways and repent. The judgment made even in excommunication is not that we throw one into hell. Excommunication, properly done, only recognizes what God has already declared: that the impenitent sinner is bound in his sins and will perish, except he repent. Whether or not he perishes in his sins or is rescued unto faith and obedience is only God's judgment in the end.

The contrast between heaven and hell and between elect and reprobate is at the heart of the enmity that God has made. That is the message of it. That is the gospel of it. That, indeed, is the promise of it. It *shall* be. That is the antithesis. And why is that such good news? Because Jesus Christ is the elect one. We are elect in him and only in him. In him we have been separated out from the world of sin and death. In him we live in contrast to all that opposes his cause. God has put us on his righteous and holy side, and his side is victorious over all. He is God. That is the gospel of the antithesis. And as gospel the antithesis is no law. The antithesis doesn't tell us what to do, as if we must make the enmity happen. The antithesis tells us what is and what God has made to happen for our salvation. The antithesis is a gift to us that depends only on God.

Is there no calling, then, to carry out and accomplish the antithesis? No, no more than we have a calling to carry out and accomplish our own salvation. God calls us to "work out" our own salvation, meaning to live in awe-struck and trembling gratitude for it (Phil. 2:12), but that is very different from effecting our own salvation.

And God calls us to “come out from among them, and be ye separate” (II Cor. 6:17), meaning to live in harmony with the spiritual separation that God has effected, but that is very different from effecting the antithesis. Our own misguided rudeness and condescension are knocking at the door, ready to come in if we should attempt to employ the antithesis as our own. But it is God’s. The antithesis is a fact that only God makes happen. We will experience that spiritual division he has made! We can watch that division unfold in real time in our own lives and all around us. As the antithesis between the world and the church becomes more and more evident in the last days, our calling is to watch. Just like Adam and Eve merely watched their salvation begin to unfold in the garden in the form of the antithesis, we now watch God wrap up our salvation in the form of the antithesis. When the devil and all his hosts are cast into the lake of fire and God’s saints are brought to heaven to

live with him there forever, the separation will be complete. We experience the antithesis and do not deny that it exists, but we cannot make it exist. That is God’s honor alone.

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. (Mark 13:35–37)

Glory to God for establishing the antithesis, the battleground that he uses in the salvation of such ungodly sinners as we are. He made the division. He separates us out to deliver us—completely.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished. (Isa. 40:1–2)

—Connie L. Meyer

HERMAN HOEKSEMA’S *BANNER* ARTICLES

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Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article XCV. Reply to Rev. H. Hoeksema

(Continued from last week)

We now pass on to take up somewhat fully the testimony that our Reformed authorities offer on the doctrine of common grace. What are the specific utterances of Calvin himself, our spiritual father? Of the Reformer who discovered this doctrine Dr. Bavinck says, “door de Reformatie, bepaald door Calvijn is ontdekt.”¹ We quote from Calvin the following: “The things which relate to this present life * * * * civil polity, domestic economy, all the mechanical arts and liberal sciences * * * * these * * * * prove that men are endowed with a general apprehension of reason. This is

such a universal blessing that everyone * * * * ought to acknowledge it as a favor of God. To this gratitude the Author of nature himself abundantly excites us by his creation of idiots, in whom he represents the state of the human soul without his illumination, which * * * * is a gratuitous gift of his beneficence towards every individual. The invention of the arts * * * * and the knowledge of them * * * * belong to both the pious and the impious. Whenever, therefore, we meet with heathen writers on philosophy, logic, law, medicine, mathematics we shall admire them, because we shall be constrained

¹ English translation: “through the Reformation, was certainly discovered by Calvin.”

to acknowledge them to be truly excellent. And shall we esteem anything laudable or excellent which we do not recognize as proceeding from God? Yet let us not forget that these are most excellent gifts * * * * which for the common benefit of mankind He dispenses to whomsoever he pleases. Nor is there any reason for inquiring what intercourse with the Spirit is enjoyed by the impious who are entirely alienated from God. It is evident in all mankind, that reason * * * * which distinguishes us from the brute animals, is ours by virtue of the general grace of God (*generalis Dei gratia*, to use Calvin's own Latin phrase). What we retain in our nature is to be ascribed to God's favor. Had it not been for his mercy, our fall would have been followed by the total destruction of our nature. In a variety of ways God displays his goodness to humanity."

