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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 an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

—Exodus 21:28–32

The Goring Ox

The judgments that God delivered to Israel through Moses included laws about the goring ox. The ox was a very valuable possession to the Israelite as a strong bearer of burdens, whether the burden of possessions in the wilderness or the burden of a plow in Canaan. The ox had long and powerful horns, by which he pushed away predators or rivals. The goring ox was the ox that turned its horns against a person and ran him through, with the result that he died.

What was to be done about the goring ox? In every case the ox must be killed by stoning. What a prolonged and bloody business it was to stone an ox to death. The ox was powerful, with stout bones, a thick layer of muscle, and its skull protected by strong horns. Men are not so strong as to lift a stone heavy enough to finish the job at a single blow. Many stones—dozens, scores, maybe even hundreds—would have to be hurled by many men at the strong ox. All the while the ox would be thrashing and bellowing and sweating and bleeding and defecating in the throes of the confusion and terror and pain of its violent death. The men would be sweaty and bloody and exhausted with the exertion of bludgeoning the mighty ox to death. By the end every stomach would be turned by the mess that was left of the goring ox.

And that was not all. The owner of the ox must also stand trial. If his ox had never been known to push at people with his horns, then the owner was acquitted. But if the ox had been known to push at people with his horns and if the owner had been informed and, through negligence, had left his ox among people until someone had been gored, then the owner must be put to death as well. The family of the gored loved one was allowed to place a ransom price on the head of the owner if they desired. Then the owner could keep his life by paying the ransom price instead, which would undoubtedly be a very heavy sum. For what price can be placed on a man's life or a woman's life or a son's life or a daughter's life? And if it were a slave that had been gored, then the owner of the ox must pay the price of a slave to the slave's master.

Goring was a brutal death. The recompense upon the ox was likewise violent. The recompense upon the owner was likewise either life-taking or life-altering. Why was God's law so strict in the matter of the goring ox? Especially when one considers that many ancient nations, like the Babylonians under Hammurabi, had laws about the goring ox, but none of those nations required the goring ox or the owner to die? Why is it that only God's law required the goring ox to be stoned and the owner to be killed or to be beggared?

It is because only God's law is love! All the laws of the nations were merely for the keeping of external order in society. But the divine law of God for his people Israel was that they love their neighbors as themselves. Love for the neighbor meant the diligent protection of the neighbor's life from the ox that was wont to push with his horns. Love—perfect love—for the neighbor was the heart of God's judgment concerning the goring ox.

And now behold by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who perfectly loved his people with the

highest sacrifice of love. For we his people do not perfectly love our neighbors and are therefore worthy of death. But our Lord has taken our place, betrayed for the price of a slave, enduring the violence of the curse, surrounded by many strong bulls of Bashan (Ps. 22:12). And shedding his blood upon the cross, he has paid the unpayable ransom price in order that we might live. How shall we then live in gratitude for such mercy? This way: love thy neighbor as thyself.

—AL

EDITORIAL

As Often As Ye Eat This Bread and Drink This Cup (6)

The Lord's supper is a spiritual feast, a nourishing meal, a means of grace, an ordinance of Christ. The Lord's supper is the gospel that Jesus' body has been broken and his blood shed for us sinners. By the Lord's supper the Lord makes us who are empty full and us who are poor rich. As often as the church partakes of the Lord's supper, she is assured of Christ's hearty love and faithfulness toward her. As often as the church eats and drinks Christ in the supper, Christ by his Spirit strengthens and confirms her faith. These editorials have proposed that the rich Reformed doctrine of the Lord's supper calls for a frequent administration of the sacrament and that the Reformed tradition of infrequent administration is inconsistent with the Reformed doctrine of the supper. In this editorial let us consider some objections to the frequent administration of the Lord's supper.

