“Herman Bavinck on Preaching and Preachers” — A Review and Response Article

By Chun Tse, February 20, 2021

Ever since the publication of Herman Bavinck’s *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* in English in 2003,¹ scholarly interest in Bavinck (1854–1921) has continued to gather steam, as evidenced by the constant stream of new and updated English translations of his works in recent years.² In contradistinction to these works that showcase Bavinck the theologian, James Eglinton’s *Herman Bavinck on Preaching and Preachers* presents a succinct portrait of Bavinck the preacher.³ Through his skillful translation of Bavinck’s booklet *De Welsprekendheid* (The Eloquence) and his only published sermon, “The World-Conquering Power of Faith,”⁴ Eglinton adeptly reveals a Bavinck whose philosophy on preaching and preachers is every bit as rich, sophisticated, and trinitarian as his dogmatic theology.

The *Eloquence* was originally a lecture addressed to students of the Theological School in Kampen on November 28, 1889.⁵ Bavinck’s accentuation on eloquence had an early root dating back to his decision to study at Leiden, where the Reformed pastor Johannes Hendricus Donner (1824–1903) profoundly influenced him.⁶ Still, as much as he admired Donner’s preaching, characterized by “compelling biblical exegesis and a considerable knowledge of psychology,” Bavinck commented on one occasion that Donner’s sermon was “let down by language and style that failed to match his content.”⁷ In other words, sound knowledge—biblical, theological, and psychological—is necessary but not sufficient for making a great preacher, who must not only master the mystery but the delivery of the divine word.

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⁴ Both the booklet and the sermon were published in Kampen in 1901. Eglinton’s book also includes a brief biography of Bavinck, a translation of three shorter works of Bavinck (“The Sermon and the Service,” “On Preaching in America,” “On Language”), and extensive endnotes.
⁵ *P&P*, 17.
⁶ *P&P*, 4–5.
⁷ *P&P*, 5–6.
Bavinck elevates “eloquence” to the level of being “an exquisite virtue”—for Christians in general and Christian preachers in particular—which he delineates in its principle, essence, and form. The principle of eloquence lies in the word with which God creates the world. The creation speaks. Bavinck declares, “The creation, in its entirety, is eloquent; sin is the only dissonance in its song.” Language is part and parcel of humanity. The fall of Adam, however, has corrupted its content and form. Instead of a carrier of life and light, the human word becomes hollow, even deceptive and destructive. Eloquence, then, consists of a return to godly content, flowing only from the heart of an eloquent life, one that reflects the image and likeness of God in ever-abounding measure. “Let the heart’s passion come to the word,” asserts Bavinck, “and eloquence will be born.” What inspires true eloquence is “a powerful emotional condition, a moved spirit, an affected heart, and an undeniable impulse to voice these feelings.” In this sense, eloquence—one that flows from a heart embued with a godly zeal—is more a gift than art and, as such, comes not primarily by practice or preparation, though both are essential for preaching of the highest order.

Bavinck defines the essence of eloquence as the gift perfected through art to convince the mind, touch the conscience, and persuade the will of the people. As the sermon directs to the person’s understanding, heart, and will, this threefold essence of eloquence—argument, description, and persuasion—interfaces with philosophy, poetry, and ethics, respectively. To argue from Scripture necessitates sound biblical knowledge that comes only through hard study, without which the sheer piety of the preacher is no substitute. Solid knowledge, however, does not preclude simplicity as the pulpit is not a lectern to display the preacher’s “arsenal of learning.” To touch the conscience, knowledge alone is inadequate. The preacher must appeal to the art of poetry—“the mother of eloquence”—and present truth not merely in dogmatic argumentation but all its poetic, artistic, dramatic, prophetic, historical, and concrete aspects. Nevertheless, eloquence must rise beyond illuminating the mind and affecting the heart to

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10 P&P, 28.
13 P&P, 32.
14 P&P, 35.
moving people’s will. Eloquence is, ultimately, “a fight and a struggle.”

The preacher must drive the listeners, by the Spirit’s power, to act according to what the sermon implores.

