

# *Modern, Yet Faithful:*

## *LESSONS FROM HERMAN BAVINCK*

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**H**erman Bavinck was the son of a conservative Reformed preacher, born in 1854 in a relatively small town (Hoogeveen) in a small, low-lands country (the Netherlands).

For the cause of “de-radicalization” in the twenty-first century, this may not be the first place one would think to look. Even as Bavinck’s theological insights have gained significant traction in the North American landscape today, he remains — for many — a rather obscure theologian, from a distant past. Nevertheless, I want to make the case that it is, indeed, Herman Bavinck who we might look to as a steady guide for our time.

Bavinck has often been described as the “Jekyll and Hyde” of Reformed theology: a man who was simultaneously bound to his conservative Reformed upbringing and enmeshed in his modern context, unable to reconcile them, and thus, alternating between the two in a state of perpetual conflict. In this, Bavinck feels surprisingly contemporary, a man wrestling with a dizzying pace of change, a fracturing social landscape, and abounding polarization — a Christian for whom being in but not of the world felt a special, and vexing challenge.

Yet, as his most recent English biographer put it, Bavinck was *both* a “theologically conservative Calvinist” and a “modern European.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, rather than being caught between irreconcilable polarities,

<sup>1</sup> James Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), xxi.

Bavinck remained true to the theological and ecclesial distinctions that had been affirmed by centuries and centuries of Christians and strove to articulate them in his particular — modern — moment *in* history.

For such a time as this, Bavinck is a faithful guide for a life characterized by “and,” not “or.” Orthodox and modern, Bavinck’s theologically informed posture in the world, and the practices that flow from it, can chart a new way, one that holds steadfast to the inalterable way of Jesus and applies it in the unique context in which God has placed us.

### BAVINCK’S POSTURE IN TRYING TIMES: IMITATING CHRIST’S VIRTUES

The imitation of Christ, a central aspect of Bavinck’s ethics, gave him the kind of faithful nimbleness required to be orthodox *and* modern.

Imitating Christ, Bavinck argues, is the “shape of the spiritual life.”<sup>2</sup> While that could seem like a straightforward, obvious assertion, what exactly the “shape” of imitating Christ *is* remains hotly contested within Christian ethics. For Bavinck, the imitation of Christ is bound together with the law. We imitate Jesus, he contends, as Jesus follows the law. The Ten Commandments “form the constitution of a life of obedience to God”

and “determine that which may and must not be imitated in the life of Jesus.”<sup>3</sup> Jesus is not only savior (though he certainly is, and must be, this!), but example. “In Christ, the law is our norm,” writes Bavinck in his *Reformed Ethics*.<sup>4</sup> Law-patterned imitation of Christ’s virtues is then the way of his disciplines.

Why does this matter? For Bavinck, Christ as *the* example of faithfully living, or obedience to the law, provides us with an ethic that has both universal norms and contextual adaptability. The centrality of the imitation of Christ in Bavinck’s ethics is how he can faithfully, nimbly, apply Christian principles in *his* day without either literal mimicry of Jesus’ actions or, given one’s new time and place in the world, abandoning Jesus’ example entirely.

For Bavinck, this posture — one that he describes as neither “world-renunciation” nor “world-domination” — is best understood through a close, exegetical examination of the Sermon on the Mount and the ethics of New Testament Christians.<sup>5</sup>

In the Sermon on the Mount, Bavinck argues, the “nature of imitation is clarified by means of concrete examples.”<sup>6</sup> When Jesus says, “If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away,” we shouldn’t see this as a *literal* command, but we should understand it

<sup>2</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics* vol. 1: *Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity*, ed. John Bolt, Jessica Joustra, Nelson Kloosterman, Antoine Theron, Dirk van Keulen (Baker Academic, 2019), 317.

<sup>3</sup> Herman Bavinck, “The Imitation of Christ I (1885/86)” in *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck’s Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, trans. John Bolt (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2013), 400.

