

Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*

Chang Jun Choi
(Saeseoul Church)

[Abstract]

Herman Bavinck(1854-1921) has undoubtedly been known as a great dogmatician with regard to Scripture and the Reformed tradition. One cannot understand Dutch Reformed theology of the twentieth century apart from a first-hand acquaintance with Bavinck's dogmatics. However, the study of Bavinck the Reformed ethicist has received relatively little attention from Western scholarship in general and Bavinck scholarship in particular. In recent years, however, all this trend in the sphere of Bavinck research has changed since Dirk van Keulen has discovered Bavinck's handwritten Reformed ethics in the Bavinck archives. Scholarly discussions for establishing dual identity of Bavinck as dogmatician and ethicist have been ongoing. This study will examine Bavinck's engagement with ethics

as well as the new discovery of Bavinck's manuscript on Reformed Ethics penned throughout his life. Particularly through Bavinck's two essays on the Imitation of Christ, Bavinck's thoughts on Christian life will be explored in detail. It is to be hoped that this study can contribute to the reappraisal of Bavinck's identity as both dogmatician and ethicist in the Reformed tradition.

Key Words: Herman Bavinck, Reformed Ethics, The Imitation of Christ, The Union with Christ, The Sermon on the Mount

1. Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a flowering in Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) studies in the English-speaking world and a new focus on the reappraisal of Bavinck's theology and life in the Reformed tradition. Until recently, surprisingly few dissertations on Bavinck's theology have been written in English, despite the prominence and significance of Bavinck's theology.¹ To be sure, with

1 Anthony A. Hoekema, "Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant" (ThD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953); followed by Bastian Kruithof, "The Relation of Christianity and Culture in the Teaching of Herman Bavinck" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1955); Eugene P. Heideman, *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959); John Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman

the aid of the recent translation into English of *Reformed Dogmatics, Essays on Religion, Science, and Society, Saved by Grace*, other articles, and the English biography of Ronald D. Gleason, Bavinck's theology and his life have been given considerable scholarly attention in the English-speaking world.² Bavinck has undoubtedly been known as a great dogmatician within Reformed theology. On the other hand, the study of Bavinck the ethicist has received relatively little attention from Western scholarship in general and Bavinck scholarship in particular. In recent years, however, this trend in the sphere of Bavinck research has changed due to Dirk van Keulen's discovery of Bavinck's handwritten *Reformed Ethics* in the Bavinck archives.³

Bavinck" (PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 1982); Syd Hielema, "Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption" (ThD diss., Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, 1998); Ronald N. Gleason, "The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck" (ThD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 2001); James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 2012); Brian G. Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology & the Image of God in Herman Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012).

- 2 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols., ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003-8); id., *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society* ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); id., *Saved by Grace: The Holy Spirit's Work in Calling and Regeneration*, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008); Ronald Gleason, *Herman Bavinck: Pastor, Churchman, Statesman, and Theologian* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2010).
- 3 Van Keulen presented a paper, entitled "Herman Bavinck's Reformed Ethics: Some Remarks about Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen", from Sept. 17-20, 2008, at International Herman Bavinck Conference on the campus of Calvin College. He has discovered Bavinck's handwritten *Reformed Ethics* in the Bavinck Archive 176 of the Historical Documentation Centre, Free University, Amsterdam. Cited from Dirk van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about Unpublished

In Van Keulen's 2008 presentation of "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen," he undercores the fact that Bavinck must have worked on his *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics* at the same time during his tenure as professor at Kampen. According to Van Keulen, there are supporting pieces of evidence that suggest that Bavinck worked on the manuscript of *Reformed Ethics* for a period in 1884-1886 and in 1894-1895, during which years his *Reformed Dogmatics* were published and released.⁴ As such, Van Keulen asserts that his research into a large handwritten manuscript of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* provides decisive evidence for interpreting Bavinck as both dogmatician and ethicist in the Reformed tradition.

In this midst of this, a two-day symposium on Bavinck's dogmatics and ethics was held at New College, the University of Edinburgh in September 2011. In accordance with the pattern of Bavinck's own career and intellectual development, the first day of the conference focused on Bavinck's dogmatics⁵ and the second day focused on his ethics, in order to understand the whole theology of Herman Bavinck.⁶ This symposium addressed

Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen", *The Bavinck Review* 1 (2010), 25.