The form of eloquence, while subservient to its content and matter, is not unimportant as it can “disfigure the speech” through all manners of crudeness, dullness, and oddness. A refined preacher in public first has to be a refined person in private, for which Bavinck offers some practical advice, namely daily engagement with the Scriptures, with classical peoples of antiquity, with noble peoples of one’s generation, and, finally, with the female gender “to whom the jewel of beauty and the secret of grace has been entrusted.” Eloquence, in other words, is not merely taught but caught—through immersion with the eloquent. Moreover, eloquence involves not only the voice but the whole person—body posture, hand movement, and eye contact. “The royal law of preaching is,” Bavinck maintains, “give yourself, not as you are, but as you can be and must become.” In sum, eloquence—Christian eloquence—bespeaks a perfect harmony between the heart and mind, thought and word, content and form, speech and deed.

A gifted theologian is not necessarily an eloquent preacher. However, if Bavinck’s only printed sermon “The World-Conquering Power of Faith” is any indication of his sermons in general, he is as eloquent a preacher as he is an erudite dogmatician. In that sermon delivered on June 30, 1901, with the South African Republic President Paul Kruger (1825–1904) in the audience, Bavinck preached from 1 John 5:4b, “And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” At the outset of the sermon, Bavinck addressed why he chose “faith” as the sermon theme by asking his audience, “might this new century allow us to see a return to the Christian faith and an application of the principles of the Reformation to every area of life?”

Unlike preachers who confine their topics to the spiritual and biblical worlds, Bavinck the preacher spoke to his audience about all spheres of life. In his threefold answer to the question, Bavinck touched on subjects ranging from politics, religions, and cultures to wars, justice, and freedom, attesting to his keen sense of the pulse of the time. By highlighting the signs of the time, Bavinck prepared his audience for attending to the word’s exposition that serves as the

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16 P&P, 42.
17 P&P, 46, 48.
18 P&P, 49.
19 P&P, 51.
divine solution to the world’s problems, namely, a sin-induced ignorance and contempt of genuine faith. Rather than laboring on the context of 1 John, he briefly reviewed the gist of the first five verses of 1 John 5 and crystalized his sermon in three points:

1. The opposition that this faith experiences.
2. The character that this faith bears.
3. The victory that is promised to this faith.23

The opposition of faith, Bavinck first argued, came from the Johannine notion of the “world,” which embodies anything and everything, visible and invisible, in a system that sets itself against God.24 Bavinck presented a theological portrait of this world, fallen through sin, to set the stage to progress to his second argument that only faith alone could overcome the world.25 To illustrate faith’s character and power, Bavinck quoted the Old Testament “heroes of faith” in Hebrews 11 and ingeniously extended the list to the New Testament and other post-biblical figures—Paul, the church, Luther, even South African resistance to the English forces.26 The faith in view, the only faith that can conquer the world, is the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.27 The nature of this faith, as Bavinck further argued, guarantees its victory over the world because it begets a new life that bears witness to Jesus as the Christ, who alone overcomes the world through his death, resurrection, and session.28 Bavinck did not end his sermon by merely laying out his threefold argument for the world-conquering power of faith. As a demonstration of his essence of eloquence, he moved to persuade his hearers, asking them:

Brothers and sisters, do you have that faith?
Do you know that faith in its wondrous, world-conquering power?
You bear the name of believers, but are you indeed what you are called?29

He beseeched his hearers to fight not only for justice and freedom but for God’s glory. With faith as the weapon, Bavinck concluded that Christ had assured the victory because he is the reigning King who will come again.30

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23 P&P, 71.
24 P&P, 72.
29 P&P, 82.
30 P&P, 83.
Preachers everywhere have a great deal to appreciate in the *Eloquence*. The thinness of the booklet is disproportionate to the breadth, depth, and beauty of Bavinck’s grand conception of preaching, coming from his high view of the word, which in turn is rooted in his Christology, epitomized by John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word.” The whole creation came into existence by God’s speaking the word—Christ—the eternal Logos. “God’s word is both life and light,” Bavinck asserts, pointing not only to Christ as the life and light but also to the regenerating (life-giving) and sanctifying (light-giving) function of preaching the word of Christ. Likewise, through the act of preaching, which is speaking the word of Christ by the power of the Spirit, God creates the new humanity, the church. Preaching, in other words, is the means through which God saves the fallen humanity through the redemption accomplished by Christ and applied by the Spirit. As such, Bavinck’s theology of preaching is as Christocentric as it is trinitarian. For Bavinck, since the word gives rise to the church—*De Vrije Kerk*—the church owes her existence, survival, and continual vitality to the word and its preaching.

