

Pro Rege

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Within memory of some of us who are older, Abraham Kuyper, the great theologian-statesman of The Netherlands, wrote a three-volume work under the title *Pro Rege*, “for the King.”¹¹

He sought to stir up his fellow Calvinists so that they might claim every square inch of ground for Christ, their King. No longer were Christian people to apologize for their existence and beg for a small place under the sun. They were children of the King; to them, not to the world, did all things belong. God through Christ must be sovereign in every sphere of life. So said Kuyper when he gave the first opening address at the Free University of Amsterdam, which was itself a monument to the slogan *Pro Rege*.

Some of us also remember that, in the spirit of Abraham Kuyper, B. K. Kuiper wrote a book called *Ons Opmaken en Bouwen*.²² Let us, insofar as we are able—never wavering—do in this great new country of ours what Kuyper proposed to do in The Netherlands.

In 1898 Kuyper came to America. Calvinism was the subject of the Stone Lectures which he gave at Princeton Theological Seminary, at that time the great bulwark for the Reformed Faith in our land.

Some years later Dr. Henry Beets wrote an introduction to a new edition of these Stone Lectures of Kuyper. In this introduction Beets asked the question as to how much progress had been made toward Kuyper’s ideal since 1898. He was most optimistic about it. He could, he thought, report good progress. Princeton Seminary had given birth to daughter institutions such as Westminster Seminary. Many graduates of Calvin College and Seminary were teaching at various institutions in the land. Surely the future for Calvinism in America looked very bright.

But what do we see now? We see blight and we see desolation. Here and there, now and then, little Calvinistic grafts have been planted as in a desert. Constantly these little plants wither away. Calvinism appears to have come to its end. A few half-sized apples fall, worm-eaten, to the ground. As for Princeton Seminary, hurricane Barth has flattened its noble structure to the ground. The seemingly

1 ¹ “Let us arise and build” with reference to [Nehemiah 2:18](#).

2 ² Eerdmans-Sevensma: 1918.

inexhaustible well-spring of Calvinism has been poisoned and those that go forth from its walls do, indeed, cry “Calvin! Calvin!” but repudiate the sovereign grace of God for which Calvin exhausted his life.

A New Look at the King

What then shall we do? Shall we give up? Or shall we, as Hitler, knowing that he was defeated, fight on in desperation to the day of our death. This we cannot do. The word of our king is as a fire burning in our bones. We shall, rather, take a new and fresh look at Christ our king.

Take a new and fresh look at Christ our King! That’s what Isaiah did when he saw nothing but desolation about him. “O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him” ([Is 40:9–10](#)). “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment on the earth and the isles shall wait for his law” ([Is 42:4](#)).

Alone in the Garden

If we think we have reason for discouragement then look at Christ our king, alone in the garden, the garden of Gethsemane. The cup of suffering from which he had been drinking all his life, he must, presently, drink to its dregs: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” ([Lk 22:42](#)).

He, the king, he alone, knows fully what the price must be for wresting with the kingdom from Satan. The price will be, he knows, to be forsaken by his Father. No other man on earth has ever experienced, as he did, such utter dereliction.

The Trial and Execution

Yet, with steadfastness he went to his trial and, beyond it, to his execution. He defies the Sanhedrin. He defies Pilate. He defies Herod. He defies Satan back of them all. He did not fail; nor was he discouraged. This was his greatest hour! Because of this hour, he later said: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” ([Mt 28:18–20](#)). These final words our Saviour, our King, spoke as he left for glory. With them he committed the task of proclaiming the “good news” of “sovereign grace” to the disciples with the promise of victory without fail.

God's Sovereign Grace in Depth

Wij Calvinisten was the title of an address which Kuyper gave at a time (1909) when he saw the need of inspiring his followers to spread the claims of Christ, the king, in the political and social, as well as in the religious, spheres of his land, Calvin, better than Luther, Kuyper argued, saw the breadth and depth of the claims of Christ. Primarily from the followers of Calvin must we expect to see a faithful following out of Christ's command to proclaim him king.

