

Why Westminster Today

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In the year 1898 Abraham Kuyper, founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, delivered the L. P. Stone lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary at Princeton Theological Seminary. The title of his lectures was "Calvinism." In more comprehensive form than it had been done by any in modern times Kuyper presented Calvinism as Christianity "Come to its Own." In his audience sat Dr. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield.

A little later Dr. Herman Bavinck, professor of Dogmatics at the Free University of Amsterdam, delivered the Stone lectures at Princeton. The title of his lectures was "The Philosophy of Revelation." So far as I know Dr. Warfield listened to Dr. Bavinck as he listened to Dr. Kuyper. Another man present at both Kuyper's and Bavinck's lectures, was Dr. Geerhardus Vos, professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Here were four great exponents of Calvinism. All of them were exponents of Calvinism because for them Calvinism was "Christianity Come to its Own."

But what does it mean when we say that Christianity come to its own? We meant that Calvinism more truly and more fully than in Romanism or in other forms of Protestantism does Christ come to his own. Calvinism is more Christ-centered than any other form of Christian witness. To be a true Christian is to believe Jesus when he says that he is the way the truth and the life. He was and is the way, the truth and the life as the Son of God and son of man. Jesus said he was one with the father who had sent him into the world. The Pharisees charged him with blasphemy when he declared himself to be the Son of God. Jesus spoke and apostles spoke of the Holy Spirit as one with the Son and the Father. In short what it means to say that Calvinism is Christianity come to its own is to be more God-centered as well as more Christ-centered than other forms of Christianity. It is the triune God of Scripture who in the counsels of eternity decided to create and redeem for himself a people, and in doing so, to reconcile all things to himself.

It was a great time to be alive those days at the turn of the century. It was a bit like the days of Luther and of Calvin. Luther, and more especially Calvin, called upon believers not only to believe in Christ as their Savior from Sin and therefore from the wrath to come but also to follow him as their Lord. By God's grace

commit yourself to Christ and he will be able to keep that which you have committed unto him against that day. What surpassing joy to know that with body and soul for time and for eternity you belong not to yourself but to your faithful savior and that without the will of your heavenly father not a hair shall fall from your head. Echoing this spirit of the Reformation Kuyper called upon the people, especially what he called the simple people, as well as the sophisticated to consider all the world for Christ as their king. *Pro Rege*, for the king was the motto of Kuyper's life.

Echoing this same spirit of the Reformation at Princeton, Dr. Warfield and Dr. Vos taught, with their associates, students to study and apply the Word that Christ their Savior and Lord had spoken for the comfort and instruction of his people. Do you fear the foe? To be sure Satan's power and ingenuity are great. But one little Word shall fell him. This Word tells the story of the Christ who came into the world conquering and to conquer. The powers of hell cannot prevail against him as he establishes his kingdom.

There, was moreover, not only a revival of the principle of the Reformation but there was also a deepening and broadening of it. There was first of all a broadening of it. Christ's name, Kuyper pointed out, must be unfurled in the field of education, in philosophy, in science and in art as well as religion. How can man be a true prophet as he must be and wants to be if whole areas of human behavior lie unclaimed for Christ the king. Under the motto or slogan of *Pro Rege* Kuyper stirred up young men and women everywhere he went. Not a centimeter of ground must remain in the hand of the enemy. The Christian's warfare is an offensive one. King Diabolus has usurped the world of science and philosophy for himself. Satan must be banished from this territory. His banners must be torn down and the flag of *Soli deo Gloria* must be raised to the top of the highest pole in every village, hamlet and town. They to whom God the father has given mental and spiritual abilities and gifts must lead those who have had no such abilities and gifts so that together they may form one mighty army of God. In the day of judgment you may cast your trophies at the feet of Christ and he shall give you the crown of righteousness.

But surely if the principle of the Reformation must thus be broadened it must also be deepened, then it must at the same time also be deepened. Lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. If you are to be a prophet in the field of science and philosophy then you must at the same time be a priest who dedicates all that he conquered as a king on the altar of devotion to Christ the great High Priest. Accordingly even when he wrote his great works in theology,

Kuyper also wrote *To Be Near Unto God, Then Thou Sittest in the House* and many other works of a deep devotional nature.

