

## HERMAN BAVINCK SPEAKS ENGLISH: A BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

by John Bolt

TO COMMEMORATE the complete translation of Herman Bavinck's magisterial four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics* into English<sup>1</sup> and the centenary of his 1908 Stone Lectures at Princeton Seminary, *The Philosophy of Revelation*,<sup>2</sup> this bibliographic essay will review Bavinck's own writings that are available in English along with significant scholarly treatments of his thought in the English language.<sup>3</sup>

Like his Neo-Calvinist contemporary Abraham Kuyper, Bavinck was accorded attention and respect in the American theological world while in the prime of his own theological career. This is remarkable considering that, unlike German, for example, the Dutch theological tradition, especially of a minor and conservative branch of the Reformed faith, did not command such attention readily. Much of the credit for this must be given to Geerhardus Vos who introduced both men to Benjamin Warfield and was influential in bringing them to Princeton to deliver the prestigious Stone Lectures, Kuyper in 1898 and Bavinck in 1908.<sup>4</sup>

What is not as well known about Bavinck is that 1908 was not his first visit to North America. In 1892, the year that the *Afscheiding* (Seces-

---

<sup>1</sup> Edited by John Bolt, translated by John Vriend, published by Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2003-08. The eschatology section of volume four was published separately in 1996 as *The Last Things: Hope for this World and the Next*; the creation section of volume 2 was published separately in 1999 as *In the Beginning: Foundations of Creation Theology*.

<sup>2</sup> Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953 [1908]); available online at <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupid?key=olbp11711>.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to the complete bibliography of Bavinck's writings compiled by Jan Veenhof and published in R. H. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus* (Kampen: Kok, 1961), 425-446. A version of this bibliography is available online at the website of Project Neocalvinisme, Nederland (<http://www.neocalvinisme.nl>). As I was preparing this essay Eric D. Bristley also kindly sent me a pre-publication electronic version of his *Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck* (to be published by Reformation Heritage Books, 2008). This guide was particularly helpful in calling my attention to a number of articles of which I was unaware. In addition to giving full bibliographic information in the manuscript itself, I will also provide the online addresses where the full text can be accessed.

<sup>4</sup> For an invaluable treatment of Geerhardus Vos's role in introducing Dutch Neo-Calvinism to North America, see George Harinck, "Geerhardus Vos as Introducer of Kuyper in America," in Hans Krabbendam & Larry J. Wagenaar, eds. *The Dutch-American Experience: Essays in Honor of Robert P. Swierenga*, Volume 5, *VU Studies on Protestant History* (Amsterdam; VU Uitgeverij, 2000), 243-262. For a more complete biographical sketch of Vos, including significant correspondence with Bavinck as well as Kuyper, see James T. Dennison, Jr., *The Letters of Geerhardus Vos* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005).

sion) Reformed churches, formed in 1834, joined with the Kuyper-led *Doleantie* ("Mourning") churches to form a new body, *De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*, the synod of that church commissioned Bavinck and his Kampen colleague D. K. Wielenga<sup>5</sup> to establish better contact with Dutch Reformed Christians in North America (in Michigan and Iowa) and to attend the Fifth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System, in Toronto, September 21-30.<sup>6</sup> On September 22, at 3:00 P.M., in the Cooke's Church, Bavinck addressed the assembly on "The Influence of the Protestant Reformation on the moral and religious condition of communities and nations." This lecture was published in the *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System: Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto, 1892* (London: Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1892), 48-55.<sup>7</sup>

Earlier that same year Bavinck's "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," translated by Geerhardus Vos, was published in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, III (1892): 209-228.<sup>8</sup> With this article and a number of others to follow, Bavinck became for many Presbyterian and Reformed people in North America the premier interpreter of continental European theological trends. The 1892 essay was followed by "The Future of Calvinism," *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* V (1894): 1-24<sup>9</sup>; "Creation or Development," *The Methodist Review* 83 (November 1901): 849-874<sup>10</sup>; "Calvin and Common Grace," *The Princeton Theological Review* VII (1909): 437-465<sup>11</sup>; "The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands," *The Princeton Theological Review* VIII (1910): 433-460<sup>12</sup>; "Christological Movements in the Nineteenth Century," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 68 (July 1911): 381-404<sup>13</sup>; and "Christ and Christianity," *The Biblical Review* I/2 (April 1916): 214-236.<sup>14</sup> During this same period two book-length publications also appeared in the English language: Bavinck's Princeton Stone Lectures, *The Philosophy of Revelation* (New York and London: Longmans,