What marvelous results followed upon Kuyper's clarion call—the Christian School movement, the Anti-revolutionary party, the Free University. In our country, we see our own Christian school movement, a Christian labour organization and Calvin College with its Seminary. But what of the results? I'm not thinking first of all of the many open defections from the Reformed Faith in The Netherlands as well as in this country which have appeared.

More important than open defection is a taking up with what Kuyper called *de geest der eeuw*, the spirit of the time. There is the defection with respect to the future. There are "Calvinists" who toy with the idea that all men are naturally in Christ and will be saved. There is defection with respect to the past. There are "Calvinists" who toy with the idea of cosmic evolution. And these two defections spring from the basic defection to the effect that God has not spoken in final form in history. Since this is true how few and far between become the little grafts of any sort of Calvinism in the ecclesiastical world today. But most of all, how small then must be the percentage of the total human population that proclaim Christ as king at all.

The 7,000

Shall we be discouraged now? Not if we take a fresh look each day at Christ our King. He is not failing now, neither is he discouraged. Elijah, the fiery prophet may be discouraged but not Christ his Lord. He has his 7,000 that own his sovereignty and that witness to it everywhere.

Take one good look at Martin Luther. He witnessed the good confession before the Emperor just as Christ his king had witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate.

Luther

Luther did not articulate in detail the plan of battle for the expansion of the kingdom of Christ in the way that Calvin later did. Certainly no follower of Luther has stipulated the particular requirements of the kingship of Christ for political and social, as well as theological, action in the way that the followers of Calvin such as Kuyper did and in the way that Dooyeweerd, following Kuyper, does. We cannot then be Lutheran today. We must be Calvinist still.

All the more ought we to take a fresh look and marvel anew at Luther's confession of the sovereignty of God in Christ. In depth, if not in breadth, all that Calvin stood for, Luther had stood for before him.

Luther heard the voice of Christ, his king, speaking to him directly and exclusively through the written Word. He was finished with the idea of the living voice of the living Church speaking by the Holy Spirit, in the way that the Roman Catholic church spoke of it in his day just as it does also in ours.

In saying this, the Roman church authorities became the children of the Pharisees. The Pharisees spoke of the living Torah, the living tradition, by which they reinterpreted and falsified everything that Moses has said. “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father,” said Jesus to the Pharisees, “there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me” ([Jn 5:45–46](#)). And Luther, following his commander-in-chief, challenged the traditions of men which the Roman church had placed on a par with Scripture. To be sure, Luther had what we Calvinists sometimes call a somewhat loose view of Scripture. The followers of Barth, who do not at all hear Christ directly speaking in Scripture, claim that they are in this respect followers of Luther even more than of Calvin. For all that, if we would listen as carefully to Christ our king as Luther listened to his voice in Scripture, we should, me thinks, be better Calvinists.

Luther’s Fearlessness

There is one trait that Luther had, in which he followed his king most marvelously. It was his courageous fearlessness. Christ knew what was ahead for him. With a greater sensitivity to suffering than any other man ever had, he shrank back from walking the *via dolorosa* to the cross. Then he prayed: “not my will but thine be done.” Luther knew that, like Paul, he “had the sentence of death” in him. So, with Paul, he trusted God “which raiseth the dead” because Christ was risen from the dead. Whatever the visible church might do to him, Luther knew that Christ was risen from the dead. “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place” ([2 Cor 2:14](#)). These words of Paul, spoken with the vision of the risen and ascended Lord before him, Luther made his own. If we could follow Luther, as he followed Paul and as Paul followed Christ, then we would be better Calvinists today. The discouragements that tend to overwhelm us would disappear as the morning fog before the blazing sun.

The Modern Scene

(A) The Confession of 1967

You have heard something, no doubt, of the fact that the United Presbyterian Church in the United States is about to accept a new confession. It is called the Confession of 1967. In this confession it is the living voice of the Church that is once more put on the par with Scripture.

In Jesus’ day the Pharisees appealed to the living Church against the revelation as given in finished form through Moses.

In Luther’s day the church of Rome pretended to be the living voice of God speaking to men. The Pope was said to be the Vicar of Christ. Yet it was the voice of Aristotle, the pagan philosopher, as much as Christ, that actually spoke through the voice of the Church.