I have spoken mostly of Kuyper. But each in his own way, Bavinck, Warfield, and Vos, together with their associates, sought to broaden and deepen the Reformation principle.

It was because of this broadening and deepening of the Reformation principle that men everywhere took note of what was happening. Men of culture, though not Christian, realized that here claim was made upon them that they could not ignore. Historic Protestant Christianity could no longer be ignored. It had come forth from the ghetto to the market place. Scientists and philosophers, as well as men of culture everywhere, began to realize that they must do something about this newly revived Protestantism. Up to this day Satan had had things pretty much his own way in the field of culture. Satan was not so much concerned about the far distant nations of the world. They were quietly following him. Satan was concerned about Europe and America. We must, he told his faithful legionnaires, win the citadels of the West. We must insinuate into the minds not only of scientists and philosophers but of theologians that when Christ said he was the Son of God as well as the son of men he was at best deluded. If formerly it was our policy to create doubt in the minds of men with respect to the story of creation, fall and redemption of the world as set forth in the Bible, we must now make them believe that the story cannot possibly be true. Some of the followers of Christ are taking seriously Christ's claim, "All power is given unto me." Look at Amsterdam, look at Princeton. We must destroy these institutions. But we must, as we do this, not overshoot the mark. We must not openly and boldly deny the claims of Christ. We must be more tactical than were the Pharisees. We must not say that Christ blasphemed when he, in forgiving sins, made himself one with God. We must rather tell men, that with the best of will we cannot think of God as eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, and truth. Did not the greatest thinkers of the past try earnestly to think of such a god and did they not by their own admission fail to do so? Surely then if Jesus was truly human, if he was like unto us in all things sin accepted, then we must think of him as trying with ourselves to reach the high idea whereby we think of God as the father of all men. We may well believe Jesus when he said that he was one with the father in that the Father loves all men and Jesus also loved all men and died for all that they, with him, might strive to love all men.

The Auburn Affirmation

It was this idea of the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of all men based on the notion that had already begun to be popular in the days of Kuyper, Bavinck, Warfield, and Vos. This pragmatic or practical sort of Christianity, based on absolute skepticism with respect to the possibility of truthfulness of historic Protestantism that had found brilliant expression in Germany. Adolph Von Harnack and Wilhelm Hermann and others were working hard not openly to reject but quietly to reinterpret the meaning of the Christian story. Soon there were professors of theology and a large company of ministers, following these German teachers who started a revolution against the establishment. Should not man be free to choose for himself what he would believe? Should he not be scientific in theology? Should he not think of Christianity as an hypothesis to be tested by their own moral experience as to its truth? Let us think of the idea of creation as an hypothesis to be set over against cosmic and biological evolution as an hypothesis. Let us set the story of Adam and Eve in paradise as an hypothesis over against what the great modern philosopher, Immanuel Kant, and the psychologists have discovered with respect to the terrible evil desires and practices of men in the earliest known ages of time. I tell my orthodox friend that if he believes creation and I believe evolution we do not really differ from one another in any basic way. I believe with you, I tell him, that we may think of God as if he were the creator within us striving to go ever onward and upward toward higher and nobler moral ideals. Moreover when you my orthodox friend, believe in theory that the man Jesus was alone God and man and I believe that all men are both God and another in any basic way. We really both think that every true man strives upward toward higher heights because it is the spirit of Jesus as the Christ who strives within us and even for us. When you my orthodox friend, believe in the virgin birth of Christ as a biological phenomena and deny it we are not so far apart from one another. We are all in Christ virgin born and can therefore with him and through him start our progress on the way to moral perfection each day anew. Finally, if you believe in a physical resurrection of the Jesus we deny we are still together striving for inward renewal every day through the power of the resurrection that works within us all.

More than a thousand ministers in the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. wrote down this new modern point of view with respect to Christianity in a manifesto. They called it the Auburn Affirmation, after the town of Auburn, New York where they met to compose it.