4 Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 28, 29.

5 John Bolt, "Bavinck's Use of Wisdom Literature in Systematic Theology", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 4-23; Mark W. Elliott, "Bavinck's Use of Augustine as an Antidote to Ritschl", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 24-40; Henk van Den Belt, "Herman Bavinck and His Reformed Sources on the Call to Grace: A Shift in Emphasis towards the Internal Work of the Spirit", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 4-23.

the question of Bavinck's dual identity as both dogmatician and ethicist. In order to give a convincing answer to this question, Bavinck's significance as a Reformed ethicist was convincingly expounded on by numerous theologians. At a fundamental level, it is obvious that there is a similar consensus on the significance of Bavinck's ethics as well as his dogmatics among Bavinck scholars. They go on to assert the necessity of understanding Bavinck's ethics in order to know his theology thoroughly. For example, James Eglinton maintains that "engagement with his[Bavinck's] ethics presents perhaps a greater challenge than work on his dogmatics. This, however, is a challenge to which we must rise if we are to develop a well orb'd understanding of Herman Bavinck."⁷

In a similar line, scholarly discussions on the significance of ethics in Bavinck's theology have been ongoing within Bavinck scholarship. Numerous studies have recently attempted in earnest to discover and explore Bavinck's ethics, but among these, John Bolt's position is particularly notable. John Bolt's 1982 doctoral dissertation regarding the role of the imitation of Christ theme in Herman Bavinck's cultural-ethical ideal has called experts' atten-

6 James Eglinton, "Guest Editorial: Bavinck, Dogmatics, and Ethics", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 1-3; George Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion: A Case Study of Herman Bavinck's Engagement with Modern Culture", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 60-77; Dirk van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck on the Imitation of Christ", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 78-91; Donald Macleod, "Herman Bavinck and the Basis of Christian Certainty", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 92-107; Paul T. Nimmo, "Bavinck, Barth, and the Uniqueness of the Eucharist", *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 108-26.

7 Eglinton, "Guest Editorial: Bavinck, Dogmatics, and Ethics", 2.

tion to Bavinck's ethics.⁸ In this dissertation, Bolt consistently expounds upon Bavinck's views on Christian ethics in relation to Christ's restoration of creational norms.⁹ In addition, following its publication, Bolt revised his dissertation to reflect the latest research on Bavinck scholarship, despite the fact that none of the recent studies affected his thesis argument.¹⁰ In both versions of his dissertation, Bolt made a considerable effort to provide a comprehensive overview of the cultural-ethical ideal of Bavinck, which seeks to strike a balance between pietism and modernism. In recent years, Bolt published a book entitled *Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service*.¹¹ In this book, Bolt explores how Bavinck's theology relates to his ethics, and he both details Bavinck's theology of Christian discipleship in terms of 'the imitation of Christ' as well as provides concrete application of his theology in marriage and family, work and vocation, culture and education, and civil society. Most notably, John Bolt has been

8 Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck."

9 John Bolt, "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck", *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993): 45-73.

10 John Bolt's dissertation for Ph.D. entitled "The Imitation of Christ in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck" was submitted and accepted in 1982 at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto. John Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck" (PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 1982). It is quite interesting to note that his revised dissertation, thirty years after its completion of original dissertation, was published again in 2013, including an update on Bavinck scholarship since 1982. The title of the dissertation was also changed to *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi: Between Pietism and Modernism*. John Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2013).

11 John Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015).

working on a translation of Herman Bavinck's unpublished manuscripts on *Reformed Ethics* into English in collaboration with Dirk van Keulen and Nelson Kloosterman. According to Bolt, Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* will be published in three volumes as follows: (1) Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity; (2) The Duties of the Christian Life (Ten Commandments); and (3) The Life of the Redeemed in the World (Marriage and Family).¹² It is to be hoped that this forthcoming translation of *Reformed Ethics* will offer an opportunity to get to the heart of Bavinck's ethics in the English-speaking world.