Objection one: Frequent celebration of the Lord's supper could cheapen the Lord's supper by making it routine. Spacing out the celebration of the Lord's supper will keep the Lord's supper special and will help God's people appreciate its value. This is the argument of Idzerd Van Dellen and Martin Monsma in their commentary on

the Church Order: "In our Christian Reformed Churches, as is the case in the Reformed Churches of Holland, the Lord's Supper is celebrated four times a year, or every three months. In our opinion this is a well-timed arrangement. To celebrate the Lord's Supper very frequently might detract somewhat from its sacredness and effectiveness. To celebrate it less frequently, say once or twice a year, would rob the Churches needlessly of a much needed blessing."¹

Answer: Because the Lord's supper is an ordinance of the Lord, celebrating it very frequently would not at all detract from its sacredness and effectiveness. Christ works by the Lord's supper to refresh his people with his body and blood. Our Lord did not give his church a supper that could become cheapened by frequent use. Rather, our Lord gave his church a supper in which he powerfully works as often as it is used. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). The sacredness and effectiveness of the Lord's supper is not strengthened by spacing out its administration because its strength and efficacy comes from Christ.

¹ Idzerd Van Dellen and Martin Monsma, *The Church Order Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), 265.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper is like the preaching of the gospel in this regard. Christ has ordained the preaching of the gospel, and he accomplishes his purpose with it every time the word is preached. We would not reduce the frequency of the Lord's word, as if that would preserve its effectiveness. Why would we reduce the frequency of the Lord's supper, as if that would preserve its effectiveness?

The Reformed church need not fear that she will become bored or unimpressed with the sacrament by administering it often, for the power of the sacrament is not in the church's receiving but in the Lord's giving. If it were up to us to maintain appreciation and fervency and piety every time the supper were administered, then the Lord's supper could very quickly become mere routine, no matter how frequently or infrequently it were administered. We are so weak, and our flesh is so disinterested in the things of heaven. But the power of the supper is found in our Lord's grace to his helpless people. He comes to us sinners and gives us his righteousness, to us dead and gives us his life, to us hungry and gives us his body for our food, to us thirsty and gives us his blood for our drink, to us who mourn and gives us his wounds for our consolation. And the Lord knows how to bless his people by his sacrament every single time it is administered, even when we have no appreciation or fervency or piety. Indeed, the Lord uses his supper to bestow upon us the appreciation and fervency and piety that we lack.

Now, as it is certain and beyond all doubt that Jesus Christ hath not enjoined to us the use of his sacraments in vain, so he works in us all that he represents to us by these holy signs, though the manner surpasses our understanding and cannot be comprehended by us, as the operations of the Holy Ghost are hidden and incomprehensible. (Belgic Confession 35)

Objection two: The preaching of the gospel is the primary means of grace, and the Lord's supper is a secondary means of grace. God's people already have Christ's body and blood through the

preaching of the gospel. Therefore, let there be preaching at every service, but there need not be the Lord's supper at every service.

Answer: It is true that the preaching is the primary means of grace and the Lord's supper is a secondary means of grace. The Holy Ghost *works* faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, not by the sacraments. By the sacraments the Holy Ghost *confirms* faith in our hearts (L.D. 25, Q&A 65). This means that God's people have Christ's body and blood through the preaching of the gospel. If God's people never had the sacraments but only ever had the preaching of the gospel, they would have everything of Jesus Christ and all of his salvation. The preaching does not lack anything that the supper provides.

However, though the preaching does not lack anything, we do. Though there is no problem with the preaching, there is a problem with us. The Lord did not give the Lord's supper to fill the preaching's lack but to fill our lack. The Lord did not give the Lord's supper because of preaching's problem but because of our problem. Our problem is that our flesh is so full of doubt and fear and unbelief. Our problem is that we are of such little faith. Our problem is that we are so earthly and selfish and cannot and will not fathom the depth of God's heavenly grace to us. And so the Lord tells us and tells us and tells us in the gospel the glad tidings of Jesus Christ. And in his grace to us empty and troubled people, he spreads alongside the preaching a table, at which he feeds us and feeds us and feeds us with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. And he has spread such a feast alongside the preaching not because the preaching needs it but because we do.

In our estimation of how much we need the Lord's supper, then, we do not proceed by comparing the supper as a secondary means of grace to the preaching as the primary means of grace. Rather, we proceed by receiving what our Lord has given us, for he is wiser than us. Our Lord instituted his supper because he has determined that we need the Lord's supper for our comfort. And our Lord did not give his supper as empty window dressing to the preaching of the gospel

but as a true sacrament of his body and blood. By the Lord's supper our Lord is pleased graciously to comfort our poor, comfortless souls. When the church estimates how much she needs the Lord's supper, she must not make the preaching the enemy of the supper in order to forego the supper. Rather, Christ's hungry and thirsty church gratefully receives both the preaching and the supper as her Lord's abundant provision to fill her desperate need.