<sup>4</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, vol. 1, 341

<sup>5</sup> Herman Bavinck, “The Imitation of Christ II (1918)” in *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck’s Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, trans. John Bolt (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2013), 428.

<sup>6</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 413.

“practically and concretely.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, Jesus’ command to his disciples is neither to be followed with extreme literalism (i.e. plucking out your eye) *or* radical spiritualization (i.e. not practically related to our actions whatsoever). Instead, the examples Jesus gives in the Sermon on the Mount are concrete illustrations of the “virtues which the law requires of us, especially love.”<sup>8</sup> In them, Jesus does not give a new law, but a renewed application and interpretation of the law. Rather than pit New Testament commands and ethics against Old, Bavinck holds them together.

While helpful exegesis, this doesn’t quite get us to the point of applying the “concrete examples” that Jesus provides in our own lives and contexts. For this, Bavinck points us to how early Christians and later Christians applied these teachings. Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount were directed to a “relatively small band of disciples who were not members of the upper echelon of society but of the lower classes.”<sup>9</sup> Because of this, Jesus stressed actions that were appropriate for their current position in society; he “exalts precisely those virtues which his disciples would require . . . in such circumstances.”<sup>10</sup>

The early church remains in a similar position to Jesus’ disciples. They were, Bavinck describes, an “oppressed and persecuted community,” often with a precarious social standing.<sup>11</sup> Given their

status, these early Christians were not necessarily in a position to *change* the world, rather they were a community seeking to “preserve its independent identity and establish its own position.”<sup>12</sup> For such a task, you’d need to display virtues like truth, righteousness, holiness, purity, modesty, temperance, prayer, vigil, fasting, faith, love, longsuffering, generosity, hospitality, compassion, lowliness, meekness, and patience.<sup>13</sup> And these, what Bavinck deems “negative and passive virtues,” are exactly what Jesus highlights. Their job was not to disengage from the world, nor was it to dominate the world. Following Jesus requires faithful application of his virtues *within* your context.

But the societal position of the church did not remain the same for all generations of Christians. When it changed, Bavinck argues, the church needed a different posture: the exercise of negative and passive virtues was no longer sufficient to sustain [the church] in its new task of reforming and renewing the world in accord with Christian principles.<sup>14</sup>

Importantly, this shift in posture is not a shift *away* from the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. Rather, it is a continued application of these principles in a new context. Alongside these “negative” virtues, the church is to undertake the “positive elements” of Jesus’ instruction, or active virtues.<sup>15</sup> These are not new, nor are they an

<sup>7</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 418.

<sup>8</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 426.

<sup>9</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 416.

<sup>10</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 417.

<sup>11</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 422.

<sup>12</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 420.

<sup>13</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 420.

<sup>14</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 424.

<sup>15</sup> Bavinck, “Imitation II,” 424.

addition to Jesus' teaching, they are "latent in the central facts of the Christian gospel."<sup>16</sup>

Not only are Christians called to follow Jesus in his "self-denial," "forsak[ing] the world," and the cross,<sup>17</sup> they are to follow him in his joy, resurrection life, and the creation-affirmation of the incarnation.<sup>18</sup> For Bavinck, this means that we can "gladly and thankfully accept" much that our culture offers, while rejecting that which is sinful.<sup>19</sup> We needn't be simply antagonistic towards our time in history, for what is good comes from God! But we also needn't be overly and naively optimistic about our time in history, for sin still has a hold in our world.<sup>20</sup>

At the heart of Bavinck's hermeneutical and historical analysis is this conviction:

*Those virtues which the disciples of Jesus are called to exercise in their relations with others are essentially the same in the Sermon on the Mount as in the apostolic imitation of Christ. Included are virtues of truth, righteousness, love, longsuffering, compassion, etc., virtues that remain powerful through the ages and retain their validity in all circumstances. Naturally the application will vary depending upon circumstances. Although all are subject to one and the same moral law the duties under that law vary considerably.*<sup>21</sup>