The authors of the Auburn Affirmation said that they were merely seeking for freedom for an oppressed minority. They had been unshackled by the establishment. They had been held down unjustly from their inalienable right of

free expression. Is not a man's religion that which is deepest in him? Should he not then have the freedom to express his religious convictions freely? Should he be kept from interpreting the facts of the past, the facts about Christ and his work, the fact about the formation of the canon and the content of Scripture in the new light that had been shed upon them by science and philosophy? Surely if you believe that Christ is the light of the world the light that comes from science and the light that comes from philosophy cannot but be one with the light that springs from Christ. Truth is one. Truth is unity. All light springs from Christ, the one all-pervasive principle of light that shines in the hearts of all men. How can there be any final conflict between what we learn our unaided intellect and what we learn from Scripture.

It was thus that they who, though they were members of many Protestant churches, were opposed to the Christ of the Scriptures, the Christ of God, reasoned for a number of years. They won over one theological institution after another to take this compromising view. Synthesis between modern thought and Christianity became the watchword of the hour. Roman Catholicism seemed to hold out against this new tendency. The church excluded "modernists" from its fold. But this did not really help. The teaching of the church itself was based upon the synthesis of a philosophy based upon man as sufficient to himself and a God and a Christ who was nonetheless said to be man's creator and redeemer. In the Presbyterian churches it was Princeton alone that continued to hold to the faith once for all delivered to the saints. So the liberals concentrated their chief efforts for the while on Princeton. Princeton must be destroyed. They won over the president of Princeton, Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, to their side. With pious sounding language, Dr. Stevenson argued that Princeton could serve its purpose much better than it had done in the past if only it could honestly say that it represented every major theological point of view found in the church. Surely this was a seminary that belonged to the church.

The Reorganization Of Princeton

In the spring of 1929, Dr. Stevenson and his party succeeded in having the Seminary reorganized in accordance with the new inclusive policy. At the 1929 General Assembly the church did away with the old two board system of control and established one new board to run the affairs of the seminary both academic and educational. Two of the members of this new board were signers of the Auburn Affirmation. It was as if two communist sympathizers had been elected to the supreme court of the United States. The new board soon made a public pronouncement to the effect that under the new board the seminary would now

be better able than it had ever been to carry out the provisions of its charter. The new board revealed the way in which it would perform its new task. It asked all the members of the old faculty, even those who had opposed the reorganization of the Seminary, to remain on the new faculty. They were not seeking to exclude the old point of view; they were simply going to give both points of views a place on the faculty. This was clever strategy. If men like Robert Dick Wilson, Oswald T. Allis, Geerhardus Vos, Wm. Park Armstrong and J. Gresham Machen could be persuaded to remain on the faculty, or rather join the new faculty, it would appear to all the world that they did not consider the change very basic or very evil. But as you all know Dr. Wilson, Dr. Machen, and Dr. Allis refused to serve under the new board. Dr. Vos, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Hodge did agree to teach under the new board but this was due to circumstances. All three of them had vigorously opposed the reorganization.

In the summer of 1929 these three men together with others organized Westminster Theological Seminary. Dr. Machen was the natural leader of the new movement. In giving a public account of the reason for the organization of the new seminary, Dr. Machen made it clear beyond the peradventure of a doubt that the old Princeton was dead. The gospel of salvation by grace from dead works would no longer be taught there without compromise. This gospel would be diluted with the supposed wisdom of man. The new seminary was small in number and had no money. There would be no final dependence upon numbers and upon organization. Those who undertook to organize the new seminary were not pretending to be greater scholars than were other men. Those who organized the seminary, both the board and the faculty would seek learning indeed, they would seek learning with all their strength, but they would seek this learning on their knees, in humility seeking their help from their Savior.

But one thing must be clear, the banner of the gospel of the grace of God in Christ must be raised to the top of the highest mountain that can be found. For that reason Dr. Machen soon organized the Independent Board for Foreign Missions as well as the seminary. To be sure, Dr. Machen believed the work of the Missions is the work of the church. But through its Board of Foreign Missions, the Presbyterian Church was sending out missionaries such as Pearl S. Buck who nowise believed the gospel at all. Graduates of the seminary applying under this Board to go out to the foreign field were required to promise that they would cooperate with such missionaries as did not believe the gospel at all. What else could be done, at least as a temporary measure, but to organize an independent mission board.