Objection three: Reformed churches have a long-standing tradition of administering the Lord's supper only four to six times per year. Even if Reformed churches are free to administer the Lord's supper more often, Reformed churches today should hesitate to depart from the old paths of our fathers.

Answer: It is true that a Reformed church values her Reformed traditions. Many Reformed traditions are either based on biblical principles or have proved useful and beneficial to the churches through the years. For that reason a Reformed church cherishes a healthy regard for her traditions, and she should not try to change things merely for change's sake or out of a vain fascination with novelties.

But it is also necessary for a Reformed church to examine her traditions in the light of the scriptures and the confessions. It is possible that some of her traditions are vain. The old paths are not necessarily what our fathers have done for many years. After all, even our fathers could err. "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them" (Mal. 3:7). Rather, the old paths are God's ordinances of doctrine and worship, as he has revealed those ordinances in his word. Therefore, the test of whether something is truly an old path is not whether that thing is a long-standing Reformed tradition. Rather, the test of whether something is truly an old path is whether that thing is an ordinance of God's word. "The old paths, where is the good way" are known by "the sound of the trumpet," which is "the word of the LORD" (Jer. 6:10, 16–17).

Therefore, a Reformed church is always reforming—not in the sense of always changing but in the sense of examining whether "all things are managed according to the pure word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only head of the church" (Belgic Confession 29). It is healthy for a Reformed church to examine her traditions in the light of her doctrine—that is, in the light of God's word—in order either to keep her traditions or to correct them accordingly.

In the case of administering the Lord's supper, the Reformed confessions overflow in describing the abundance that God provides his hungry and thirsty people through the supper. The Reformed tradition of withholding that abundant meal from God's people except for a handful of times each year is not consistent with the doctrine. Correcting that tradition is not a matter of novelty but is a matter of returning to the old paths by bringing the administration more in line with the doctrine.

Objection four: The church has the freedom to administer the Lord's supper frequently or infrequently. A church is not better if she administers the Lord's supper more often or worse if she administers the supper less often. Why trouble the church with the issue of frequency if it is a matter of freedom anyway?

Answer: It is true that the church is free to administer the Lord's supper frequently or infrequently and is under no compulsion in this matter. In light of the fact that our Lord and his apostles did not ordain how often to administer the Lord's supper, the matter of frequency is adiaphora and can be decided church by church and circumstance by circumstance. The church that is hiding and fleeing due to persecution does not sin by forgoing the administration of the Lord's supper for a time. The church that is at peace does not sin by administering the Lord's supper at every service. The church is entirely free in the matter of how frequently she administers the sacrament.

However, let the church remember that inconsistent traditions can bind the church's

freedom every bit as much as a false law. The church's sense of what is right and wrong is often held captive to an inconsistent tradition. How easy it is for the church to say, "But that's not how we do it" or "But that's not how we've always done it," even when the way she does it is inconsistent with her confession. Any attempt to bring the tradition in line with the doctrine can easily be seen as troubling the church. In such a case the church, though boasting of her freedom, is not truly free to follow the word but binds herself under her tradition.

The question for the church in matters of adiaphora is what is useful and beneficial. "Useful and beneficial" is the language of the Belgic Confession in article 32.

In the meantime we believe, though it is useful and beneficial that those who are rulers of the church institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the church, yet they ought studiously to take care that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only master, hath instituted.

How wonderful and how delightful it is for the church to be guided by what is "useful and beneficial" in those things that are adiaphora. For "useful and beneficial" is the language of love. Love seeks out what is useful for the sheep. Love embraces what is beneficial for the sheep. In all things the rulers rule with affection and mercy and tender loving-kindness, remembering that these sheep over whom they rule are the sheep of Christ. Love does not yank the sheep this way and that according to the rulers' changeable will, decreeing first this thing and then that thing with no explanation or with explanations that are a farce. Such leaders are cruel men, lords in God's heritage, and utterly loveless. Rather, the ruler operates out of love for the sheep of the Good Shepherd. His love includes instructing the sheep through patient explanations why the "institutions and ordinances" that the rulers have established are "useful and beneficial" to the sheep. (Oh, how utterly

empty is every ruler, and how utterly lovely is our Good Shepherd!)