Given this background, the present research emerges from this question: Did Bavinck sometimes engage in ethics as a dogmatician? In other words, can we regard Bavinck as an important Reformed Christian ethicist as well as a Reformed dogmatic theologian? I would like to contend that Herman Bavinck should be regarded as a Reformed ethicist as well as a Reformed dogmatician. In order to support my argument, I will first briefly examine and explore Bavinck's writings about ethics, particularly with respect to Bavinck's unpublished manuscripts of *Reformed Ethics*. This research aims to provide supportive evidence of the identity of Bavinck as an ethicist from his interest and his own writings. Second, I will analyze Bavinck's two essays on the imitation of Christ, which should be regarded as an indispensable key for understanding Bavinck's thoughts on ethics.¹³

¹² John Bolt, "Editorial", *The Bavinck Review* 6 (2015), 8.

¹³ Herman Bavinck, "The Imitation of Christ", ("De navolging van Christus, I, II, III", in *De Vrije Kerk* 11 (1885): 101-13, 203-13; 12 (1886): 321-33); "The Imitation of Christ and Life in the Modern World", ("De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", in *Schild en Pijl* 1, no. 3 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1918)

2. Bavinck's Engagement with Ethics

Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), the Dutch Reformed dogmatician, regarded ethics as a matter of enormous importance, and he offers a rich and nuanced understanding of the relationship between dogmatics and ethics. No sentence better summarizes Herman Bavinck's thoughts on dogmatics and ethics than this: "Dogmatics is the system of the knowledge of God; ethics is that of the service of God."¹⁴ Bavinck strongly contends that there is no fundamental difference between dogmatics and ethics, underscoring instead the inseparably close relationship between the two. Bavinck views dogmatics and ethics as "a single system," related to each other, not as "two independent entities" facing each other.¹⁵ With this concept alone, Bavinck had enough to occupy his mind and time throughout his life as he dealt with the notion of ethics in conjunction with dogmatics.

With regards to Bavinck's own career and theological works, scholars generally agree that Bavinck devoted himself to teaching systematic theology and writing his *magnum opus*, *Reformed Dogmatics*, as a systematic theologian at Kampen Theological Seminary (1883-1902), and that he turned his attention more and more to ethical issues during his tenure at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (1902-21). For the theme of this paper, however, it is important to note that Bavinck engaged heavily in the study

in Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2013), 372-401, 402-40.

¹⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Prologomena*, vol. 1, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 58.

¹⁵ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:58.

of ethics. Although Bavinck's work on ethics has attracted less attention than his systematic theology, Bavinck indeed wrote widely on ethical issues throughout his life.

On June 10, 1880, Bavinck obtained his doctorate with a dissertation on the ethics of the Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli.¹⁶ In his doctoral dissertation, Bavinck commented that "theology could only penetrate the consciousness of the modern world to the extent that it demonstrated its ethical value and relevance."¹⁷ At this point in his life, Bavinck considered Zwingli to be the most ethical person among the Reformers, reflecting the unity between faith and life.¹⁸ It is clear that Bavinck drew his ideas about the inseparable nature of the relationship between dogmatics and ethics from Zwingli's work on ethics.¹⁹ As soon as Bavinck received his doctorate, he published two articles on the

16 Herman Bavinck, *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli* (Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 1880); According to Ron Gleason, the faculty of the University of Leiden awarded Bavinck the title of Doctor of Theology *cum laude*. Ron Gleason, *Herman Bavinck: Pastor, Churchman, Statesman, and Theologian* (Phillipsburg, N.J. : P & R Pub., 2010), 60.

17 Bavinck, *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli*, 2. The translation cited from Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 98. For the original Dutch text is as follow: "Alles schijnt er op te wijzen, dat het dogme eerst dan weer spreken zal tot het bewustzijn van onzen tijd, als het in zijne ethische waarde en kracht gezien..."

18 Bavinck, *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli*, 60. Bavinck writes, "Door geen der Hervormers is de ethische kracht van het geloof zoo duidelijk aangetoond als door Zwingli."