The response of the leaders of the church was not slow in coming. They soon called Machen to give an account before a commission of five appointed by the General Assembly. One of the commissioners was a signer of the Auburn Affirmation. The whole Commission was loyal to the church, but they were not loyal to Christ the head of the church. They condemned Machen who was loyal to Christ as the head of the church. If Machen had succumbed to their requirement he would, like they, have crucified the Christ of the Scriptures afresh. He, like they would have prevented as far as he could, the gospel of grace from going out to the ends of the world. By the grace of God Machen said in effect that he must obey God rather than man.

Bismarck, North Dakota

It was in this spirit of obeying God rather than man that Machen spent himself to exhaustion till he died in Bismarck, North Dakota. It was on New Year's Day, 1936. Before leaving for the West, he called me up and told me that on his way to Dakota to speak for a little group of people who sought to be faithful to Christ he would stop in Chicago and write an article on Christian Schools. He would send this article to me. Would I go over it and send it on to the office of the National Union of Christian Schools. In Chicago the pains of pleurisy overtook him but they did not prevent him from going on to the Dakotas in order to encourage a small group of Christian people to stand fast for their Lord. A former student of his drove him forty miles through midwinter weather while he was in pain. But he carried on to the finish. On his death bed he sent a telegram to Professor John Murray about the comfort of the active obedience of Christ for a dying man. As he lived so he died. In humble deep obedience of love he gave his life, his money, his all.

How good it was for those of us whom he had chosen to labor with on the faculty, R. B. Kuiper, Ned B. Stonehouse, Paul Woolley and me to be with him daily and often to go out to lunch with him after the Saturday morning faculty meeting. He did not preach at us telling us to do this or to do that. He left us free in the true sense of the word, freedom to develop our work for ourselves. But we could not help but imbibe something of his spirit of unreserved devotion to the one goal of lifting up the banner of Christ on top of the highest mountain.

When Socrates was about to drink the hemlock cup he had sent his wife away. One cannot die philosophically with women around. Socrates had Simmias and Cebes and others with him. With them he calmly discussed the question whether, when the hemlock would reach his heart, and he would pass to the other world, he should then still know who he was. Socrates was certain that he would live

because he would partake of the Idea of Life. Well, Machen did not send his wife away. It was indeed said of him that he had inherited his money from his wife and she had made it from breweries. But the missing link in this chain of forgeries was his non-existent wife. As for his money, he had some money but he used it freely to pay for the deficits that appeared on the books of the seminary from year to year. One day I saw him place a check of \$24,000.00 on the desk of the treasurer to make up for the deficit of a certain year. We his followers could not be present at his deathbed physically in the way that Simmias and Cebes were present at the deathbed of Socrates. But one thing we knew without a doubt. Machen did not speculate on the problem whether or not he might participate on some unknown Idea of Life. He knew Christ and the power of his resurrection. He knew that he would presently see his Savior face to face. On the way back from the burial service at Baltimore I was depressed. Would everything that Machen had done go, as it were, with him into death? Then Mrs. Frank Stevenson, of the Seminary Board's first president and a friend of Machen's, spoke to me and told me not to be disheartened. The greatness of Machen lay precisely in that he had not centered the work of the seminary around himself. His death was a great loss indeed but the work must go on. God would raise up new men to do his work. They might not be of the caliber of Machen, but as long as they were of the spirit of Machen the work would go on for generations to come and even to the final day of Jesus Christ. Then soon after that I visited my father who had all his life been a simple farmer. He listened to me as I told him how dismayed I had been not only at the personal loss sustained in the death of Machen but of my fear that the work could not go on effectively without such a world renowned leader as Machen had been. My father, old and well stricken in years, simply quoted the passage of Hebrews "He that cometh to God must believeth that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." That was all he said! He said no more. I was rebuked and chastened. Did I still finally trust in Machen's greatness as a scholar and as a man or did I trust in the Christ to whom Machen had constantly pointed us?

The Future

Now as I look to the future I take the words of the apostle John for my guide. Writing his letter to the Church of Philadelphia he says, "Thou hast little strength; thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name."