---

<sup>5</sup> Douwe Klazes Wielenga (1842-1902) taught church history at the Theological School in Kampen. In July 1892 he received a call from the Christian Reformed Church to teach at its theological school in Grand Rapids. The American trip in part was a journey of exploration; Wielenga, however, declined the call.

<sup>6</sup> Bavinck's reflections on his 1892 trip, with a helpful introduction by the editor, is provided in H. Bavinck, *Mein Reis Naar Amerika*, AD Chartas Reeks 2, edited with introduction and notes by George Harinck (Barneveld: De Vuurbank, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> The address is available online at Google.com/books, search using "Bavinck, Moral Influence of Protestantism" ([www.http://books.google.com/books?id=xsVLAAMAAAJ&pg=PA48&dq=Bavinck,+Moral+Influence+of+Protestantism#PPA60,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=xsVLAAMAAAJ&pg=PA48&dq=Bavinck,+Moral+Influence+of+Protestantism#PPA60,M1)).

<sup>8</sup> Available online at: <http://digital.library.ptsem.edu/default.xqy?src=BR1892310.xml&div=1>

<sup>9</sup> Translated by Geerhardus Vos; available online at: <http://digital.library.ptsem.edu/default.xqy?src=BR1894517.xml&div=1>

<sup>10</sup> Translated by Rev. J. Hendrick De Vries.

<sup>11</sup> Translated by Geerhardus Vos; this essay also appeared in a collection *Calvin and the Reformation: Four Studies* by Émile Doumergue, August Lang, Herman Bavinck and Benjamin Warfield (London, Edinburgh, New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1909), 99-130; available online at <http://digital.library.ptsem.edu/default.xqy?src=BR190973.xml&div=3>.

<sup>12</sup> Available online at: <http://digital.library.ptsem.edu/default.xqy?src=BR191083.xml&div=4>

<sup>13</sup> Translated by Benjamin B. Warfield from the second edition of Bavinck's *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (1910), III: 273-291.

<sup>14</sup> Translated by Rev. A. A. Pfanstiehl.

Green & Co., 1909),<sup>15</sup> and *Mental, Religious and Social Forces in the Netherlands*, published for the P. P. I. E., The Hague (Commercial Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce) [1915] (*A General View of the Netherlands*, XVII).<sup>16</sup>

The last item in the previous paragraph serves as a portent for how Bavinck would be received in North America for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; Reformed people were more interested in Bavinck the social thinker and pedagogue than Bavinck the theologian. Bavinck's popular<sup>17</sup> meditations for those making profession of faith, *The Sacrifice of Praise: Meditations before and after Receiving Access to the Lord's Table*, translated by Rev. John Dolfin (Englewood, NJ: John V. Bogert, 1908; 2nd revised edition, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1922) introduced him to a larger Reformed church audience, but the real interest focused on Bavinck's educational philosophy, psychology and pedagogy.

Though none of Bavinck's book length studies on pedagogy and religious psychology<sup>18</sup> were translated into English until the second half of the twentieth century, there was clearly a strong interest on the part of Reformed educators in North America in his educational thought.<sup>19</sup> In 1928 two unnamed members of the Calvin College faculty translated J. Brederveld's *Hoofdlijnen der Paedagogiek van Dr. Herman Bavinck met Critische beschouwing* (1927) in English: *Christian Education: A Summary and Critical Discussion of Bavinck's Pedagogical Principles* (Grand Rapids: Smitter Book Company, 1928). It is striking that the subtitle simply speaks of "Bavinck" as though no further explanation were needed. The importance of Bavinck's work for Reformed day school education in North America is apparent in the translator's preface where they write: "Dr. H. Bavinck, whose pedagogy is being summarized and evaluated in this pamphlet, was one of the leaders in the movement for Christian education in The Netherlands, and his writings in the field of pedagogy were