Christ, in his example and in his instruction, shows us how we ought to live by applying the law in his own time, place, and context. He perfectly lives out patience, holiness, love, gentleness, joy, self-denial, cross-bearing, compassion, longsuffering, justice, and resurrection life. Our call is to follow his example in our own time, for "while the virtues to which the imitation of Christ calls us are the same, circumstances may modify the application."<sup>22</sup>

The way of living in Christ is not tied, then, to a particular moment, or even *one* posture that is able to be replicated in all ages. Bavinck's robust, contextually sensitive, interpretation of the imitation of Christ led him to be able to embrace many things about modern life, without naively accepting everything, and live faithfully in modernity.

## PRACTICES FOR "STAYING CENTERED"

Bavinck was convinced that God was at work in every time and place throughout history and that God's work "never opposes nature and culture in themselves but only their degeneration."<sup>23</sup> Grace isn't antithetical to *culture*, it is antithetical to *sin*.

This conviction, buttressed by many other central theological themes — including common grace, the leavening power of the gospel, and God's sovereignty — drove Bavinck towards a

<sup>16</sup> Bavinck, "Imitation II," 424.

<sup>17</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, vol. 1, 322.

<sup>18</sup> Bavinck, "Imitation II," 424-425, cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, vol. 1, 325, 341.

<sup>19</sup> Bavinck, "Imitation II," 432.

<sup>20</sup> For more on this, see Herman Bavinck, "Herman Bavinck's 'Common Grace,'" trans. Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, *Calvin Theological Journal* 24, no. 1 (1989): 36-65.

<sup>21</sup> Bavinck, "Imitation II," 438.

<sup>22</sup> Bavinck, "Imitation II," 438.

<sup>23</sup> Bavinck, "Imitation II," 430.

non-reactionary posture in the world, one that resisted extreme polarization, engaged with those who differed from him in good faith, and sought to learn of God's goodness and truth in every corner of God's world. Compelled by his central conviction that God was in the business of restoring and renewing his creation, Bavinck was able to reject a radical — or, to use his own terminology, “revolutionary”<sup>24</sup> — posture, seeking instead *reformation*, a path that goes into “the new situations in state and society, of philosophy and science, of literature and art, of profession and business; they investigate everything and preserve the good. They are no praise-singers of the past times and do not wail idly about the miseries of the present, but they intervene and reform.”<sup>25</sup>

Imitating Christ in *the modern world* led Bavinck to adopt distinct, and instructive, practices that can no doubt help us, in our time, too: intellectual curiosity, genuine friendships, charitable receipt, and attention to the “log” in our own eye.

## INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY

While he characterized his way in the world as neither “world-domination” or “world-renunciation,” we could also say, more simply, that

Bavinck was not afraid. He knew that God, in his sovereignty, can make all things “subservient to his glorification”<sup>26</sup> and is at work throughout his world, not merely in his church (though certainly there, too!).<sup>27</sup> With this conviction, Bavinck did not learn *only* within his ecclesial circles. He was deeply formed and catechized by his church, absorbing truths there that would carry him throughout his life; he also had an intellectual curiosity that led him to learn with and from different — and sometimes competing — schools of thought.

As a young man in the Christian Reformed Church<sup>28</sup> intending to study theology, the expectation was that Bavinck would attend the theological school in Kampen, their ecclesial school. And Bavinck did, for one year. After that year, Bavinck transferred to the University of Leiden.

Unlike Kampen, a conservative, Reformed school, Leiden was a thoroughly modern university. Some have read this as Bavinck's rejection of his conservative upbringing for a new, modern way of engaging theology.<sup>29</sup> Certainly some were nervous that such a rejection might happen. Upon learning of the switch to Leiden, Bavinck's friend Henry Dosker wrote to him, saying:

<sup>24</sup> This language did not originate with Bavinck. He and Kuyper were indebted to the thought of Groen van Prinsterer for this posture. See: Groen van Prinsterer, *Unbelief and Revolution*, trans. Harry van Dyke (Lexham Press, 2018).