Guided by love for the sheep, the ruler applies the principles of the word of God to every question of adiaphora in order to lead them into what is useful and beneficial. Which Bible version shall the church use? There is no law, but it is useful and beneficial for the sheep that they use the King James Version as the most faithful translation. Which psalmbook shall the church sing? There is no law, but it is useful and beneficial for the sheep that they sing the Scottish Metrical Version as the most faithful singable translation. How many times shall the church assemble for worship on the Lord's day? There is no law, but it is useful and beneficial for the sheep that they assemble as many times as preparation and earthly infirmities will allow. And in all of this, the law of love means that the rulers will not only apply principles but teach them so that the church understands what has been decided.

When it comes to the administration of the Lord's supper, what is useful and beneficial for the sheep of Christ? Why, it is useful and beneficial for them to eat and drink Christ! And it is useful and beneficial for them to eat and drink Christ often. The church is free to administer the sacrament frequently or infrequently. But what is of most use and benefit to Christ's sheep? Such a question does not trouble the church but profits her.

Objection five: Our Reformed confessions and Church Order only address the frequency of administering the Lord's supper in Church Order 63, where an infrequent administration is implied: "at least every two or three months." If the Reformed confessions and Church Order imply an infrequent administration in the one and only place that they address frequency, should not Reformed churches be satisfied with this?

Answer: The Church Order does imply an infrequent administration, and most Reformed churches administer the supper according to the Church Order's implication: four or six times per year. And although the Church Order allows

for far greater frequency by saying “at least,” the objection is still valid that the Church Order at least implies an infrequent administration of the Lord’s supper.

However, it is not correct to say that the Reformed confessions do not address the frequency of the Lord’s supper. In fact, the Reformed confessions recommend a *frequent* administration of the sacrament. While the confessions do not specify *how* frequent, they do imply that the Lord’s supper should be administered often.

The Belgic Confession says that we should be “keeping up among us” the administration of the Lord’s supper.

We receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God with humility and reverence, keeping up among us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our savior with thanksgiving, making there confession of our faith and of the Christian religion. (Belgic Confession 35)

“Keeping up among us” is not the language of infrequency but of frequency. Especially when one considers the other things that are mentioned: the assembly of the people of God and confession of our faith. Those things happen every Lord’s day, which certainly implies that “keeping up among us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our savior with thanksgiving” normally would also be happening every Lord’s day.

The strongest confessional statement about the frequency of administering the Lord’s supper is undoubtedly found in the Canons of Dordt 3–4.17:

For grace is conferred by means of admonitions; and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is his work advanced; to whom alone all the glory, both of means

and of their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.

This article has been so badly twisted by false prophets that God’s people can hardly quote the article anymore without having to make a vigorous defense against men’s corruption of the article. Without entering into a lengthy explanation of the article now, let this brief summary suffice.² Canons 3–4.17 is not teaching that the more readily a Christian obeys God’s law, the more God will bless him. That is the lazy and treacherous explanation given by the foes of the gospel. Rather, Canons 3–4.17 is teaching that God confers grace upon his people through the means of the gospel that he has appointed: the means of the preaching of the gospel, the means of the administration of the sacraments, and the means of the exercise of Christian discipline. The article warns the church not to abandon these means of grace, as the church is always tempted to do. The article exhorts the church instead to exercise these means of grace. And the article reminds the church of the connection that God himself has made between the administration of the means of grace and God’s conferring of his grace: “the more readily we perform our duty [of administering the means of grace], the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us.” And the explanation for God’s blessing’s attending the administration of the means of grace is not to be found in the church’s faithfulness to God but in God’s faithfulness to his church. “To whom alone all the glory, both of means and of their saving fruit and efficacy, is forever due. Amen.”