19 Bavinck, *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli*, 7. Bavinck points out that Zwingli's theological system reflects the inseparably close relation of dogmatics and ethical reflection, saying that "op strenge scheiding van het dogmatische en ethische heb ik me dan ook niet toegelegd, te minder, wijl Zwingli's theologisch systeem weinig algemeen bekend is en daarenboven in velerlei opzicht iets zoo eigenaardigs heeft, dat kennis daarvan ook voor het begrijpen zijner ethische beginselen niet kan gemist worden."

human conscience.²⁰ After this, he was ordained as pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in Franeker. Ron Gleason notes that during his time as pastor, Bavinck focused himself on ethics as well as dogmatics when he had time to study outside of sermon preparation, catechism classes, and consistory meetings.²¹ From a letter Bavinck wrote to his lifelong friend, Snouck Hurgronje, we find that the focus of Bavinck's studies increasingly narrowed to the study of ethics during this time.²²

During the years of Bavinck's professorate at Kampen, it should be pointed out that Bavinck spent a great deal of his time not only on his work on dogmatics, but also on his work on ethics.²³

²⁰ Herman Bavinck, "Het geweten", *De vrije Kerk* 7 (1881): 27-37, 49-58.

²¹ Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 89.

²² Bavinck to Snouck Hurgronje, 23 September 1881, in De Bruijn and Harinck, eds., *Een Leidse Vriendschap* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1999), 93.

²³ R. H. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus* (Kampen, 1961), 52. Bavinck dealt with a number of ethical issues related to Christian life: Herman Bavinck, "De huishouding Gods", Pts.1 and 2, *De Vrije Kerk* 9, no. 5 (May 1883): 239-42; "De hedendaagsche wereldbeschouwing", *De Vrije Kerk* 9, no.10 (October 1883): 435-61; *De Theologie van Prof. Dr. Daniël Chantepie De La Saussaye: Bijdrage tot de Kennis der Ethische Theologie* (Leiden: D. Donner, 1884); "The Imitation of Christ", ("De Navolging van Christus, I, II, III", in *De Vrije Kerk* 11 (1885): 101-13, 203-13; 12 (1886): 321-33) in Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2013), 372-401; "Een Christelijk gymnasium", *De Bazuin* 33, no. 21 (1885); "Het Christelijk gymnasium", *De Bazuin* 35, no. 41 (1887); "General Biblical Principles and the Relevance of Concrete Mosaic Law for the Social Question Today (1891)", trans. John Bolt, in *Journal of Markets and Morality* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 437-46; *De Algemeene Genade, Rede gehouden bij de overdracht van het Rectoraat aan de Theologische School te Kampen op 6 Dec. 1894* (Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 1894); "Calvin and Common Grace", trans. Ray Van Leeuwen, in *Calvin Theological Journal* 24 (1989): 35-65; "Eene belangrijke apologie van de Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing", *Theologische Studiën* 12 (1894): 142-52; *Opleiding en Theologie* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1896); *Beginselen der Psychologie* (Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1897); *Bede en rede: Ter inleiding van*

He also expounded on the weaknesses of the so-called ethical theology of his time, which was exemplified by Albrecht Ritschl and Daniel Chantipie de la Saussaye.²⁴ In particular, Bolt notes that one prominent feature of Bavinck's writing during the period from 1880 to 1892/3 is concern for the ethical dimension of the Christian faith and the ethical implications of theology.²⁵ According to lifelong friend Henry Elias Dosker, Bavinck lectured on a wide variety of subjects during his tenure at Kampen, including dogmatics, the history of philosophy, encyclopedia, psychology, rhetoric, logic, aesthetics, and in particular ethics.²⁶ With