Bavinck’s vision of preaching also flows from his broader conception of biblical worship. In “The Sermon and the Service,” Bavinck flatly asserts:

> The sermon is certainly not the only, or even the most important part of our worship service—that is the priestly work of the believers together—but it is nonetheless the high point of the priestly gathering and worship.

Part of the preacher’s duty, then, is to educate church members about what constitutes genuine biblical worship. Some Christians nowadays regard the worship service as chiefly an occasion to listen to a “good” sermon, judged by whether it can bring any new insight or move the heart of the hearers. Under such a mindset, as long as worshippers arrive before the preaching, it is not considered late for worship. This sermon-centric view of worship is a far cry from Bavinck’s trinitarian view of genuine worship in which the church militant joins with the church triumphant and the angels in adoring the greatness and goodness of God revealed in Christ by the Spirit. As

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31 See Bavinck’s comment of Goethe’s use of John 1:1 in *Faust, P&P*, 22.
33 Christ as both the life (John 1:4, 11:25, 14:6) and the true light (John 1:5–9, 8:12) is a major theme of John’s Gospel.
34 For Bavinck’s view on corporate worship, see *P&P*, 59–61. For the ways in which American church has not manifested the ideal of biblical worship, see *P&P*, 85.
35 *P&P*, 61.
36 Bavinck specially cautions against the latter because the goal of preaching “does not consist of … flooding God’s house with tears,” *P&P*, 41.
much as the preacher, believers are active participants in worship as they offer their priestly gifts to God and serve one another. This view of biblical worship does not in any way belittle the significance and the high office of preaching, which, in Bavinck’s mind, is an eloquent exposition of the word of Christ to persuade the hearers, by the Spirit’s power, to conform them to God’s will and his image and likeness. Since true worshippers worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24), Bavinck stresses the faithfulness of the preached word to the word of Christ. As such, the preacher must not put words into Christ’s mouth through unbiblical interpretative methods such as unduly seeking the allegorical and spiritual meanings behind the text.\textsuperscript{37} Piety cannot compensate for, must less substitute, hard study. In brief, Bavinck’s high view of preaching is rooted in his exalted view of true worship.

Another salient feature of Bavinck’s conception of preaching is its evangelistic, militant, and public nature. Far from “preaching to the choir,” preaching, in Bavinck’s final analysis, is “a fight and a struggle.”\textsuperscript{38} It is a battle against all the principalities and powers for the allegiance of the souls of the people, from slaves to kings. Preaching is evangelistic as it implores sinners of Adam’s race, both outside the church and within, to reconcile to God. It is also militant as it employs the word as the sword of the Spirit to “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). Indeed, Bavinck’s only printed sermon, “The World-Conquering Power of Faith,” captures the combatant spirit of his message well where he used the word “fight” twenty times and the variants of “conquer” seventeen times.\textsuperscript{39} Finally, preaching is public, not merely confined to the podium or directed toward the faithful.\textsuperscript{40} The whole world, borrowing from John Wesley’s words, is Bavinck’s parish. Due to his glorified vision of what preaching is, Bavinck envisions preaching—eloquent preaching—to exert a global influence in “renewing society, saving the city, and changing the face of nations.”\textsuperscript{41}

In an age when Reformed preachers have become fixated on expositional preaching and preaching Christ from all of Scripture as the gold standard of preaching, it is refreshing to see Bavinck view “eloquence” as the quintessence of preaching. On the surface, one might be

\begin{footnotes}
37 P&P, 34.
38 P&P, 42.
40 For the public nature of preaching, see Bavinck’s foreword to \textit{Eloquence}, P&P, 17.
41 P&P, 44.
\end{footnotes}
surprised at his choice of “eloquence” as a near-synonym for preaching until one realizes the two senses with which he uses the term. In the broader sense, eloquence presupposes a pious content. “A person shall be eloquent,” Bavinck asserts, “if his word once again becomes the bearer of godly content.” In most cases, however, Bavinck uses the term in the narrower (and more common) sense of speaking well. Still, even in this latter sense, it is a sanctified use of the tongue to speak passionately out of a holy conviction, not contrived words of human wisdom.