To put that in terms of the administration of the Lord’s supper, the more the church administers the Lord’s supper, the more Christ’s sheep receive Christ’s blessing through Christ’s supper. And the flock’s blessing is not due to the church’s administration but to the grace of our Lord. Our Lord uses the means of his supper to bestow “blessing” and “saving fruit” upon

² For an explanation of the article and a defense of its truth, see Andrew Lanning, “Canons 3–4.17: ‘Grace is Conferred by Means of Admonitions,’” *Sword and Shield* 3, no. 4 (September 2022): 8–18; “More on Canons 3–4.17: ‘Grace is Conferred by Means of Admonitions,’” *Sword and Shield* 3, no. 5. (October 2022): 8–16.

his people, that his work may be “advanced.” The sacrament is not in vain but has “saving... efficacy” by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The crystal clear implication of the article—so clear that it is almost an explicit requirement—is that the church administer the Lord’s supper often: “readily” and even “more” readily.

Whatever infrequency of administering the Lord’s supper the Church Order might imply, the Reformed confessions recommend a frequent administration.

Next time let us address some practical considerations for how to administer the Lord’s supper frequently.

—AL

HERMAN HOEKSEMA’S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

January 27, 1921

(pp. 55–56)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Not Satisfied

To our profound amazement Dr. R. Janssen abruptly discontinued the articles he was writing in reply to what we wrote concerning his instruction and the act of our last Synod with respect to it. I must confess that I do not understand this course on the part of the professor. He promised that he would expose to criticism certain views which I held concerning the doctrine of common grace, that, further, he would show the connection between these supposedly unreformed views of mine and my criticism of his teachings, and that in the sequel he would discuss some other questions of a theological character. Fact is, that Prof. Janssen had just started to discuss the doctrine of common grace. I repeat, he had just started that discussion. And now he lets us know, without further explanation, that he will write no more articles in reply to me. I do not doubt that the professor has his own reasons for taking this course of action. But I confess that I fail to understand it. And I wish to add that I am sorry this course was decided upon. For personally I do not believe that at the present time and under the present circumstances there is any good to be expected from secrecy and private discussions. A clear statement of the whole matter in public, a discussion of the differences or supposed differences in the open is much more healthful and

will, to my mind, be helpful to clear the atmosphere more than anything else.

For the same reason I am sorry, too, that Prof. Janssen evidently considered the whole matter in the light of a personal attack upon him. It was no such thing. It tends to throw a wrong light on the whole controversy. More than once the attempt was made to explain this entire action against the teachings of Prof. Janssen in the light of petty jealousies at school. There was a time that I, too, labored under the same suspicion. As stated before, I respected Dr. Janssen as a scholar, especially in the line of Semitic languages and Old Testament criticism, and I resented any action to remove him from our school. But I have changed my mind on this subject. And the cause of this change of mind is not mere rumors or suspicions, but a personal investigation of the typewritten documents based on the notes taken in Prof. Janssen’s classes. At any rate, it is entirely unfair, because absolutely untrue, that my articles on this subject were rooted in a spirit of jealousy and personal dislike of the brother. What, pray, could I possibly have against the brother personally? There never were any personal matters between us. And surely, (if so base a thing could possibly be suspected) my position as pastor and Dr. Janssen’s as professor at school are sufficiently apart to banish all

thought of personal jealousy. It is to me not a cause for jealousy, but of real joy to know that there are able men at our school to train our young men for the ministry in our churches. I will, therefore, even now dismiss this phase of the subject as unworthy among brethren and as never having entered my mind or heart. And also in the future I will leave all personalities out of our discussion and limit myself to the matter proper.

Let me be allowed, then, to answer Dr. Janssen's reply in a few paragraphs. I shall be brief.

First of all, I will answer the statement that I ought to have taken this matter up with Prof. Janssen personally before writing it in public. I do not believe that this is correct. If it is a personal matter today, much more so was it a personal matter before our last Synod took action. Yet Synod did not advise the brethren professors to settle the matter between them, but openly discussed the matter and came to a conclusion. Synod did not consider the matter a personal one, but one of general significance for the whole church. I say, much more, after the Synod took action and the matter has become public it has ceased to be a personal question. My difference now is not directly with Prof. Janssen, but with the action our Synod of 1920 took in regard to his teachings. Neither is it a matter which I as Prof. Janssen's pastor or even my consistory as such could discuss with him. It does not concern him as member of my congregation, but as professor at school. To judge of his instruction at our school lies not within the jurisdiction of my consistory, but is the business of the Board of Trustees and ultimately of Synod.