To keep in remembrance the name of Jesus, to stand up for it before those who rule in the false church and to spread it abroad to the ends of the world, that is the task of those who in his own body bore upon the tree the curse of our sins

so as to set us free. It is much more difficult to do what Christ expects of his disciples than it was in the days of Kuyper, Bavinck, Warfield, and Vos.

In the first place the powers of hell are much more solidly ensconced in the world about us than they were in the days of these men. The forces of those who hate the name of Christ are now united as they never were before. Thus Radakrishnam, a famous Indian philosopher, insists that his philosophy is in all respects similar to that of various philosophies of the West. Arnold Toynbee, the so-called Christian historian, insists that Christianity and Buddhism are at one in their basic striving for the elevation of mankind. Buddha was a great religious leader and so was Jesus. Both sacrificed themselves in the interest of lifting the masses of men up to an ever higher level of moral accomplishment. According to Karl Jaspers, a great German philosopher, Socrates, Buddha Confucius and Jesus were the four determinative men of all history. None of these thinks of himself as divine; therein liest their greatness. Robert Collingwood has taught such great theologians as Rudolph Bultmann and others, to see that when Jesus says I am the light of the world this must be taken as a datum by the modern historian, who must, in the light of his own self-sufficient historical consciousness decide what to do with the claims that Jesus made for himself. Surely there can be no absolute revelation in history.

Philosophers and theologians, not to speak of scientists, vie with one another in their asserting that they who take Jesus at his word when he said he was the bread of life are surely wrong. Scientists and philosophers and theologians are far more insistent in our day than in the beginning of the century that such claims as Christ made for himself, assuming they were actually made by an historically existent man, cannot be true.

Now we at the Seminary are of little strength. We have no men of the faculty, unless they be among the younger men who have not yet developed their full potential, of the stature of Machen, of Kuyper, Warfield or Vos. But we have, and this holds as much for the men who have been added to the faculty as of those who still remain of the early faculty, by the grace of God the determination to keep his word and not to deny his name.

We have learned that there is only one way of meeting the various forms of unbelief as they attack our Christian faith. We must do what Paul the apostle did at Athens. We must proclaim the name of him after whom the Greeks had vainly sought and point out that if in unbelief and rebellion men turn away from that name then their pretended wisdom has been made foolishness with God. We have learned, all of us have learned, not to plead with men as was unfortunately

done by some men even in the olden days at Princeton to believe in Jesus because he is very probably what he claims to be, the Savior of men. We have learned, all of us, again perhaps in the hard way not to do what was done even by some men at Princeton in the old days to say that the documents of the Bible are at the least trustworthy as documents of history and that therefore we may believe what they say about Jesus. We have learned to begin with the Scriptures as the very Word of God and of Christ written by those who were inspired directly and infallibly by the Holy Spirit. We have therefore gone beyond some of the men of old Princeton in that we unashamedly begin the presentation of the gospel with the self-attesting Christ of the Scriptures. There are not some of us who start with the Christ of Scripture but all of us do. We are not fully agreed on all the detailed points of theology, the difference. The difference in background between us manifests itself in certain differences of outlook on various points of teaching.

But by the grace of God we have, though of little strength, kept his word and not denied his name. It is the only name that is given under heaven unto men by which they must be saved that of which we speak in every class directly or indirectly.

It is a matter of special gratification to me to say a word about the spread of the knowledge of that name through graduates of the Seminary in the Orient. I think it was during the second year of the seminary's existence that Goji Tanaka came to study with us from Japan. He wrote a 60 page paper for me on the doctrine of common grace. He and later graduates with him were largely instrumental in spreading the light of the gospel and more particularly according to its Reformed expression in the Reformed Theological Seminary in Kobe. A little later Mr. Park Yun Sun came from Korea. He learned the Dutch language in order to be able to profit from the tremendous output of exegetical work in the Netherlands as the fruit of the work of the Free University of Amsterdam.