Biblical preaching, for Bavinck, is more than eloquence for sure, but not less. To put it another way, a preacher should be at least a speaker and, for that matter, an eloquent one. Peaching, by implication, is not for everyone as eloquence is primarily a gift and only secondarily an art. God, in reality, “only gives the glorious gift of eloquence to a few.” This restrictive view of preaching is consistent with James 3:1, “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” A person with vast biblical and theological knowledge does not automatically qualify to be a preacher unless the person is also eloquent. Limiting preaching only to those who have the gift of eloquence runs counter to some churches’ practice in which anyone who is “spiritually mature” and has taught Sunday School lessons is qualified and encouraged to preach from the lectern. The pulpit to them serves as a training platform for the faithful to develop their preaching skills, regardless of whether they have the gift of eloquence. In particular, the essential quality of eloquence may present a formidable challenge to those pastors whose previous training was in science and engineering, where the requirements for linguistics and speech are not as demanding as in the humanities. Still, even for those preachers who are already somewhat eloquent, they must, through persistent practice and dedication, hone the skill of speaking the word in all its “simplicity, truth, and power,” commending it to the consciences of the people through the power of the Spirit.

Eloquence, then, is what differentiates a great preacher from a great theologian. A top-notch dogmatician may have the gift of languages and the uncanny ability to unravel the word’s mysteries and synthesize its doctrines. However, the same person will not rise to be a great preacher unless eloquence is there—the gift to convert the theological truth in the word to homiletical speech that moves the hearers to conform to God’s will. Indeed, a prolific theologian

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42 P&P, 27.
43 P&P, 62.
may have written scores of books on systematic theology, as Bavinck did, but until that person has the irresistible urge and holy compulsion to speak, that person would not pass the principle of eloquence. Even if one has the Spirit-engendered inner compulsion to speak, the person still needs to channel that emotion to the mind, heart, and will of the hearers to fulfill the essence of eloquence. Even then, to comply with the form of eloquence, there needs to be harmony in the whole person—between who one is and what one preaches, between what one preaches and how one preaches, and between how one preaches and what one does. Furthermore, to be an eloquent communicator of the word, Bavinck’s conception of eloquence is not limited to familiarity with the Scripture or theology but all of science, art, literature, and culture. Preachers should “plunder the riches of Egypt” and sanctify them for the use of Christ. With such a high bar for preaching, no wonder Bavinck, in his Foreword to *Eloquence*, behooves preachers to “apply themselves with all their might to developing the gift of the word.”

The *Eloquence* is both theologically robust and pastorally sound, as one would expect from a theologian of the highest order who also preached regularly for two-thirds of his life. By integrating theologizing and preaching, Bavinck embodies what it means to be a preacher-scholar or a scholar-preacher. Growing up in a pastor’s family, he held no illusion of the stringent demands God places upon the office of a pastor, where preaching, though vital and rightly the primary duty, is but one of the responsibilities. Bavinck himself did not find it easy to juggle the tasks of research, writing, and preaching. Still, suppose God has gifted a theologian with eloquence, it would be a powerful combination to preach the word with theological insight and dogmatic depth to a world whose only hope is the gospel, as demonstrated by Bavinck’s only printed sermon, which was at once theological, exegetical, pastoral, evangelical, and apologetical. The unity-in-diversity and the depth of that sermon contrast sharply to the “superficial” and “shallow” sermons he listened to during his trip to America.

A healthy integration of dogmatics and homiletics ensures one’s sermons are theologically rigorous even as one’s dogmatics is pastorally warm and relevant to the church. In

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44 *P&P*, 55.
45 *P&P*, 17.
46 *P&P*, 1, 7, 15.
47 *P&P*, 4, 10.
48 *P&P*, 7.
49 *P&P*, 85–86.
essence, a sermon is like a window through which to view and discern one’s theology. The fact that Bavinck typically preached without notes, for instance, attests not only to his eloquence but the internalization and crystallization of his theology.\textsuperscript{50} He breathed and spoke theology. Nonetheless, there are not “two Bavincks”—the “dogmatic Bavinck” and the “homiletical Bavinck.” They are but two sides of the same Bavinck. While some pastors perceive a tension between pursuing dogmatic knowledge and fulfilling pastoral duties such as preaching and caring, as if the two were antithetical, Bavinck would reject such a false dichotomy. In God’s vast kingdom, one is not superior to the other. The model exemplified by Bavinck suggests that one does not have to choose between being a good dogmatician and a good preacher. Both are God’s gifts to the church, even the world, one that is evermore secularized and postmodern. Nevertheless, for the love of just such a fallen world, God gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is toward that goal and the glory of the triune God that Bavinck the preacher teaches preachers everywhere something about eloquence.