<sup>15</sup> Available online in its entirety on Google Books at: <http://books.google.com/books?id=wS03AAAAMAAJ>

<sup>16</sup> For access to this volume online: <http://books.google.com/books?id=hg-wGAACAAJ&dq=Mental,+Religious+and+Social+Forces+in+the+Netherlands>

<sup>17</sup> Dutch: *De Offerande des Lofs* ('s Gravenhage: Verschoor, 1901). This work went through four editions/printings in six years; a fifth, revised edition was published in 1907, a sixth in 1911, and continued to be published until the 16<sup>th</sup> edition in 1948.

<sup>18</sup> *Paedagogische Beginnselen* (Kampen: Kok, 1904); *Over het Onbewuste* (Amsterdam: Kirchner, 1915); *De Opvoeding der Rijpere Jeugd* (Kampen: Kok, 1916); *De Overwinning der Ziel* (Kampen: Kok, 1916); *De Nieuwe Opvoeding* (Kampen: Kok, 1917); *Bijbelsche en Religieuze Psychologie* (Kampen: Kok, 1920); *Beginnselen der Psychologie*. 2nd ed. revised by V. Hepp (Kampen: Kok, 1923).

<sup>19</sup> The single-minded attention given to Bavinck's educational writings was also true in the rest of the Reformed world. For up to forty years after his death the major scholarly interest in Bavinck centered around his pedagogy and educational philosophy and no less than five major works on Bavinck's educational philosophy and pedagogy appeared within sixteen years of his death (Fr. S. Rombouts, *Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck, Gids Bij de Studie van Zijn Paedagogische Werken* ('s Hertogenbosch-Antwerpen: Malmberg, 1922); J. Brederveld, *Hoofdlijnen der Paedagogiek van Dr. Herman Bavinck, met Critische Beschouwing* (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1927); L. van der Zweep, *De Paedagogiek van Bavinck* (Kampen: Kok, 1935); Cornelius Jaarsma, *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936); and L. van Klinken, *Bavincks Paedagogische Beginnselen* (Meppel: Boom, 1937). A major study of Bavinck's *theology* was not completed until 1953 with the appearance of A. A. Hoekema's dissertation on Bavinck's theology of the covenant ("Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant" [Unpublished Th. D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953]).

the main sources used by our pioneers in their struggle for free Christian schools here" (emphasis added). The capstone of this interest was Cornelius Jaarsma, *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936). To complete this story, we need to report that two of Bavinck's important works on psychology were translated in the latter part of the century though neither was publicly published: a partial translation of *Biblical and Religious Psychology*,<sup>20</sup> trans. Herman Hanko (Grand Rapids: Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Church, 1974); *Foundations of Psychology*,<sup>21</sup> translated by Jack Vanden Born (M. A. C. S. Dissertation, Calvin College, 1981).

In addition to the educational writings, shorter doctrinal/theological works also appeared in English. The important evangelical five-volume *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, edited by James Orr (Chicago: Howard Severance Co, 1915) included two articles by Bavinck: "Death" (II: 812-13); and "The Fall" (II:1092-94).<sup>22</sup>

In the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century two of Bavinck's important rec-toral address at the Kampen Theological School, *Algemeene Genade* (1894) and *De Katholiciteit van Christendom en Kerk* (1888) were translated and published in the *Calvin Theological Journal*: "Common Grace," translated with introduction by Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, *CTJ* 24 (1989): 35-65; "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," translated by John Bolt, *CTJ* 27 (1992): 220-251. Also published during this time were Bavinck's "The Problem of War," *The Banner of Truth*, 166-67 (July-August, 1977): 46-53, and an excerpt from the first volume of the *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, translated by Albert Wolters, "Herman Bavinck on Scripture and Science," *CTJ* 27 (1992): 91-95. Bavinck's reflections on faith and certainty, which went through two revisions and four editions in Dutch,<sup>23</sup> were published in 1980: *The Certainty of Faith*, translated by Harry der Nederlanden (St. Catherines, Ontario: Paideia, 1980).