Let us next consult the testimony of Dr. Bavinck. He writes as follows: "Still another injustice must be laid to the charge of the average conception of Calvin. Men sometimes speak as if Calvin knew of nothing else to preach, but the decree of predestination with its two parts of election and reprobation. The truth is that no preacher of the Gospel has ever surpassed Calvin in the free, generous proclamation of the grace and love of God. He was so far from putting predestination to the front, that in the *Institutio* the subject does not receive treatment until the third book, after the completion of the discussion of the life of faith. * * * * And there are other features in Calvin's doctrine of reprobation to which attention should be called. There is, in the first place, the fact that he says so little about the working of reprobation. The *Institutio* is a work characterized by great sobriety, wholly free from scholastic abstruseness; it everywhere treats the doctrine of faith in the closest connection with the practice of religion. * * * * But of even greater significance is it that with Calvin reprobation does not mean the withholding of all grace. Although man through sin has been rendered blind to all the spiritual realities of the Kingdom of God, so that a special revelation of

God's fatherly love in Christ and a '*specialis illuminatio*' by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of sinners here become necessary, nevertheless there exists alongside of these a "*Generalis Gratia*" which dispenses to all men various gifts. If God had not spared man, his fall would have involved the whole of nature in ruin. As it was, God immediately after the fall interposed, in order by his Common Grace to curb sin and to uphold in being the '*universitas rerum*.'"²

I cannot, in this article, begin to quote from Dr. Kuyper's works. There is no end to the weighty passages that can be adduced. Probably later his testimony, in slightly different connection, may be called on. And as to other present day Reformed theologians, as e.g. Dr. Honig and Dr. H. H. Kuyper, and even Reformed jurists, as e.g. Fabius, abundant material is available, all going to show that they regard Calvin as the originator of the doctrine of Common Grace, and are also in full agreement with Calvin on this point.

Let us now itemize some of the findings in regard to Rev. H. Hoeksema's teachings and apply to them some of the reliable Reformed standards.

1. There once more stands forth boldly the denial of Common Grace.
2. There is no such thing as God assuming in any sense, to any extent, an attitude of favor to the reprobate. As we shall realize, this stand of Hoeksema affects the very doctrine of God.
3. Rev. Hoeksema's **reason** tells him that such an attitude of God is impossible. Such an attitude is to him "inconceivable." Rev. Hoeksema's **reason** decides that the view of the Reformed authorities is wrong.
4. Rev. Hoeksema has regard only for the "holiness and righteousness" of God. The goodness and mercy of God he completely ignores in this connection.

² English translation: "the universe of things."

5. The world after the fall “sank upon the grace as it is in Christ Jesus.” There is no working of God’s General Grace keeping the world from ruin after the fall.
 6. Hoeksema’s interpretation of history, of sacred history, of Scripture, becomes a different one.
 7. The revelation which there is in the world in general, e.g. in the heathen world, cannot be a revelation of God’s General Grace, for there is no General Grace. Rev. Hoeksema’s doctrine of revelation becomes a different one.
 8. In his approach to the question of Common Grace Rev. Hoeksema proceeds from the doctrine of Election and Reprobation. The Reformed procedure is conveniently dismissed.
 9. Rev. Hoeksema does not consult sufficiently the “*werkelijkheid*,”³ to borrow a term from our Reformed authorities in this connection.
 10. God’s sovereignty by virtue of which He can show favor to the reprobate becomes different to Rev. Hoeksema because of his denial of Common Grace. The very center of Calvinism is affected by the denial.
3. Our Reformed authorities consult, in the first place, Scripture. It is not **reason** that they allow to dictate or to settle the question for them.
 4. Calvin and his true followers have regard for the mercy and goodness of God, his “*benevolentia*” and “*indulgentia*,” as well as the holiness and righteousness of God.
 5. “God immediately after the fall interposed in order by his Common Grace to curb sin and to uphold in being the ‘*universitas rerum*.’”
 6. In the interpretation of history, of sacred history, of Scripture, God’s Common Grace, as well as his Special Grace, is to be taken into consideration.
 7. In the heathen world there is a working of God’s Common Grace.
 8. The Reformed fathers give the highest place to the sovereignty of God. Election and reprobation is to them not “*het voornaamste theologische leerstuk*,”⁴ in this connection.
 9. Calvin and the exponents of Reformed doctrine have a supreme regard for “*de werkelijkheid*.”
 10. The idea of God and of his sovereignty includes, to Calvin and all true Calvinists, also Common Grace.

What now is the Reformed view? We again itemize.

1. There is common grace.
2. God’s Common Grace dispenses not merely to men in general various gifts; Common Grace is withheld not even from the reprobate.

The views of our critic, it will be seen, break to pieces on the solid rock of the Reformed authorities.

(To be continued)

—R. Janssen

³ English translation: “fact” or “reality,” in the sense of the “actual reality of things.” Janssen’s point appears to be that Hoeksema should pay more attention to what he can observe around him—the goodness of his fellow man and the good gifts that God bestows upon all men. Janssen believed that a keen observation of these facts would prove that God is gracious to all men. Janssen forgot that all of ungodly man’s apparent goodness is not of faith and therefore is sin (Rom. 14:23). Janssen also forgot that God’s good gifts to the reprobate are not gracious blessings but slippery places by which the reprobate is hastened to his destruction (Ps. 73:18). The actual reality of things is not found through man’s observations but by God’s revelation: “The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just” (Prov. 3:33).

⁴ English translation: “the foremost dogma of theology.”