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\textsuperscript{50} P&P, 11, 13.
赫爾曼·巴文克《講道與講道者》——評論與回應文章

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自從2003年赫爾曼·巴文克（Herman Bavinck, 1854-1921）的《改革宗教理學》（Gereformeerde Dogmatiek）以英語出版以來，學術界對巴文克的興趣一直在不斷增長；近年來他的作品不斷出版新的和更新的英語翻譯，足以證明這現象。恩雅各（James Eglinton）翻譯巴文克的《講道與講道者》展示了講道者巴文克的簡潔肖像，與神學家巴文克形成鮮明對比。透過巴文克的小冊子《口才》（De Welsprekendheid）和他唯一發表的講道《信心得以勝過世界的能力》的精彩翻譯，恩雅各巧妙地揭示了巴文克對講道與講道者的理念，與他的教理學一樣既豐富、成熟，又具有三一特性。

《口才》源自1889年11月28日在坎彭神學院舉行的一次演講。巴文克對口才的強調源於他在萊頓求學的經歷。在那裡，改革宗牧師約翰內斯·唐納（Johannes Hendricus Donner, 1824-1903）對他產生了深遠的影響。儘管他欽佩唐納的講道“有令人信服的聖經釋經和相當多的心理學知識”，但巴文克還是認為唐納的講道“被不符合他內容的語言和風格所壓倒”。換句話說，健全的知識（聖經、神學、心理學）對於造就一個偉大的講道者來說是必要的，但並不足夠；講道者不僅必須掌握上帝聖言的奧秘，而且還必須掌握聖言的傳達。

對一般基督徒，尤其是基督教講道者而言，巴文克將“口才”提升為“精緻的美德”，並在其原理、本質和形式上進行了描述。口才的原則在於上帝以聖言創造世界。創造物會說話。巴文克宣稱：“整個創造都是具有口才的；罪是歌曲中唯一的不和諧。”語言是人類的組成部分。可是，亞當的墮落破壞了它的內容和形式。人類的話語不再是生命和光明的載體，而是變得空洞，甚至具有欺騙性和破壞性。因此，口才包含回歸到敬虔的內容，這源於一個雄辯生命的內心，這種生命以無窮無盡的方式反映了上帝的形像和樣式。巴文克斷言：“讓內心的激情產生話語，口才就由此而生。”激發真正口才的是“強大的情緒狀態、被感動的靈、受觸動的心，以及無法按捺要表達這些感覺的衝動”。從這個意義上說，口才來自敬虔火熱的心，是恩賜多於藝術。因此，口才並非主要來自練習或準備，儘管兩者對於最優秀的講道都是必不可少的。

巴文克將口才的本質定義為以藝術達致完美地說服人心、觸動良知並動員意志的恩賜。就如講道直接指向人的理解、內心和意志，口才的三重本質——論據、闡述和勸服，分別與哲學、詩歌和倫理相互交融。要從聖經引典論據，就必須有紮實的聖經知識，而這只有通過刻苦的學習才能得到，講道者純粹的虔誠是不能替代這些知識的。但是，紮實的知識並不妨礙簡潔，因為講壇不是講道者展示“學識軍火庫”的講台。要觸動良知，光有知識是不夠的。講道者必須訴諸“口才之母”詩詞藝術，不單要以教理式論證，而且要從詩意性、藝術性、戲劇性、先知性、歷史性和具體性方面介紹真理。然而，口才必須超越光照思想和感動心靈，從而進入到打動人的意志。口才最終是“一場爭戰和鬥爭”。講道者必須藉著聖靈的力量，驅使聽者按照講道中的呼籲而行動。

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雖然口才的形式要服從於其內容和所關注的事，但並非不重要，因為各種粗暴、呆板和怪異的方式都能把言語“毀容”。一個精煉的講道者，首先要在私下成為一個精煉的人。為此，巴文克提供了一些實用的建議，就是每日要與聖經、古代的經典人物、現代的賢人，並與“被賦予瑰麗寶石和恩典奧秘”的女性接觸。換句話說，口才不純粹是通過學習得來的，而是通過與有口才的人相處而捕捉獲取。而且，口才不僅涉及聲音，還涉及每個人的身體姿勢、手部動作和眼神接觸。巴文克堅持“講道的至尊法則是，不是照你的本相，而要照你所能成為，以及必須成為的模樣，付出自己。”總而言之，基督徒的口才代表著心靈與頭腦、思想與文字、內容與形式、言語與行為之間的完美和諧。