When I went to the Orient in 1960 Mr. Egbert Andrews got me an opportunity to speak to over 75 philosophy students at the University in Taipei. Through the influence of one of our graduates I spoke to a large number of students at the University in Seoul. I spoke at three institutions of higher learning in Formosa, at three in Japan and two in Korea, all because of graduates of the seminary who were able to get openings for men. And all of these men were true to the gospel. But the greatest joy came when at Pusan, in Korea, I spoke to a church full of simple Korean folk. The church had no pews. When the crowd could not all get in the chairman asked those who were seated to stand up. They were sitting on the

floor. Stand up please! Come forward please! Be seated please! That maneuver made room for about one hundred more.

What a handicap to speak through an interpreter. Even so the audience listened attentively every minute. And then the singing and best of all the common prayer out loud every one for himself speaking forth the inmost yearnings of his soul to the Saviour. The audience swayed back and forth in the way a field of grain does when it is blown upon by the wind. But I think I was never closer to heaven than when I saw this to my shame. Pray what more effective way of doing mission work in foreign fields than to have native students study here with us and then go back to their own people and tell them of the wonderful world of God and of the Saviour who can save them from their slavery to sin.

Finally I come back to the West and to the modern church. As the forces of unbelief outside the church have united as a common hopeless search for salvation where it cannot be found so the various forms of unbelief which have also united in a common and bitter opposition to the followers of the lamb.

In the Spring number of the alumni news of Princeton Seminary, President James I. McCord, reports on the progress that has been made in the "Consultation of Church Union." This consultation on church union, says Dr. McCord, was inspired by a sermon preached in San Francisco by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake at the beginning of this decade. It now includes 25 million people of nine Protestant communions. But where are we now in Church union asks Dr. McCord. We are considerably beyond the point of its official beginning in May, 1961, when a decision was made to attempt to reshape Protestantism within our generation. Many churches from all over the world have joined in with the effort. But the size of the movement however impressive is not the most important point. The important point is that this movement represents "an attempt to reshape the face of the Protestant witness to the world today." The new shape of Protestantism provides at the same time for principles of religion which can lead to the reunion of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The new religion is the religion of salvation of all men in the Christ of the world. It is the religion of man as being a product of cosmic and biological evolution on his way to every higher and nobler forms of morality and love. This is the religion of the World Council of Churches of Christ. It is the religion of the Documents of Vatican 2. It is the religion also of the modern Jew. You may listen in the morning on the T.V. to A Word for Today. You may have a rabbi, a priest or a Protestant minister, but of

one thing you can be sure, namely, that they will all say essentially the same thing. We must all love all men regardless.

The Presbyterian Church to which Princeton Seminary belongs now has, as you know, a Book of Confessions. In it there is something for everybody. But the one confession which they who were anxious to exchange the Westminster Confession for the Book of Confession swear by is the Confession of 1967. From it the Scriptures as a once and for all finished revelation of God to man has been removed and from it the Christ of God and his once and for all atoning death on the cross has been removed. We find instead a self-sufficient man projecting for himself a Christ image in order with the help of this ideal to learn to love and forgive all men as God learns to love and forgive all men in sovereign freedom which means in this case without the necessity of any atoning substitutionary death on the part of Christ, the God-man. In the *Ladies Home Journal* of December, 1969, there is a special Christmas Portfolio with the title "Does Religion Have a Future?" Answers are given by fourteen men. All of them, whatever their church affiliation, offer the gospel of self-sufficient man as the only hope for mankind, except one. That one is Billy Graham, and, sad to say, Billy does not, in this article, in any clear-cut fashion, proclaim the sovereign grace of God in Christ and the need for men to be saved from the wrath of God to come through the substitutionary death of Christ.

John Mack Carter, the editor and publisher of the *Ladies Home Journal* cannot find a single man who will speak clearly and fearlessly of that only name that is given under heaven by which men and all their culture must be saved. Men, leading men, men of science, still pin their hopes on future scientific discoveries. In *Time* of July 18, 1969, we find an article on: "Beyond the Moon, No End." The Frontiers of Science which seemed closed only a generation ago "is open again, and this time it will never close." But if the quest for physical survival, survival from the atom bomb, seems for a moment not to be so utterly hopeless as it seemed not long ago, what of The Quest for Spiritual Survival.