The inimitable John Bunyan portrays to us this condition of the Roman church in his Holy War. Three “seemingly proper men”—tradition, human wisdom and man’s invention—were given a place of honor in the church. They perverted not merely some but all the teaching of the Scripture. They produced enough static to keep the voice of the king from coming through clearly to the citizens of the town of Mansoul. And Satan loved to have it so.

Today these same “seemingly proper men”—church tradition, modern philosophy and the claims of science falsely so-called—have had a part in forming this new Presbyterian Confession.

The committee that prepared this new instrument of a false church says that they have written not for Presbyterians only. How true this is. To all intents and purposes they have written a confession that could be subscribed to by all those that want to obey the voice of the church and of its disbelieving leaders rather than the voice of Christ, the king of the church.

(B) Neo-Orthodoxy

The Confession is written by followers of what is called neo-orthodox theology, the theology of Karl Barth and his many followers. Some fifty or more years ago, when Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck laboured valiantly to make *Pro Rege* a reality as well as a slogan, there were two giants of equal stature with them teaching at Princeton Seminary. The name of one of them was Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. His name is forever associated with the fearless defense of the Bible as the infallibly and therefore inerrantly inspired word of Christ. The Bible is God through Christ speaking to us. This was Warfield’s view. It was the view of Geerhardus Vos.

Consonant with this assertion of biblical infallibility, Warfield made eloquent, if not unequalled defense, of the teaching of God’s sovereign grace as expressed in Scripture. So did Geerhardus Vos, as did other colleagues standing at his side. Professor R. B. Kuiper can testify of all this, having been a student of Warfield and his colleagues at that time.

But what of Princeton now? Did I speak too strongly when I said that Princeton has been reduced to rubbish by that hurricane called Karl Barth?

(C) Clarence Macartney

The New Confession lies now before you as evidence that Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney was not wrong when in 1930 he said, in effect, that with its reorganization in 1929, the principle of Protestantism seemed to have departed from Princeton and from the Presbyterian Church.

Realizing that the Princeton of the days of Warfield and Geerhardus Vos was no more, Dr. Macartney spoke at Westminster Seminary’s first commencement concerning the time when he stood before the Reformation monument in the city park of Geneva, the city of Calvin. Calvin, Farell, Beza and Knox stand there together carved out in eternal stone. “Over all,” said Macartney, “cut in great letters was the familiar motto of the Reformation, ‘*Post Tenebras Lux.*’ But what of Protestantism today. Has the Protestant Church which we and our fathers before us took to be a Tree of Life, whose leaf could not wither, come to its sere and yellow leaf?”¹³

During 1930, too, the Reverend Frank H. Stevenson said that the Presbyterian church once cared “nothing for the persuasions of unbelief and would not take a step to appease the contempt of the world.”²⁴

If these men, Macartney and Stevenson, both ministers in the Presbyterian church till their day of death, could now read the Confession of 1967, we scarcely dare imagine the horror they would express. Princeton Seminary—the Seminary of the Hodges, of Robert Dick Wilson, of Geerhardus Vos, of W. P. Armstrong and of J. Gresham Machen, which was looked upon as the greatest Reformed or Calvinist theological institution in the land and called upon to defend the heritage of the Reformation—now was the first and foremost to capitulate to the philosophy of men. In Princeton Seminary, the Seminary of Warfield, from which Kuyper and Bavinck saw issuing a stream of life-giving faith to the north and to

3 ¹ *Christianity Today*, May, 1930, p. 7.

4 ² *Ibid.*, Sept., 1930.

the south, to the east and to the west, is now harboring a teacher of systematic theology, George S. Hendry, who rejects the God of the Westminster standards and puts in his place the God of modern philosophy. It is led by a president who takes his principles of theology first from Immanuel Kant and only after that, from the Bible.

Then, the Presbyterian church, the natural God-appointed leader of all the forces of the Reformed and more generally of all the forces of the Protestant world in this country, is now about to adopt a Confession in which man rather than Christ is king.

I dare not (and indeed cannot) try to express our reaction to what has happened to Protestant thought with words such as those of these men of sacred eloquence. The very idea of the Protestant principle as the principle of listening obediently to the voice of Christ speaking once for all to all men in Scripture, has been adulterated to mean the moment-to-moment moralizings of men who have forsaken God.