一位有天賦的神學家不一定是有說服力的講道者。但是，如果說巴文克唯一出版的講章《信心得以勝過世界的能力》在總體上能展示他所講的道，那麼他就是一位有說服力的講道者，同時也是一位博學的教理學者。這篇是1901年6月30日的講道，當時南非共和國總統保羅·克魯格（Paul Kruger, 1825–1904年）出席了聚會。巴文克以《約翰壹書》五4下節宣講：“使我們勝了世界的，就是我們的信心。”在講道開始時，巴文克解釋他選擇“信心”作為講道主題的原因。他詢問聽眾：“這個新世紀會使我們看到了基督教信仰的回歸，並將改革宗的原則運用到生活的各個領域中嗎？”與那些把主題只限於屬靈和聖經世界的講道者不同，講道者巴文克向聽眾講述生活的各方面。在對此問題的三重回答中，巴文克的講論主題從政治、宗教和文化，到戰爭、正義和自由，證明了他對時代脈搏的敏銳感知。透過突出當時的時代特徵，巴文克使聽眾為聖言的闡釋作好準備。此闡釋乃是要為世界上的問題提供神聖的解決方案，即因罪導致對真實信仰的無知和蔑視。他沒有深究《約翰壹書》的上下文，反而簡要回顧《約翰壹書》五章中首五節經文的要旨，並在三個要點上闡明他的講道：

1.這種信心遇到的反對。
2.這種信心所具有的特質。
3.這種信心所應許的勝利。

巴文克首先指出，信心遇到的反對來自約翰所說的“世界”；它在可見和不可見的所有事與任何事上，都與上帝對立。巴文克展示了一個因罪而墮落的世界的神學畫像，為進一步論證他的第二個論點奠定了基礎，就是只有信心才能克服這個世界。為了說明信心的特質和力量，巴文克引用《希伯來書》十一章中的舊約“信心英雄”，並巧妙地將清單擴展至新約聖經和其他聖經時代之後的人物，如保羅、教會、馬丁路德，甚至是南非人民對英國勢力的抵抗。唯一可以戰勝世界的信心，就是相信耶穌是基督，是永生上帝的兒子。正如巴文克進一步論證，這種信心的特質保證它會勝過世界，因為使人得到新的生命。此生命見證耶穌是基督，唯有通過祂的死亡、復活和坐著為王，戰勝了世界。巴文克並沒有僅僅通過闡述他對征服世界的信心力量的三重論據來結束他的講道。他的口才本質展現於此，他轉移至勸服聽眾，問道：

弟兄姊妹，你有那種信心嗎？
你是否知道那种信心有奇妙的、能征服世界的力量？
你以信徒自稱，但實際上是否如你所稱？他懇求聽眾不只為正義與自由而戰，更要為上帝的榮耀而戰。巴文克以信心為武器，斷定基督已確保勝利，因為祂是將要再來的那位君王。

各地的講道者在《口才》中有許多值得欣賞的地方。這本小書雖然精簡，但包含巴文克宏大講道理念的廣度、深度和美感。這源於他對聖言的崇高觀點，植根於他的基督論——《約翰福音》一1的“太初有道”。整個創造是因上帝的聖言而存在，而基督是這永恆的邏格斯（Logos）。“上帝的聖言既是生命，又是光。”巴文克認為，他不僅要指出基督是生命和光，還要講出傳講基督聖言的使人重生（賦予生命）和成聖（賦予光）的功能。同樣，通過講道的行動，即藉著聖靈的能力傳講基督的話，上帝創造了新人類，就是教會。換句話說，講道是上帝拯救墮落人類的手段，此救贖透過基督來完成，並透過聖靈來施行。因此，巴文克的講道神學既以基督為中心，也以三位一體為基礎。對於巴文克而言，因著這聖言產生教會，就是自由的教會（De Vrije Kerk），教會將她的存有、生存和持續的生命力歸功於這聖言及其傳講。

巴文克的講道願景也源於他更廣闊的合乎聖經之敬拜的概念。巴文克在《講道的服侍》中直截了當地主張：講道當然不是我們敬拜服侍的唯一部分，甚至不是最重要的部分——那是信徒共同的祭司性工作——但它是祭司性聚集和敬拜的高潮。