<sup>25</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Christelijke en neutrale staatkunde*, 30, trans. George Harinck, quoted in George Harinck, “Herman Bavinck on Antirevolutionary Politics,” 269.

<sup>26</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* vol. 3: *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 64.

<sup>27</sup> For more on this, see Bavinck, “Common Grace,” 62 and Herman Bavinck, “The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church,” trans. John Bolt, *Calvin Theological Journal* 27 (1992), 224.

<sup>28</sup> While the names are similar, and they are ecclesially related to one another, the Christian Reformed Church that Bavinck belonged to is a 19th century Dutch denomination. The Christian Reformed Church in *North America*, perhaps more familiar to readers of this essay, has its roots in this movement, but they are not synonymous.

<sup>29</sup> This read of the situation, as James Eglinton points out in his biography of Bavinck, has been largely “sensationalize[d].” There was certainly some opposition, but also much support of Bavinck in his decision to go to Leiden (Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 71-72).

*God help you, Herman, to remain true to your choice to persevere and to choose the clear truth of faith of our historical Christianity above all the flickering light rays of an enemy science. And yet, you risk a lot . . . you will, I think, have to withdraw within the narrow walls of your own opinions; you will have to be on the defensive and as a result have to adopt a somewhat terse opinion of the truth, while you can grow and develop only by attack.*<sup>30</sup>

But Bavinck's own journals reveal a different attitude. They highlight his desire to imitate Christ in any and every context: "I continue to be struck by the duties that I, as a Christian in the academy, have to fulfill here," writes young Bavinck. "May God grant me the strength to do this!"<sup>31</sup>

In Leiden, Bavinck did not leave the orthodoxy of his youth. He went in search for rigorous, "scientific," academic training that Kampen could not offer him at the time. For Bavinck, it was not orthodoxy *or* rigor, rather orthodoxy *and* rigor. He was not afraid of the modernity that characterized Leiden. While he did not accept all of it — he critiqued modern presuppositions strongly in his inaugural lecture as a faculty member in Kampen, "The Kingdom of God, the Highest Good" — he knew he could learn from the theologians there. He needn't wholly shy away from intellectual diversity. Without accepting all the presuppositions that his professors at Leiden taught, Bavinck was able to learn from them.

His scholarship is profoundly marked by their influence, as James Eglinton remarks, in both "style and rigor."<sup>32</sup>

This posture, of learning from those who differ significantly, was one Bavinck continued throughout his life. Rather than retreat into an intellectual cul-de-sac where he was only and always surrounded by those with whom he agreed, Bavinck sought out alternative ways of seeing the world, to learn from, and in, conversation together, and continue to sharpen and refine his own thinking and writing.

## GENUINE FRIENDSHIPS

Bavinck was a man of strong, deep conviction. Despite an ecclesial background that had separatist tendencies, he was convinced that a wholehearted acceptance of Reformed principles ought not lead to "the preference for closed societies, the rejection of art, scholarship, science, culture, and all the goods of earthly life, and the spurning of the vocation that rests upon us in the family, business and the state."<sup>33</sup> God gives his common grace to the whole world, and thus we can engage it with confidence.

Such confidence allowed Bavinck to form genuine friendships with those who he deeply disagreed with. He knew that truth, beauty, kindness, and insight were not solely found within his community; these were gifts of God, and gifts God had given to many.<sup>34</sup> In the midst of deep

<sup>30</sup> TH. E. Dosker to H. Bavinck, December 23, 1876. H. Bavinck Archives, HDC. Dutch, trans. George Harinck, "Something That Must Remain, If the Truth Is to Be Sweet and Precious to Us: The Reformed Spirituality of Herman Bavinck," *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, no. 2 (2003): 251.

<sup>31</sup> Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 76.

<sup>32</sup> Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 99.

<sup>33</sup> Bavinck, "Common Grace," 54.