Discussions about translating Bavinck's *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* were initiated in the 1930s and the editor of the Christian Reformed weekly, *The Banner*, even highlighted the project.<sup>24</sup> The Rev. Henry J. Kuiper regularly bemoaned the loss of Dutch reading skills among American Reformed folk and called for a twofold strategy: "On the one hand our future ministers must be instructed so thoroughly in the Dutch language that they can read the works of Kuyper, Bavinck and others with ease. On the other hand the best Dutch works must be made accessible to our people in general by providing good translations." Kuiper called attention to the recently completed translation of an initial volume

<sup>20</sup> *Bijbelsche en Religieuze Psychologie* (Kampen: Kok, 1920); the Dutch text has 220 pages; the English translation, 74.

<sup>21</sup> *Beginselen der Psychologie*. 1st ed. (Kampen: Bos, 1897); 2nd expanded addition prepared by V. Hepp (Kampen: Kok, 1923).

<sup>22</sup> I was alerted to these articles by Eric Bristley's *Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck*.

<sup>23</sup> *De Zekerheid des Geloofs* (Kampen: Kok, 1901); 2nd expanded edition, 1903; 3rd revised edition, 1918; 4th edition, 1932.

<sup>24</sup> I am indebted to James De Jong for this. The editorial appeared in *The Banner* of July 18, 1930, 676; quotations that follow in the text are taken from this editorial.

of the *Dogmatiek* by the Rev. William Hendriksen, pastor of the Third CRC, Zeeland, Michigan, and cited a glowing recommendation from CTS professor Louis Berkhof:

It is a cause of gratitude and joy that the Rev. William Hendriksen of the Third Church of Zeeland, Mich., conceived the plan of translating the greater part of it (Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*), and that one of our publishers, Mr. Arthur Meyer, expressed the willingness to finance the publication. These men certainly deserve credit for their ambitious venture. We owe them our sincere gratitude and ought to encourage them in every way possible.<sup>25</sup>

It is worth noting the nature of this translation work. Significant omissions from the original are noted as well as considerable reconstruction to make it more serviceable as a textbook. Here is Berkhof's description (with emphasis added):

[The translator] does not intend to translate the whole work of Dr. Bavinck, but *only those parts of it that seem to be of the greatest practical value for us at present*. To be more precise, *the first volume [Prolegomena], which is of an introductory character, is not included in the plan*. And the historical material, which covers many pages of the original, is summarized. Consequently the size of the work is reduced considerably, while at the same time the historical approach which is so characteristic of Dr. Bavinck's work, is *in a measure retained*. From the present volume it can already be seen that all the rest of the work, that is, the biblico-theological and the more strictly dogmatical material—and this constitutes by far the greater part of the work—is included in the translation. Moreover, it will also become evident from this volume that *the translator does not rest satisfied with giving us a mere translation. He seeks to make the work, if possible more serviceable as a textbook for dogmatics than it is in its original form*. He undertakes to *edit it* by subdividing chapters and paragraphs, and *by prefacing each main division with a brief statement or summary of its contents*.

The history of this project is every bit as interesting as the editorial and translating choices indicated. Hendriksen realized, as did the editor and translator of the now completed *Reformed Dogmatics*, that readers needed guides to the work; summaries and a more transparent subdivision of topics were indispensable. But Hendriksen's efforts were not rewarded until 1951 when the theological *locus* on God, the first half of *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, vol. II, was published as *The Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951; rpt., Baker, 1977). Undoubtedly the financial restraints imposed by the Great Depression contributed to this though it is also noteworthy that during this same time Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* were introduced to North American Reformed students of theology through the writings of Louis Berkhof, Professor at Calvin

---

<sup>25</sup> Berkhof's comments are taken from an introduction to what Kuiper describes as the "first volume" of a larger translation project. "First volume," as we shall see, does *not* mean Volume I of the *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*.