“You should have stood up for Christ and have contradicted the Pope’s impiety. This is not the time to tremble but to cry aloud, while our Lord Jesus Christ is being condemned, burned, blasphemed.”³⁵ Thus wrote Martin Luther, Oak of Saxony, to a friend.

Christ our king was willing to give himself unto death, that through his death and resurrection from the dead his kingdom might be established. Christ died for the sins of Luther. In gratitude Luther would give his mortal life for his place in the kingdom which was given him through Christ’s death. “Since then Your Majesty and lordships desire a simple reply,” said Luther at the Diet of Worms, to Emperor Charles 5 and his lords, “I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and of councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.”⁴⁶

(D) The English Reformers

I said that Luther was willing to give his life for his king. Herein the practical outliving of the sovereignty of his king manifested itself. Luther practiced, as well as he preached, the sovereignty of his king. “Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; the body they may kill. God’s truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever.”

John Rogers, a London minister, was soon to discover that his body, the church might kill. He was the first to be burned with fire in England for his faith in Christ as king alone. John Rogers, we are told, went to death “as if he were walking to his wedding.”⁵⁷

The second minister in Great Britain to be burned was John Hooper. He died “neither moving backward, forward, nor to any side, but only praying, ‘Lord Jesus, have mercy on me; Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’ ...”⁶⁸ The church of Rome was hiding and keeping from the people “the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ.” That is the one point he kept insisting on.

Time would fail me to speak further of Rowland Taylor, of Robert Ferrar, of John Bradford, and John Philpot. Just a word about Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer. They were burned “back to back at one stake.” “Latimer’s last words were like the blast of a trumpet, which rings even to this day,... ‘Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day, by God’s grace, light such a candle in England as I trust shall never go out.’ ”⁷⁹

5 ³ Edwin P. Booth: *Martin Luther, Oak of Saxony*, p. 135.

6 ⁴ Ronald Bainton: *Here I Stand*, New York, 1950, p. 185.

7 ⁵ J. C. Ryle; *Five English Reformers*, 1961, p. 15.

8 ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

9 ⁷ *Ibid.*

Does it sound easy, this being burned at the stake? No, indeed, if Christ prayed that, if it were possible, the cup of suffering might be taken from him, his followers did also. Thomas Cranmer, in a moment of unbearable temptation, recanted his “Protestant opinions.” But then, weeping bitterly as Peter did when he had denied his Lord, he openly rejected the Popish doctrine of Christ’s real presence in the mass. When the fire surrounded him he thrust his right hand, with which he had signed his recantation, first into the flame.⁸¹⁰

And now the professed followers of the Reformers and more particularly of Calvin, are trying to put out in this land that flame which the pilgrim fathers brought to this country.

(E) Rome’s Aggiornamento

As for the Church of Rome, what of its talk of *aggiornamento*, you ask? We are no longer called heretics. We are brethren now, even though yet departed brethren. However, have you not read that in his third encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*, Pope Paul 6 maintained the same doctrine of the Mass, namely the real Presence? Was it not for rejecting this doctrine that the British Reformers which we mentioned were burned at the stake? When some Dutch theologians in the mother church now argue that “the essential change” of the bread and wine of the Mass “is in the significance of the elements rather than in their substance,”⁹¹¹ they need not fear for the stake. But this is not due to the fact that Rome has changed any of its teachings, all of them together destructive of the sovereign grace of God in Christ.

But now also in the proposed Confession of 1967 the United Presbyterian Church in the United States now virtually disowns their forebears who were burned at the stake for their doctrines of free grace. The leaders of the neo-orthodox theology of Princeton Seminary and the leaders of the Presbyterian church have abjectly surrendered to the spirit which makes man his own king. It will join and then lead the Roman church to capitulate completely at last to modern unbelief.

(F) The New Morality

Look now with me, for a moment, at the emergence of what is called the new morality. This new morality exemplifies the end of Christian morality just as the Confession of 1967 exemplifies the end of Christian theology.

You recall how that, before the time of the flood, it was the descendents of Seth that intermarried with the descendents of Cain. Then came the flood and wiped them all away. God’s patience with his people and then his patience with the whole human race was exhausted.