de jaarvergadering van de V ereeniging voor Hooger Onderwijs op Geref. grondslag, gehouden te Zwolle op 6 en 7 Juli 1898 (Kampen: J. H.B os [Zalsman], 1898); "Ter toelichting en verdediging der psychologie", Pts. 1-8. *Christelijk Schoolblad* 2 Juni to 21 Juli. (1899); "Theological School." *The Trumpet* 47, no. 34 (1899); "Kennis en leven", Pts. 1-15. *De Bazuin* 48, nos. 3-20 (1900); "Ouders of getuigen", Pts. 1-20. *De Bazuin* 48-49, nos. 35-50 (1900); 2-8 (1901); "De hoogeschool te Genève", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 7 (1900); "De vrije school", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 8 (1900); "Stemrecht der vrouw", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 9 (1900); "De oorlog", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 22 (1900); "Leven en dood", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 32 (1900); "Op reis", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 35 (1900); "Bevoorrecht Nederland", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 35 (1900); "Moderne kunst", *De Bazuin* 48, no. 38 (1900); *Schepping of Ontwikkeling: Lezing, gehouden te Arnhem, Zutphen, Amsterdam en Haarlem*, 1901. (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1901); "Schepping of ontwikkeling", *Tijdschrift voor Gereformeerde Theologie* 8, no. 5 (1901): 217-57; "Feminisme", *De Bazuin* 49 no. 11 (1901); "Onkerkelijkheid", *De Bazuin* 49, no.11 (1901); "Werk of genade", *De Bazuin* 49, no. 18 (1901); "Woord en daad", *De Bazuin* 49, no. 23 (1901); "Middelbaar onderwijs", *De Bazuin* 49, no. 33 (1901); *Hedendaagsche Moraal* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1902).

24 Herman Bavinck, *De theologie van Prof. Dr. Daniël Chantipie de la Saussaye: Bijdrage tot de kennis der ethische theologie* (Leiden: Donner, 1884); id., "De theologie van Albrecht Ritschl", *Theologische Studiën* 6 (1888): 369-403.

25 Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 98.

26 Henry Elias Dosker, "Herman Bavinck: A Eulogy by Henry Elias Dosker", in Herman Bavinck, *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*, ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 17. Originally

respect to the breadth of topics covered by Bavinck's writings, Dosker comments that "the undermanned condition of the seminary was responsible for this multiplicity of labors and variety of subjects."²⁷ From another angle, Gleason singles out Bavinck's lectures on *Reformed Ethics* as one of the reasons that Bavinck made the decision to decline a third appointment to the Free University, the other reasons being "his church setting", "his preparation for the writing of his Dogmatics," and "the love his students had for him."²⁸ For Bavinck, his ethics may have overtaken the studies he had carried out up to that point as the predominant focus of his whole theology.

However, the fact that Bavinck was employed in Kampen to lecture on ethics is often overlooked, regardless of its importance to Bavinck's whole theology. Accordingly, it can be argued that without a careful account of his thoughts on ethics, Bavinck's theology as a whole cannot be properly understood. In this regard, James Eglinton's comments are especially noteworthy: "[T]he pietistic Calvinism of his parents, the weak account of human agency taught by his Leiden professors, his doctoral studies in Christian ethics and his own writings on ethics all contribute to a somewhat ignored picture of Bavinck as ethicist."²⁹

Some might still argue that ethics is not the one of major themes in Bavinck's theology because his *Reformed Ethics* has never ap-

published in the *Princeton Theological Review* 20 (1922), 454.

²⁷ Dosker, "Herman Bavinck", 17, 18.

²⁸ Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 134.

²⁹ James Eglinton, "On Bavinck's Theology of Sanctification-as-Ethics", in *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice*, ed. Kelly M. Kopic (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2014), 169.

peared in his own separate volume. Although it is true that Bavinck did not publish his own *Reformed Ethics*, it is not the case that Bavinck lacked keenness for the subject. During Bavinck's tenure in Kampen, Bavinck not only wrote his magnum opus, *Reformed Dogmatics*, but was concurrently also concentrating on his lectures on ethics. Bavinck's manuscript of *Reformed Ethics* discovered by Dirk van Keulen makes reference to Bavinck's lectures on ethics during 1884-86 and 1894-95.³⁰ This means that Bavinck was delivering his lectures on ethics from the time of his first year of tenure in Kampen (1883-1884). Moreover, during Bavinck's time in Amsterdam, it is apparent that Bavinck consistently made important contributions to Reformed ethics with his numerous writings not only on general areas of ethics but also on specific ethical issues.³¹

³⁰ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 28, 29.