Theological Seminary from 1906 to 1944.<sup>26</sup> Berkhof published his own *Reformed Dogmatics* in two volumes in 1932 followed by an accompanying *Introduction to Reformed Theology* as a separate volume that same year. Whereas Hendriksen had skipped the introductory, prolegomena volume of the *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, Berkhof did not dispense with the material. In the Preface to the *Introductory Volume* “Berkhof acknowledged that the general plan of his work was based on the first volume of Bavinck’s *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* and that in a few chapters he followed Bavinck’s argumentation as well.” (166) This admission was lacking in later editions but, as Zwaanstra observes, “in his *Systematic Theology*, Berkhof was only slightly less dependent on Bavinck” (167). Though he rearranges material and his inclusion of Barth and Brunner is original, “Berkhof’s theology was essentially the theology of Herman Bavinck” (167). In conclusion, as I have claimed elsewhere, “It is largely through Berkhof’s [*Systematic Theology*] that Herman Bavinck has influenced the theology of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.”<sup>27</sup>

Shortly after the appearance of Hendriksen’s translation *The Doctrine of God*, Eerdmans published Henry Zylstra’s translation of Bavinck’s more popular one-volume summary of Christian doctrine, *Magnalia Dei (Our Reasonable Faith)* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956; rpt. Baker, 1977]). Further translations of the *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* waited another half-century when first the *locus* on eschatology, *The Last Things: Hope for this World and the Next*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), and then the remaining part of *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, II was published as *In the Beginning: Foundations of Creation Theology*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).<sup>28</sup> After these initial partial volumes the Dutch Reformed Translation Society and Baker went ahead with the project of preparing the entire four-volume set of *Reformed Dogmatics*. Volume 1 (*Prolegomena*) was published in 2003, volume 2 (*God and Creation*) in 2004, volume 3 (*Sin and Salvation in Christ*) in 2006, and volume 4 (*Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*) in 2008. Two additional volumes were published in 2008: *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*, ed., John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008); and Bavinck’s articles on calling and regeneration (*Roeping en Wedergeboorte*, 1903), written for a broader church audience as a guide to controversies in the Dutch Reformed Churches, *Saved by Grace: The Holy Spirit’s Work in Calling and Regeneration*, ed. J. Mark Beach, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008).

In the remainder of this essay I shall highlight some of the important scholarship on Bavinck written in the English language, beginning with biography and historical context and concluding with some specific topics.

---

<sup>26</sup> For what follows I am indebted to Henry Zwaanstra, “Louis Berkhof,” in David F. Wells, ed., *Reformed Theology in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 153-171; page references that follow in the text are to this essay.

<sup>27</sup> John Bolt, “Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam: Herman Bavinck’s Reception and Influence in North America,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 38 (November 2003): 277.

<sup>28</sup> The translation of *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* was funded by the Dutch Reformed Translation Society, formed in 1994.

A full length English-language biography on Bavinck has not yet been published though there is at least one in preparation.<sup>29</sup> However, Bavinck's childhood friend Henry Elias Dosker, who immigrated to the United States, served as a minister in the Reformed Church of America, did graduate work at McCormick Theological Seminary, and became professor of church history at the Presbyterian Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, wrote a tender and illuminating eulogy at the time of Bavinck's death that is readily available, initially published in the *Princeton Theological Review* 20/3 (1922): 448-64;<sup>30</sup> and reprinted in *Essays in Religion, Science and Society* (2008), 13-24. This eulogy is unsurpassed in its intimate portrait of Bavinck as a deeply spiritual person and brilliant scholar. A short piece by the author can be found in the *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Theologians*, edited by Patrick W. Cary and Joseph T. Lienhard (Westport, CT, & London, Greenwood Press, 2000), 59-60. At this time, the editor's Introduction to any of the published volumes of the *Reformed Dogmatics* remains the most accessible overview of Bavinck's life and thought.