In *Life* of January 9, 1970, Norman Mailer writes of a brilliant article on "A Dream of the Future's Face." "Whitey had built a palace on numbers ... and numbers would kill whitey's civilization before all was through." Yesterday Whitey took his first steps to the stars ahead of the black man. "How that had to burn in the ducts of this [the] black man's stomach, in the vats of his liver." ¹ "What lava in the membranes of the belly.... The moonshot had smashed more than one oncoming superiority of the black." And now Whitey himself begins to worry

¹ p. 62b.

more than ever before. He sees that the war between the races is more gruesome than ever. Was our venture into space "noble or insane." "It was as if we had begun to turn the pocket of the universe inside out." How can we know "whether he is a monster or a saint of the deep." ² "Mr. Answer Man, what is the existential equivalent of infinity?—Why insomnia, Sandy, good old insomnia. Aquarius knew for the first time in years that he no longer had the remotest idea of what he knew." "All that men can do is to "seek for reason in absurdity." It is thus that brilliant men today, as did the brilliant men of Noah's time look with utter despair upon the rising flood of horrible events overwhelming them, the while that they, with one accord, say that, as did the men of Noah's time refuse to repent and be saved by repentance and faith in Jesus who came to seek and to save that which is lost.

Thou hast little strength, thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name. As were the days of Noah so shall the days of the Son of man be. The descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth have learned to love one another because of their common desire to live in accord with the principle of the new morality which, Christ says, he hates. Noah spoke to his contemporaries about the direct word of God that had come to him. According to that Word men would, for their immorality be destroyed, through a flood that was to come. Noah told his contemporaries that they would be destroyed because they denied the truth of what had been told to them about the past. What Adam and Eve had, in great sorrow, no doubt told their children, their grandchildren, and still grander-children about their listening to Satan instead of to God was, Noah told them, the reason for their coming destruction. But Noah's contemporaries would not hear. They said there were no records of floods that covered the highest mountains. And after all must we not interpret the course of the future by what has happened in the past. Was not Adam himself open-minded when he took the words of Satan to be an hypothesis on a part with the words of God which he also took to be those of hypothesis? How could any one, in advance of experience, know what would come out of the womb of chance. As for me and for my house, said Lamech of Cain's kind, we shall stake our life on such wisdom as we have accumulated in life.

Thus it is in our day. The descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth have again united in one form of thought in one form of organization and one form of life, namely, the form that merits the righteous wrath of God.

Surely it is the task of those who have found grace in the sight of God as Noah found grace in the sight of God to be preachers and to train preachers of righteousness, namely, preachers of the righteousness that springs from the substitutionary death of Christ. Thanks be unto God our Saviour that there are seven thousand others who bowed not their knees to Baal. But, by the adorable grace of God there is now still at Westminster a band of men who are resolved that, though they have little strength, they will use all strength to keep his word and not to deny his name so that through that name the world may be saved.

I started this talk by speaking of Kuyper and Bavinck, of Warfield and Vos. I said that it was their aim to deepen and broaden the Reformation principle. This must, in our day be done anew. The enemy has broadened and deepened its attack. The enemy now controls, or seems to control, every area of human interest, of art, of science, of philosophy and of theology. We must as believers in Christ challenge Satan's right to anything, least of all to the fealty of the hearts of man.

We must, like Noah, tell men that they await the wrath of the lamb unless they repent for what they have done with their past, their present, and their future. If you can point out other institutions of learning, whether seminaries, colleges, or universities, where this is being done we shall with you rejoice. We are not rivals to any institution. There is need for many more. It is our aim, at Westminster, at the strategic place of influence which God has given us, to do what Noah did. We know that God has sent his Son into the world that men through him might be saved. We know that the whole world lies in darkness; and is on the way toward the wrath of the lamb. Our faculty and our board are in entire agreement on the nature of our task in this situation. We would do what Machen tried to do, what Kuyper and Bavinck, Warfield and Vos tried to do, namely, take the flag with the name of Jesus to the top of the highest mountain. We have little strength, we need more strength, but what counts for most is that we have kept his Word and by his grace are resolved not to deny his name.¹

¹Van Til, C., & Sigward, E. H. (1997). *The works of Cornelius Van Til, 1895-1987* (electronic ed.). New York: Labels Army Co.