I have here a little book bearing as its title *Honest To God*. It is written by John A. T. Robinson, a bishop of Woolwich, in the Anglican church.

Like the writers of the Confession of 1967, Bishop Robinson says that he seeks to bring the gospel of God’s sovereign grace to modern man. In particular, Robinson wants to help young people with their moral problems. How is this to be done? First, he argues, we must, with Rudolf Bultmann, the great New Testament scholar, demythologize the teaching of the Bible. This idea of a three-decker universe—the world on which we live with heaven above and hell beneath—who can believe in such a thing today? We should realize that “the whole schema of a supernatural Being coming down from heaven to ‘save’ mankind from sin, in the way that a man might put his finger into a glass of water to rescue a struggling insect, is frankly incredible to man ‘come of age,’ who no longer believes in such a *deus ex machina*.”¹⁰¹²

10 ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

11 ⁹ *Time*, Sept. 24, 1965, p. 62.

12 ¹⁰ *Honest to God*, Philadelphia, 1963, p. 78.

The person “come of age” will rather follow Jesus, ‘the man for others,’ the man in whom Love has completely taken over, the one who is utterly open to, and united with, the Ground of his being. For at this point of love “ ‘to the uttermost,’ we encounter God, the ultimate ‘depth’ of our being, the unconditional in the conditioned. This is what the New Testament means by saying that ‘God was in Christ’ and that ‘what God was the Word was.’ Because Christ was utterly and completely ‘the man for others,’ because he was love, he was ‘one with the Father,’ because ‘God is love.’ ”¹¹¹³

It is with the vision of this new Christ, this man-for-others, wholly given to love, that Robinson construes what he himself speaks of as a “revolution in ethics.” Significantly, he says that this revolution is “no ‘reluctant revolution.’ The wind of change here is a gale.”¹²¹⁴

It is, we may fairly say, the sort of revolution in ethics or morals that took place before the flood. Who today believes that marriages are made in heaven? Do you still wish to base marriage “like all else in life, upon the absolute command or law of God ... ?” Do you still think of the task of the church to call men back to the absolute standards of God and of Christ? Then listen to bishop Robinson again. The “moral precepts” of Jesus “are not legislation laying down what love always demands of every one: they are illustrations of what love may at any moment require of anyone.”¹³¹⁵ Thus, life in Christ Jesus, in the new being, in the Spirit, means having no absolutes but his love.¹⁴¹⁶ “Love alone, because, as it were, it has a built-in moral compass, enabling it to ‘home’ intuitively upon the deepest need of the other, can allow itself to be directed completely by the situation.”¹⁵¹⁷ “One cannot then,” says Robinson, “say that ‘sex relations before marriage’ or ‘divorce’ are wrong and sinful in themselves. The only intrinsic evil is lack of love.”¹⁶¹⁸

(G) Ecumenism

Do you not see, my friends, that what bishop Robinson does with respect to Christian morality, is the same, in effect, as what the proposed Confession of 1967 does for Christian theology as a whole? We are no longer to think of Christ as revealing in Scripture the will of God for the redemption of his people from sin. We are no longer to think of Christ as revealing to us the will of God for our lives so that they might be directed to the praise of his sovereign grace.

The entire Protestant principle is denied by the would-be leaders of Protestantism. The so-called ecumenical movement among Protestants in our day is inspired by this so-called Protestant principle: that there is no absolute revelation of God through Christ given once-for-all in Scripture. Man rather has the standard of right and wrong within himself.

But let us not think that we have in the New Confession and in the new morality only a virtual rejection of historic Protestantism. We have a virtual rejection of basic Christianity. If the Roman Catholic church wants to join the ecumenical movement it will be called upon to surrender whatever is left in its midst of any such thing as an absolute revelation of God in Christ. The Christ of the ecumenical movement is the Christ of modern would-be autonomous man.

(H) The Autonomous Man

13 ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

14 ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 105.

15 ¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–111.