The first full-length scholarly treatments of Bavinck's theology at the doctoral level were by North Americans, not by his fellow countrymen. The first was Anthony A. Hoekema, "Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant," Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953; followed by Bastian Kruithof, "The Relation of Christianity and Culture in the Teaching of Herman Bavinck," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1955, and Eugene P. Heideman, *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959). Since then, there have been three doctoral dissertations on Bavinck's theology by North Americans and one by a European in the English language: John Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 1982; Syd Hielema, "Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption," Th.D. Dissertation, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, 1998; Ronald N. Gleason, "The Centrality of the *unio mystica* in the Theology of Herman Bavinck," Ph.D. Dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 2001. The most recent work, including a large chapter on Bavinck's understanding of Scripture, is Henk Van de Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology: Truth and Trust* (Leiden: and Boston: Brill, 2008).<sup>31</sup> Mention also needs to be made here of Richard B. Gaffin, *God's Word in Servant Form: Abraham Kuypers and Herman Bavinck on the Doctrine of Scripture* (Jackson, MS: Reformed Academic Press, 2008).

The interest in Bavinck's theology at a number of North American Reformed Seminaries can be seen from the following list of Master's theses written on aspects of Bavinck's theology:<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> By Dr. Ron Gleason of Yorba Linda, California.

<sup>30</sup> Available online at <http://digital.library.ptsem.edu/default.xqy?src=BR1922203.xml>

<sup>31</sup> An earlier version: Hendrik van den Belt, "Autopistia: The Self-convincing Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology." Ph.D. diss., Leiden University (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> These will be listed in chronological order; here too I am indebted to Eric Bristley's *Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck*.

- Jerome B. De Jong, "The Ordo Salutis as Developed by the Dutch Theologian Herman Bavinck," Th.M. thesis, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1947.
- Hendrik Krabbendam, "Calling and Regeneration," Th.M. Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 1962.
- Harry Fernhout, "Man, Faith, and Religion in Bavinck, Kuyper, and Dooyeweerd," M. Phil. Thesis, Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, 1974.
- Eric Bristley, "From Probability to Certainty: The Witness of the Holy Spirit and the Defense of the Bible in Presbyterian and Reformed Apologetics, 1870-1920," Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989.
- E. J. Dirksen, "Spiritual Assurance: The Knowledge of Salvation in Herman Bavinck," Masters thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2003.
- J. A. Guy, "The Polemics of the Doctrine of Assurance in Jonathan Edwards's *The Religious Affections* and Herman Bavinck's *The Certainty of Faith*," Master's Thesis, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, 2006.

I will conclude this overview with listing scholarly articles that have appeared in various English-language journals and books:<sup>33</sup>

- Cornelius Van Til, "Bavinck the Theologian." *Westminster Theological Journal* 24/1 (November 1961): 48-64.
- Richard B. Gaffin, "Old Amsterdam and Inerrancy," *Westminster Theological Journal* 44/2 (Fall 1982): 250-289.
- Ronald N. Gleason, "Calvin and Bavinck on the Lord's Supper," *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 273-303.
- Harry R. Boer, "Evolution and Herman Bavinck," *Reformed Journal* 37/12 (December 1987): 3-4.
- John Bolt, "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck," *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (April 1993): 45-73.
- 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 (November 2003): 248-62.
- John Bolt, "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam: Herman Bavinck's Reception and Influence in North America." *Calvin Theological Journal* 38 (November 2003): 263-80.
- H. M. Vroom, "Scripture Read and Interpreted: The Development of the Doctrine of Scripture and Hermeneutics in Gereformeerde Theology in the Netherlands," *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993): 352-371.

---

<sup>33</sup> I am restricting this list to those articles that deal with Bavinck either exclusively or extensively; an additional listing of essays and book chapters that refer to Bavinck more incidentally (e.g., as part of a general discussion of neo-Calvinism), is beyond my scope here.



- Dirk Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck and the War Question," in *Christian Faith and Violence*, Volume 1 (Zoetermeer, Netherlands: Meinema, 2005), 122-140.
- Donald Macleod, "Bavinck's Prolegomena: Fresh Light on Amsterdam, Old Princeton, and Cornelius Van Til," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68/2 (Autumn, 2006): 261-282.
- Jan Veenhof, "Nature and Grace in Bavinck," translated by Albert M. Wolters, *Pro Rege* 34 (June 2006): 10-31; from Veenhof's *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, pp. 345-365.
- Brian Mattson, "Van Til on Bavinck: An Assessment," *Westminster Theological Journal* 70 (2008): 111-27.
- Cornelis P. Venema, "Herman Bavinck: A Sketch of His Life," *Outlook* 58 (February 2008): 21-26.
- , "Bavinck the Dogmatician." *Outlook* 58 (April 2008): 6-9; (May 2008): 8-11.