因此，講道者們的職責，是要教導教會成員真正合乎聖經的敬拜是如何構成的。現在，一些基督徒認為敬拜主要是聽一場“好”講道的場合，此取決於它是否可以帶來新的見解或打動聽者的心。在這種心態下，只要敬拜的人在講道之前到場，就不算遲到。這種以講道為中心的敬拜觀點，與巴文克的三位一體的真正敬拜觀點相去甚遠。在後者中，爭戰的教會與得勝的教會並肩同行協力，靠著聖靈敬拜在基督裡彰顯的那位偉大和良善的上帝。信徒和講道者一樣，都是積極參與敬拜的人，因為他們將獻祭的禮物奉獻給上帝，並互相服侍。如此合乎聖經的敬拜，絲毫沒有削弱講道的意義和崇高。在巴文克看來，這是對基督的聖言口才的承認，藉著聖靈的力量動聽聽眾，使他們服從上帝的旨意、形象和樣式。由於真正的敬拜者以心靈和真理敬拜（約四24），所以巴文克強調所講的道必須忠於基督的聖言。因此，講道者不得通過不合乎聖經的解釋方法，例如過分地尋求文字背後的靈意，反將他們話語放進基督的口中。敬虔無法補足，更不能替代勤奮學習。簡而言之，巴文克對講道的崇高看法源於他對真正敬拜的崇高觀點。

巴文克的講道概念的另一顯著特徵是其福音性、爭戰性和公共性。在巴文克的最終分析中，講道遠非“對著詩班講道”，而是“一場爭戰和鬥爭”。這是一場與所有執政的和掌權的爭奪人們靈魂致勝的戰鬥，不管是奴隸還是國王，都是如此。講道是福音性的，因為它勸勉因亞當的罪而迷失的人與上帝和好，無論他們是在教堂外或內。它也是爭戰性的，因為它使用聖靈的寶劍來“攻破堅固的營壘。我們攻破各樣的計謀，和各樣攔阻人認識上
帝的高壘，又奪回人心來順服基督”（林後十 4-5）。確實，巴文克唯一出版的講道《信心得以勝過世界的能力》很好地體現了他所傳講信息的爭戰精神，他用“爭戰”一詞二十次，用“勝過”一類的詞語十七次。最後，講道是公開的，不僅限於講台上或針對信徒。借用約翰·衛斯理的話，全世界成為了巴文克的牧區。出於他對講道的榮耀願景，巴文克所想像的口才的講道，會在“更新社會、拯救城市和改變萬國的面貌”方面發揮全球影響力。

在現今，改革宗的講道者變得只專注於釋經講道，並以從所有經文中傳講基督成為講道的黃金標準。巴文克將“口才”視為講道的精髓實在令人耳目一新。從表面上看，人們可能會驚訝於他選用“口才”作為講道的近義詞，直至人們意識到他其實在兩種意義上使用該詞。從廣義來說，口才以虔誠為前提。巴文克認為：“如果人的話語再次成為敬虔內容的承載者，那麼他就會有口才。”但是，在大多數情況下，巴文克所指的是狹義（和更常用的），就是能言善辯。儘管如此，即使是從後者的意義上說，這也是用舌頭來作聖潔的事，出於神聖的信念而以熱情的方式表述，而不是出於人的智慧。

對巴文克來說，合乎聖經的講道肯定比口才更重要，但口才也不能少。換句話說，講道者至少應該是一位演說家，就此而言，應該是一位有口才的演講者。這意味著並非所有人都適合講道，因為口才先是一種恩賜，其次才是一門藝術。實際上，上帝“只將口才的恩賜賜給少數人。”這種限制性的講道觀點與《雅各書》三1一致：“我的弟兄們，不要許多人做教師，因為你們知道，我們做教師的要接受更嚴厲的審判。”除非一個人具有口才，否則即使他有豐富的聖經和神學知識，也不會自動有資格成為講道者。僅容讓有口才的人講道，與某些教會的做法背道而馳。在一些教會中，任何“靈命成熟”並任教過主日學課程的人，都有資格並受鼓勵在講台上講道。無論他們是否有口才的恩賜，講台對他們來說是一個培訓平台，幫助信徒發展他們的講道技巧。口才的基本素質，可能特別會給那些以前只是接受科學和工程學培訓的牧師帶來巨大挑戰，因為這些學科對他們的語言學和演說要求高。儘管如此，即使對於那些已經有些口才的講道者，他們也必須通過堅持不懈的實踐和奉獻精神，磨練以“簡單、真理和有力”的技巧來傳達聖言，並通過聖靈的力量，把聖言提至人們的良知上。