³¹ *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing*, Rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam op 20 October 1904 (Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1904); *Christelijke Wetenschap* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1904); *Paedagogische Beginselen* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1904); *De toekomst van het Christelijk onderwijs*, Rapport en advies door het bestuur van de Vereeniging voor Gereformeerd Schoolonderwijs aangeboden aan de eerstkomende Algemeene Vergadering (Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1904); "Wat is wijsbegeerte?" Pts. 1-6. in *De School met den Bijbel* 1 (1904): 38-46; Foreword to *Ongeloof en Revolutie: eene reeks van historische voorlezingen*, 3rd ed. (Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1904); "Paedagogische beginselen", Pts. 1 and 2. *De School met den Bijbel* 2 (1905), 7-8; "Paedagogiek als wetenschap", Pts. 1-17. *De School met den Bijbel* 2 (1905): 11-46; "Gedachten van Bilderdijk over onderwijs en opvoeding", Pts. 1-3. *De School met den Bijbel* 3 (1906), 37-39; "Godsdienstonderwijs." Pts. 1-10. *De School met den Bijbel* 3 (1906), nos. 6,8,10,12,17,18,19,21,22,25; *Evolutie: Pro en Contra, Betreffende Vraagstukken van Algemeen Belang* 3, no. 3 (Baarn: Hollandia-drukkerij, 1907); "Godsvrucht en wetenschap", *De School met den Bijbel* 4, no. 26 (1907); "De paedagogische periode", *De School met den Bijbel* 4, (1907), 33; *Het Christelijk Huisgezin* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1908); "Christian Principles and Social Relationships", ("Christelijke Beginselen en

Maatschappelijke Verhoudingen” in the series *Christendom en Maatschappij*, series 1, vol. 1 (Utrecht: J. A. Ruys, 1908): 121-50) in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*, ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library, 2012), 119-43; Foreword to *Christendom en opvoeding* (Baarn: Hollandia-Drukkerij, 1908), 3-32; “Psychologie der religie”, in *Verslagen en mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van wetenschappen, Afdeling letterkundes* 4, vol. 9 (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1909), 147-76; “Richtingen in de psychologie”, *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift* (Orgaan der Vereeniging voor Paedagogiek) 1 (1909): 4-15; “Psychologie van het kind”, Verslag van de rede, gehouden op de jaarvergadering der Vereeniging voor Christelijk Nationaal Schoolonderwijs, *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift* 1 (1909): 105-17; *The Philosophy of Revelation*, The Stone Lectures for 1908-1909, Princeton Theological Seminary, trans. Henry E. Dosker, Nicholas M. Steffens, and Geerhardus Vos (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909); *Modernisme en orthodoxie*, Rede gehouden bij de Overdracht van het Rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit op 20 Oct. 1911 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1911); “Bijbelsche psychologie”, Pts. 1-24. *Orgaan van het Gereformeerd Schoolverband* (4 Jan. 1912-5 Maart 1914); *Evangelisatie: Christendom en Maatschappij*, vol. 5, no. 9 (Utrecht: Ruys, 1913); “Richtingen in de paedagogiek”, in *Handelingen van het Nationaal Christelijk Schoolcongres*, gehouden op 9, 10, 11 October 1913 te Utrecht, 61-66 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1913); “Kinderstudie”, Pts. 1-3. *Paedagogisch tijdschrift: Orgaan der Vereeniging voor Paedagogiek* 5 (1913): 241-52; 289-99; 6 (1914): 1-17; “Christendom en natuurwetenschap”, *Stemmen des Tijds* 2 (1913): 343-77; “On Inequality”, (“Over de ongelijkheid” in *Stemmen des tijds* 2 (1913):17-43) in *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library, 2012), 145-63; *Het probleem van den oorlog* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1914); *De opleiding van den onderwijzer*, Voor onderwijs en opvoeding, no. 9; Rapport voor de Algemeene Vergadering van “Gereformeerd Schoolverband”, (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1914); “Van schoonheid en schoonheidsleer”, in *Almanak van het Studentencorps aan de Vrije Universiteit (NDDD)*, (Amsterdam: Herdes, 1914), 121-43; “Religieuze psychologie”, Pts. 1-50. *Orgaan van het Gereformeerd Schoolverband* (11 Juni 1914-22 April 1920); “Kinderstudie”, Pt. 3. *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift* 6 (1914): 1-17; Verslag van acht lezingen gehouden in het kader van de Vacantie-cursus, georganiseerd door het hoofdbestuur der Vereeniging van Christelijke Onderwijzers en Onderwijzeressen in Nederland en Overzeesche Bezittingen, van 26 tot 31 Juli 1915 te Amsterdam. *De School met den Bijbel* 13, nrs. 5-13 (1915); “Verslag van rede op de vergadering der Vereeniging van Christelijke Onderwijzers over ‘Individualisme en Individualiteit,’” *De School met den Bijbel* 12, no. 49 (1915); *De Opvoeding*