There is good reason to believe that ten years from now this summary of Bavinck scholarship in the English language will have multiplied many fold. The English-language translation of the *Reformed Dogmatics* has already helped birth Bavinck translation projects in the Indonesian, Italian, Korean, and Portuguese languages. In October 2004 the Theological University of Kampen (Oudestraat) and the Free University of Amsterdam hosted an international congress, *Encounters with Bavinck* ("Ontmoetingen met Bavinck").<sup>34</sup> Calvin Theological Seminary and a number of co-sponsoring institutions<sup>35</sup> celebrate the centenary of Bavinck's 1908 Princeton Seminary Stone Lectures, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, with an international conference, "A Pearl and a Leaven: Herman Bavinck for the 21st Century," held at the Prince Conference Center, Calvin College, on September 18-20, 2008.<sup>36</sup> This event holds real promise for future Bavinck scholarship as a pre-conference gathering brings together veteran Bavinck scholars with younger graduate students in theology for a day-long conversation centered on prize-winning student papers on such topics as "Herman Bavinck's Thomistic Epistemology" (David Sytsma, Princeton), "Trinity, History, and Covenant: Herman Bavinck and Modern Theology" (Adam Eitel, Princeton), "Bavinck and Covenant Christology" (Mark Jones, Leiden), "The Position of Women in Society: A Study in Principles and Practice in the Socio-Political Work of Herman Bavinck" (Niels Van Driel), and "Unleavened Morality: Bavinck's

---

<sup>34</sup> See the publication of conference papers: George Harinck and Gerrit Neven, eds., *Ontmoetingen met Bavinck*, AD Chartas—Reeks 9 (Barneveld: De Vuurbank, 2006). The congress was a combined celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bavinck's birth and the founding of the Theological School at Kampen in 1854.

<sup>35</sup> Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Protestant Reformed Seminary, Puritan Reformed Seminary, Western Theological Seminary, Calvin College, Dordt College, Redeemer University College, Trinity College, The Dutch Reformed Translation Society.

<sup>36</sup> Speakers at the conference include John Bolt, Jim Bratt, Eduardo Echeverria, Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., Darwin Glassford, Ronald Gleason, Gordon Graham, George Harinck, Syd Hielema, Allan Janssen, Barend Kamphuis, Nelson Kloosterman, Albert Mohler, Jr., Mark Noll, James Payton, Cornelius Plantinga Jr., Henk van de Belt, Cornelis Vander Kooi, Dirk Van Keulen, David Van Drunen, Paul Visser, John Vissers, and Nicholas Wolterstorff.

Contribution to the Debate on Natural Law” (Ted Van Raalte, Calvin). Princeton Theological Seminary will commemorate the same centenary at its annual Kuyper Center for Public Theology Conference in April 2009.

In the Foreword to the first edition of the first volume of the *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*,<sup>37</sup> Bavinck drew attention to the need for contemporary Protestant theology to become much better acquainted with and seriously engage the rich tradition of patristic and scholastic theology. Yet, he insisted that simple repristination would be wrong: “To love the past merely because it is ancient is neither Reformed nor Christian. A dogmatics does not just describe what was counted as valid in the past but what still counts today. It is rooted in the past but labors toward the future.... The goal of this work is to bear the stamp of its own age.... God speaks to us as vividly and seriously as to previous generations.”

The current revival of theological interest in Bavinck’s own work, so it seems to me, seeks nothing other than to be true to his own vision of the theological vocation.

---

<sup>37</sup> Dated Kampen, April, 1895. It is unfortunate that this foreword was not included in the subsequent editions of the *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*. To my own embarrassment I had overlooked until this past year. My thanks to David Sytsma for calling my attention to it as he done for so many other valuable references.