16 ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

17 ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

18 ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Bishop Robinson rightly says that the “revolt in the field of ethics from supranaturalism to naturalism ... began with” what he calls “the magnificent grandeur of Kant’s autonomous ideal.”¹⁷¹⁹ Modern man is, as he thinks, sufficient to himself. There cannot be a God, says Sartre, for if there were, man would not be free. The true freedom of man means, according to this modern view, absolute independence from God, as he has spoken through Christ in Scripture. The truly free man is, then, on this view, the man who sets his own ideals of life before him, who finds within himself the norm or standard by following which he aims to reach his ideals of life and who thinks that he has within himself whatever power is necessary to force him onward to his ideals.

“As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” ([Mt 24:37](#)). The “believers” are leading the “unbeliever” in unbelief; the “disciples” of Christ are baptizing and teaching children and adults in the name of God the Father as the “ground of Being,” of God the Son as Jesus “the man for others,” and of God the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of anti-Christ.

Noah, the Man of God

A new and fresh view of Christ is what we children of the Reformation and grateful followers of Calvin need today.

A new and fresh view of Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. A new determination to present the Christ of the Scripture over against the Christ of New Protestant theology, the new Roman Catholicism, and the new Protestant morality—a new determination to proclaim him to the world as the Saviour of men.

(I) Grace in Depth

A new view of Christ means first of all, for all of us, a deeper humility. No one of us and no group of us dare now say, if we have ever said or thought it: “It can’t happen here.” When the Son of man returns, will he find faith on earth? Yes, he will. He has promised that he will. Will he find faith in America? Perhaps, perhaps not. He has not absolutely promised that he will. Will he find faith in Holland? Perhaps, perhaps not. He has not absolutely promised that he will. Will he find faith in China or in Russia? Perhaps he will. He will find faith where in his sovereign good pleasure he gives faith.

If we still believe in Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, living in the midst of those who have no Christ or have a false Christ, it is not *per se* because we are Calvinist but because we, like Noah, have found grace in the sight of God.

To say this is to recognize the grace of God in depth. It is to expect, according to his promise, to find this grace among our fundamentalist friends—many of them likely trusting in the grace of God alone more unreservedly than we, who are Calvinists, do. It is to expect to find grace in the most unexpected places. It means that we shall never be discouraged. Christ will be victorious. We pray and pray more earnestly that he will be victorious even through us as individuals and through us as groups. God through Christ can save through many or few; through Noah, prefiguring Christ he saved the world by one. Christ shall not fail nor be discouraged. He did not fail and was not discouraged when all but one, Noah (and he by grace alone) placed their trust and hope in man instead of in him.

(J) Grace in Breadth

19 ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

But then, are we retrenching now? Are we merely to rejoice in the fact that here and there some individual firebrands are saved from the burning? Are we now, because of our discouragement, virtually to repudiate the program of a Calvin and the ambition of a Kuyper to see Christ's claims, his sovereignty, recognized everywhere and in every sphere of life? Does our vision of Christ's sovereign grace in depth imply that we can no longer see it in its breadth? Is the *Pro Rege* slogan at best to be muffled and to be spoken softly among those only who already believe? Shall we, now seemingly so small in number, say that Christ's kingship pertains only to the field of religion or that it will be only probably established?

Take another look at Noah. He was alone! He told his contemporaries that God had spoken to him. He did not say that probably God had spoken. He did not say that he believed that God had spoken but that it was always possible that he was mistaken since mistakes do happen. All those about him said that there could be no such thing as an absolute revelation of God to man.

Hearing this, Noah did not shrink back. He knew—he was certain—that God had spoken to him. Moreover, what God had spoken pertained to the whole of human life, to all men, to body and soul, to the past and to the future as well as to the present.

Noah reasoned with his contemporaries about their present. He was a preacher of righteousness in the present. He himself believed in and lived according to the righteous ordinances of God. Thus he condemned the immorality that surrounded him on every side.

Noah reasoned with his contemporaries about their future. Their unrighteous deeds would be punished by their creator-redeemer. Let them repent and be saved; if not they would be destroyed by an all-destroying flood.

Noah reasoned with his contemporaries about their past. It was, he argued, because of the fact that they had sinned in Adam, that they were now unrighteous and would be destroyed by the flood.

This flood to come would be a flood in the realm of space and time. It would take them away to destruction, body and soul.