— perhaps even fundamental — perspectival difference, Bavinck knew he could learn from others, and was convinced that the best way to do that was through face to face contact and genuine friendship.

While studying in Leiden, Bavinck met Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. Snouck, who once belonged to a mainline Dutch church and later converted to Islam, no doubt saw the world very differently than Bavinck. But theirs was a lifelong friendship, and in it, the two did not shy away from these differences, nor let these differences hinder a close, personal relationship.

Glimpses of their relationship have been preserved through letters that the two wrote to one another. Near the completion of their studies, Bavinck writes:

*I can only regret that we have gone so far, immensely far, from each other in principle and view of life. And yet my sincere friendship and warm interest will remain with you despite such great difference in insight and conviction.*<sup>35</sup>

Already, as a young man, Bavinck neither shies away from explicitly naming difference *nor* maintaining friendship amid difference, a posture he retains throughout his life. His relationship with Snouck was not simply a utilitarian scheme to win ideological kin, but a friendship to be cherished. Neither was it, however, a relativistic acceptance that others would see the world

differently. In the same letter, Bavinck wrote: “I hope that this difference [in conviction] will become smaller, but I do not yet see this.”<sup>36</sup>

Their fundamental differences notwithstanding, Bavinck understood their relationship not only to be relationally significant, but intellectually sharpening. In a later letter to Snouck, he writes:

*We can still learn a great deal from each other and be useful to each other. And precisely because I live among kindred spirits, the correction of opponents who are still friends is all the more indispensable to me.*<sup>37</sup>

Fighting against intellectual cul-de-sacs, Bavinck was not satisfied to stay among “kindred spirits.” He valued friendship with those not only within his ecclesial and theological circles, but outside. Personal relationships were not only possible in the face of significant worldview differences, but could be a place of important formation and growth.

## CHARITABLE RECEIPT

Not only did he prize “human contact with conversation partners,” as James Eglinton describes, Bavinck also “took pains to understand them on their own strongest terms.”<sup>38</sup> As such, his method of scholarship gives us a model antithetical to straw men: charitable receipt, sometimes also referred to as “steel manning,” which involves setting forth the strongest possible version of your opponent’s argument. Bavinck

<sup>34</sup> Herman Bavinck, “General Biblical Principles and the Relevance of Concrete Mosaic Law for the Social Question Today,” trans. John Bolt, *Journal of Markets & Morality* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 440-441

<sup>35</sup> Bavinck to Snouck Hurgronje, Kampen, November 24, 1880, in Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 115.

<sup>36</sup> Bavinck to Snouck Hurgronje, Kampen, November 24, 1880, in Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 115.

<sup>37</sup> Bavinck to Snouck Hurgronje, Kampen, December 23, 1884, in Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 147

<sup>38</sup> Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 155-156.

sought to uncover the good, without minimizing the error.

Ulrich Zwingli, the subject of Bavinck's PhD thesis, was a strong model of this kind of engagement. Zwingli, argues Bavinck, had a "respectful" disposition toward "differing convictions."<sup>39</sup> This disposition was one Bavinck thought critical for the modern world, and one he strove to emulate.

One such case of "differing convictions" is found in Friedrich Schleiermacher, known to many as the "father" of modern theology. When Bavinck defines the task of dogmatic theology in the first pages of his *Reformed Dogmatics*, he does so *contra* Schleiermacher's assertions (among others). But Bavinck's posture towards Schleiermacher in his *Dogmatics* and beyond is not simply antagonistic.