Secondly, I wish to answer the statement made more than once that Prof. Janssen cannot be responsible for the notes taken in class, from which I made my quotations. To express it very mildly, I consider this argument as unworthy and without any force. I made my quotations from typewritten notes, redacted by one student, which are uniformly in possession of all the students. I admit, Prof. Janssen does not

literally dictate. But, in the first place, he lectures so deliberately and slowly that without much difficulty he can be followed verbatim or approximately verbatim by the students that take notes. In the second place these notes are in the hands of all the students alike and constitute the basis of their examinations. They are responsible for them. In the third place Prof. Janssen knows that the students possess these notes, and for a long time already was acquainted with some of the impressions the students obtained from them. If he were suspicious that they did not perfectly reflect his instruction, he could have changed them. And, finally, if the things I quoted from them were not taught in class, why does not the professor openly say so, and repudiate these very teachings instead of simply intimating that he cannot be responsible for them? If the case is thus at school, that the students cannot take notes any more, and receive different erroneous ideas from a professor that teaches the straight Reformed truth, there must be some evil spirit somewhere in the school classrooms, and it were time that he be cast out. In my time this never took place.

In regard to the matter of common grace, I wish to state that this is not the matter at issue for the present, and I refuse to be thrown off at a tangent in regard to the main question between us. If the professor had shown the connection between this question of common grace and higher criticism the matter would have been different. He failed to do so, however. A few things of a formal nature I wish to say, nevertheless. First of all, the professor made very serious charges. He called me un-Reformed in regard to one of the main doctrines of our confession. Hinging his statement on a single phrase he even intimated that I was a rationalist. I kindly ask the professor to retract these statements or to follow them up. The matter cannot rest here. The professor made mere accusations. He promised to substantiate them by passages from our Reformed Standards. He never did. Not for once. I publicly ask the professor for proof that the theory of common grace is a confessionally Reformed doctrine. I here deny that it is. All that

the professor has shown is that I differ on this subject with Kuyper and Bavinck. As to Calvin's views, we shall see again. But remember, I refuse to be called un-Reformed only because I differ with these great men. Not they, but our standards are the criterion in this case. And, then, the professor must know as well as any man that a person can hold to my view of common grace and be thoroughly Reformed. In the second place, I would welcome a serious and friendly discussion on this subject at any time. I think it is very unfortunate that Prof. Janssen broached this subject as he did. It was plainly evident that the whole discussion on common grace was marred by the single purpose the professor had in view: to destroy his critic, in order that he might destroy the criticism with regard to his teachings. That is deplorable. It accounts for the fact that the whole discussion, even from a purely scholarly point of view, was a lamentable failure. The professor did not enter into the subject at all. The basis of the whole argument was the following syllogism:

1. Kuyper and Bavinck teach common grace;
2. Rev. Hoeksema denies it;
3. Hence, Rev. Hoeksema is un-Reformed.

As I say, to the principle that lies at the basis of this syllogism we do not submit ourselves. Yet, I would not be surprised if a real and thorough discussion of this theory would clear up a good many difficulties. It would, to my mind, also give an answer to the question why Moses cannot be explained from Hammurabi.

And, finally, I want to state once more the reasons why I am concerned about the act of our last Synod in respect to the teachings of Prof. Janssen at school. I followed the procedure. The conclusion reached by Synod was based chiefly upon the expression of Prof. Janssen on the floor of the Synod, his repeated assurance that he was Reformed and loved our Reformed doctrine. But the question, after all, was not whether these statements were Reformed, but whether the teaching that was actually given in the past by the professor could have the approval of the

Church. And the act of Synod in regard to this matter leaves the impression that the Church set its stamp of approval upon the instruction given. In the light of that conclusion the following facts constitute for me a cause of grave concern. And I must know whether the Church actually approves of the view of Scripture embodied in these teachings.