But Noah, do you not know that there can be no such thing as an absolute voice of God speaking in our world of pure relativity? Even in the religious realm this cannot be. Surely, then, no such revelation as you speak of can pertain to the physical world. Science has records of hurricanes and of floods, but there is no record of a flood that encompasses all those even that have fled to higher ground. Even if such a flood should come then we could not recognize it as coming from your God; it could always have come by Chance.

Was Noah silenced by such an argument? Not at all. The flood to come upon all men in the future, he told them, was due to their unrighteousness, to their new Confession written by Lamech and to their new morality practiced by him and his descendents, and even now by the descendents of Seth. How did he know? Well, God had told him even through the words of Adam which came down to him and, in fact, to all of those in the long-lived generations preceding them.

An absolute revelation of God as Creator and as coming Saviour, condemning men for worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator—this is that with which we, today, must confront the hearts and minds of an unbelieving world and an apostate Christ.

The Great Temptation

The great temptation for all of us is to make concessions to unbelieving and apostate men in order to win them to an acceptance of our Christ. The temptation toward concessionism is far greater than it has ever been before.

Does not neo-orthodox theology hold to the sovereign grace of God? Does it not claim to be even more faithful to Christ than even Luther and Calvin could be? Has not Barth brought back the idea of the transcendence of God into the mind of the church? Can we not rejoice in the fact that Barth, over against Brunner, maintains belief in the virgin birth of Christ; that Barth, over against Bultmann, maintains belief in the resurrection of Christ? Does not Barth so greatly elevate the importance of Christ that all men, to be men, must be created in Christ?

My friends, this is the final hour. There be many false Christs abroad in the church. But our Christ, the Christ who dies for us and rose again, warned us against listening to their seductive voices. Barth does not believe in this Christ. The Confession of 1967 does not believe in this Christ. The men of the ecumenical movement do not believe in this Christ.

To be sure, a greater emphasis on the primacy of Christ is needed—a greater emphasis on the fact that all things are and were created by and unto him; a greater emphasis on the fact that all common grace is subservient to saving grace in Christ; a greater emphasis on the fact that only in Christ as the light of the world does any man, even the most violent hater of Christ, see any light at all. We need a greater emphasis upon the fact that scientists and philosophers, even those who ignore or deny Christ do their work effectively because of his work for the salvation of the world.

If some of our Reformed fathers stressed the fact that as Reformed believers we must be genuinely theological, let us stress the fact today that one cannot be truly theological unless one is genuinely Christological and that one cannot be genuinely Christological unless one be genuinely biblical. It is in the light of the revelation of God in Christ as it lies before us in Scripture that any fact in any field and all facts in all fields have their meaning.

It is not stubbornness or ignorance when we claim that in the original manuscripts of the Bible, the Word of Christ has come into the world. All the “phenomena of Scripture” as well as all the “phenomena of science” need this revelation of God if they are to present anything but chaos.

The issue between unbelief and false belief as over against true belief is always, in the last analysis, an issue with respect to one’s ultimate point of trust. It is impossible for you to bring any coherence into your experience, unless you make God’s revelation through Christ in Scripture your starting point. Without the light of the sun you search in vain for anything. All the lights of human life, science, philosophy or theology derive their light from Scripture or they convey no light at all.

Shall we then fear the wrath of man? Take another look at Cranmer as he thrust his right hand, the hand that had signed the document of compromise with belief in the false Christ of Rome into the devouring flames. Take another look at Luther, that Oak of Saxony, and listen to that resonant voice of his at the Diet of Worms: Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.

Look too at the world with all its seeming power and glory, with all its science and philosophy. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? Do not modern philosophers themselves admit that on their view, human existence is existence unto death? Do not those who reject our Christ have to do so even as they are being borne up by him just as a father bears up his child who strikes him in the face. “This is not the time to tremble but to cry aloud, while our Lord Jesus Christ is being condemned, burned, blasphemed.” This is not the time to make concessions to unbelieving biblical criticism, to science falsely so-called, to a bankrupt philosophy, to a would-be self-sufficient man.

Take a look again, a new look, a fresh, daily look, at your king, lowly, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass. But now he is in glory, with all power in his right hand. Now once more, boldly if humbly, say *Pro Rege*, and he that seeth in secret will reward you openly.