In the midst of his critique, Bavinck goes to great length to charitably understand and retell the intention behind, and impact of, Schleiermacher's work: "Schleiermacher, it must be noted, still tried in his dogmatic work to give an account, not of religion in general, but of the Christian religion, of Christian piety in particular. . . . The mystical element was anchored in history and thus safeguarded from many excesses."<sup>40</sup>

Not only does Bavinck take care to assume the best intention in Schleiermacher's thought, he also is, as Cory Brock masterfully demonstrates, theologically indebted to him. Bavinck remains an opponent "of modern theology in general

according to its adoption of the subjective consciousness as a source-foundation for theological construction" (a theme which owes much to Schleiermacher's influence), but *nevertheless*, "in obedience to his own suggestion regarding the requirement that one must comprehend and engage modern philosophy . . . Bavinck appropriated much of the philosophical grammar that consciousness theologies so promoted."<sup>41</sup>

Schleiermacher had something to teach him! He showed Bavinck that "feeling offers a unique, original form of knowing," a theme which, once learned, persists throughout Bavinck's work, albeit in a uniquely Reformed way.<sup>42</sup>

## LOGS AND PLANKS

The stain of sin, for Bavinck, is evident throughout creation — and cuts through every facet of the created order. It's easy, however, to be mindful of the way *others* manifest this stain, the way it cuts deep into their insights, convictions, and patterns. Jesus pointedly reminds us of this:

*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 101.

<sup>40</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1: Prolegomena, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 35-36.

<sup>41</sup> Cory C. Brock, *Orthodox yet Modern: Herman Bavinck's Use of Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 21.

<sup>42</sup> For more on this, both where Bavinck took up Schleiermacher's themes and where he continued to reject other theological and philosophical impulses in Schleiermacher, see Hank van der Belt, "An Alternative Approach to Apologetics," in *The Kuyper Center Review, Volume Two: Revelation and Common Grace*, ed. John Bowlin (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 48-49.



Bavinck intentionally tried to be attuned not only to planks, but logs. He wanted to see the way sin manifested out there, but also in his own tradition.

One example of this conviction in practice can be seen in Bavinck's *The Certainty of Faith*. In it, he walks through various routes of seeking certainty: non-Christian, Catholic, Pietistic, Reformed, and more. Rather than simply attending to errors in these *other* positions, he also sees where his own tradition has also faltered. Of Roman Catholicism he writes,

*Far be it from us to immediately denounce the latter with the protestant judgment that since such piety issues from a false principle – righteousness by works – it is therefore worthless to God. For no matter how much truth that judgement may contain, before we utter it, we must remind ourselves that the Catholic righteousness by good works is vastly preferable to a protestant righteousness by good doctrine. At least righteousness by good works benefits one's neighbor, whereas righteousness by good doctrine only produces lovelessness and pride.<sup>44</sup>*

Whether or not we find ourselves convinced by his description of Catholicism and certainty, we ought to notice his principle of engaging his own tradition: it is one that might have faults, and one that may need correction. Before we can simply rebut our opponents, we need to examine the log in our own eye.

## CONCLUSION

There is no silver bullet to rid us of our polarization and radicalizing tendencies. If there were, a rather obscure figure from the 20th century European low-lands wouldn't be it. But a silver bullet is not what we need. Instead, we need faithful guides and enduring, biblical truths to help moor us and, when needed, correct us. For this, Bavinck may just be rightly suited to come to our aid.

Bavinck's example isn't flashy, and the perennial truths he points to won't land on a bumper sticker anytime soon ("law-patterned imitation of the virtues of Christ" isn't quite as snappy as "WWJD"), but they do speak to our moment, in a way that offers fodder for disciplined, lifelong discipleship, not a one-time fix. The centrality of a cross-shaped, law-bound imitation of Christ in Bavinck's work points us towards a posture that is neither dictated by, nor ignorant of, our present milieu. Jesus, the "living law,"<sup>45</sup> embodies virtues that are never changing *and* he does so in a particular moment in history. Our task, Bavinck reminds and exemplifies, is one of faithful nimbleness, or disciplined contextual sensitivity: holding to the steadfast way of Jesus and discerning how we ought to apply it in our time.



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<sup>43</sup> Matthew 7:3-6 (NIV).

<sup>44</sup> Herman Bavinck, *The Certainty of Faith* (St. Catharines, ON: Paideia Press, 1980), 36-37.

<sup>45</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, vol. 1, 341.