1. Prof. Janssen proceeds from the principle that the chief element in science, also in theology, is that of search. Not to know the truth but to search for it is the chief element of theological joy. This very principle is antagonistic to the idea of revelation. (See Notes on Old Testament Introduction, pp. 1, 2. Cf. Dr. Kuyper "Scholastica" II.)
2. The teaching of Prof. Janssen as embodied in the notes undermines the conception of the canon of Scripture as one organic whole:
 - a. Because that organic whole is never pointed out. In Isagogics, for instance, the professor never points out the canonical significance of any book. The notes are a treatment of separate "records," not of organic parts of one whole.
 - b. Because it is impossible to see how some books as conceived by Prof. Janssen can have a place in the canon. Ecclesiastes is a book written by a sceptic philosopher whose fundamental thought was: "panta rei," all is in a state of flux, a Greek pantheistic conception. The Song of songs, it is emphatically stated, is nothing but a natural love song. It is difficult to see what place such books could have in the canon.
 - c. Because, according to the notes, the records do not show that Abraham knew anything of immortality, while in Heb. 11 we read that the patriarchs looked for the city that hath foundations.

3. The teaching of Prof. Janssen as embodied in the notes tends to obliterate the distinction between special revelation and “natural light.” For instance:
 - a. There is a Babylonian influence in the Psalms. And the laws of Israel can be traced to Babylonian codes.
 - b. The possibility is even granted that the entire Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, were originally written in Babylonian, and therefore, long before Moses wrote.
 - c. There is a possible Egyptian influence in Proverbs, and an influence of Greek philosophy in Ecclesiastes.
 - d. Abraham is explained as a Babylonian chief. The God he serves and the god of the Canaanites are the same. Israel’s religion was semi-monotheistic up to the time of the prophets.
 - e. As a Babylonian chief Abraham deliberately seeks to transfer his wife, Sarah, to the Egyptian court for business reasons. And this low deed must partly be excused in Abraham because the standard of morality was no higher at this time.
 - f. The incident of Rebekah’s inquiring of the Lord at the time she was pregnant of Esau and Jacob is explained as follows: Rebekah turns to a sanctuary in Canaan. The functionary (the priest) at the sanctuary gives her an oracle. The oracle is: “The elder shall serve the younger.” This oracle may also mean, “the younger shall serve the elder,” as the object of the sentence may be the subject. Thus the functionary at the sanctuary is always safe.
4. The teaching of Prof. Janssen undermines the historicity of the Word of God because of an attempt to conform to “science.” For instance:
 - a. The walls of Jericho did not fall flat objectively. A breach was made in the wall. “If one takes that view he reverences Scripture and will not meet with conflict from the side of science.”
 - b. The standing still of the sun and moon is sufficiently explained if we believe that the sun pierced the clouds again after the darkness accompanying the preceding hailstorm.
 - c. In regard to passages of the book of Judges we read: “These accounts are not important historical accounts, but current and oral traditions of the experience of an individual. There is often an element of exaggeration. We find this also in the New Testament. Sometimes a correction is added. Literalness should not always be pressed.” The Synod carried on an interesting discussion about the difference between hyperbole and exaggeration. The notes have exaggeration. Hyperbole is a figure of speech. But how could there be a figure of speech in the statement that Samson carried the gates of Gaza to the top of a neighboring mount? This is either true or exaggerated and, then, false.
5. The teaching of Prof. Janssen as embodied in the notes undermines respect for the veracity of the Word of God in general:
 - a. Repeatedly the expression occurs that this or that fact adds to the credibility of the narrative. The fact that there were persons by the name of Abraham in Babylonia goes a long way, though it does not prove absolutely that Abraham is a historic person. From the standpoint of faith we need no such proof.
 - b. The author of the book of Daniel probably uses that name as a literary device. That is, Daniel did not write the book, but his name is used as a literary device.

These facts are gathered from the notes of the students. And it is these that cause my concern. What conception do our future ministers obtain of the Word of God? I assure you that on the basis of such a conception I could be no

preacher of the Word of God. And I fail to see how anyone can be. I write this without personal antagonism, but with grave concern about our future.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