因此，口才是偉大的講道者和偉大的神學家之間的區別。一流的教理學家可能擁有語言才能，並具有揭開聖言的奧秘並綜合其教義的超凡能力。但是，除非他有口才，否則不會成為一位偉大的講道者——一種將聖言中的神學真理轉化為講道內容的恩賜，使聽眾能夠遵循上帝的旨意。的確，一個多產的神學家可能像巴文克一樣寫了幾十本關於系統神學的書，但他有不可抗拒的催迫和神聖的感動而說話，否則他不能達到口才的原則。即使有人有一種從靈裡引起的內在催迫，這個人仍然需要將這種情感傳達至聽眾的思想、內心和意志上，才能實現口才的本質。儘管如此，要遵循口才的形式，他的全人也需要保持和諧——在於他之所是與他之所講之的和諧，在於他之所講與如何表達之間的和諧，並在於他如何表達與如何行之間的和諧。此外，要成為一個有口才的聖言傳講者，巴文克的口才觀念不僅限於熟悉《聖經》或神學，還包括科學、藝術、文學和文化。講道者應“掠奪埃及的財富”，並使之聖化而為基督所用。有如此高的講道標準，难怪巴文克在《口才》的前言中要求講道者“竭盡全力地培養聖言的恩賜”。
正如人們從最高級別的神學家那裡所期望的一般，這位在其三分之二的人生中定期講道的神學家筆下的《口才》，在神學上既稳健又具有牧養性。通過整合神學和講道，巴文克體現了成為講道者學者(preacher-scholar)或學者講道者(scholar-preacher)的含義。在牧師的家庭中長大，他就上帝對牧師職份提出的嚴格要求沒有任何幻想。雖然講道是至關重要的，而且理所當然是牧師的主要職責，但它只是眾多的職責之一。巴文克本人認為要兼顧研究、寫作和講道的任務殊不容易。儘管如此，假設上帝賦予了一位神學家口才，那麼向一個福音是唯一希望的世界宣講具有神學洞察力和教義深度的話語將是一個強大的組合。正如巴文克唯一出版的講道所證明的那樣，這是一次神學性、釋經性、教牧性、福音性和護教性兼備的講道。此講道的統一性和深度，與他在訪問美國期間所聽的“表面”和“膚淺”的講道形成鮮明反差。

教理學和講道學的健康融合，確保講道在神學上是嚴格的，同時教理是溫暖的和與教會相關。本質上，講道就像一扇窗戶，通過它可以察看和辨別一個人的神學。例如，巴文克通常不看講稿，這不僅證明了他的口才，而且證明了他神學的內在化和結晶化。他呼吸之間就能講論神學。但是，這裡沒有“兩個巴文克”——“神學巴文克”和“講道巴文克”；他們只是一個巴文克的兩面。儘管有些牧者認為，追求神學知識與履行牧養的職責（如講道和關懷）之間存在張力，彷彿兩者是對立的，但巴文克會拒絕這種錯誤的二分法。在上帝遼闊的國度中，沒有一方比另外的一方強。巴文克的自身榜樣表明，一個人不必要在成為一個好的神學家和一個好的講道者之間作出選擇。兩者都是上帝給教會乃至世界的恩賜，一個越趨世俗的和後現代的世界。然而，出於對墮落世界的愛，上帝賜下了祂的獨生子，凡相信祂的都不致滅亡，反得永生。正是為著這個目標和三位一體上帝的榮耀，講道者巴文克向所有講道者傳授了一些有關口才的知識。

作者簡介：
謝進是一名工程師後轉為牧師。他持有馬里蘭大學電機工程博士，明尼蘇達州伯特利神學院道學碩士，賓夕法尼亞州威斯敏斯特神學院神學碩士。他現在是蘇格蘭愛丁堡大學神學院的系統神學博士候選人。他著有"Assurance of Adoption: A New Paradigm for Assurance of Salvation"（Wipf & Stock，2020 年）一書。他和妻子育有三個女兒。

中文翻譯：賢理・璀雅文字事工