Considering the evidence hitherto examined, it seems to follow that, throughout his whole theological career, Bavinck continued to deal with ethics as a matter of significance. Furthermore, based on the new discovery of Bavinck's manuscript on Reformed ethics, it can be argued that Bavinck wrote his *Reformed Ethics* manuscript at the same time as *Reformed Dogmatics*, rather than afterwards. As a result, unpublished manuscripts of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* should be examined in order to gain more precise knowledge of his thoughts on ethics, and, as such, are worthy to be treated in the following section.

der Rijpere Jeugd (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1916); *De overwinning der ziel*, Rede uitgesproken in de Algemeene Vergadering van het achtste Nederlandsche Philologencongres te Utrecht, 26 April 1916 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1916); "Ethiek en politiek", *Stemmen des Tijds* 5, no. 2 (1916): 32-56, 96; "Individualisme en individualiteit van het kind", *Correspondentieblad van de Vereeniging van Christelijke Onderwijzers en Onderwijzeressen in Nederland en de Overzeesche bezittingen* (1916): 64-72; *De Nieuwe Opvoeding* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1917); Foreword to *De ethische richting: eene studie* (Rotterdam: Libertas, 1917); Foreword to *Opvoedkunde voor het huisgezin* (Nijverdal: E. J. Bosch Jbzn, 1917); *De Vrouw in de Hedendaagsche Maatschappij* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1918); "De navolging van Christus en het moderne leven", *Schild en Pijl* 1, no. 3 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1918); "Klassieke opleiding", Pts. 1-2. *Stemmen des Tijds* 7 (1918): 46-65; 113-47; "De beroepsarbeid der gehuwde vrouw", in *Proces verbaal van het Tweede Christelijk Sociaal Congres*, gehouden te Amsterdam op 10-13 Maart 1919 (Rotterdam: Libertas, 1919): 206-25; "De opvoeding der vrouw", *Onze jonge Meisjes* 25 (1919); "Christelijke jeugdarbeid", Pts. 1-8. *Leidersblad Bond voor Gereformeerde Jeugd Organisatie* 3, nos. 4-6 (1919); 4, nos 1-5 (1920); "Christendom, oorlog, volkenbond", *Stemmen des Tijds* 9, no.1 (November 1919): 1-26; 9, no. 2 (December 1919): 105-33; *Bijbelsche en Religieuze Psychologie* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1920); *Christendom, Oorlog, Volkenbond* (Utrecht: Ruys, 1920); "Individuele en sociale opvoeding", Pts. 1-4. *Orgaan van het Gereformeerd Schoolverband* (20 Mei-18 Nov.1920).

3. Recent Discovery of Unpublished Manuscripts of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*

Recent attention by Bavinck scholars has been focused on the International Herman Bavinck Conference at Calvin College surrounding the presentation of Bavinck's unpublished manuscript of *Reformed Ethics*. At this conference, Van Keulen demonstrated that in the Bavinck archives, there are several documents that Bavinck used for his lectures on ethics, such as "a small lecture notebook", "an extensive manuscript entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek (Reformed Ethics)*," and several manuscripts made by his students.³² According to Van Keulen, these documents have been severely damaged: "Many pages have been torn from each other, and the paper is crumbling. Furthermore, the manuscript is not finished."³³ However, it is noteworthy that some of the documents had been written by Bavinck himself, whereas evidently, other documents had been compiled by students of his ethics classes during the Kampen years.

When it comes to the manuscripts created by his students, it seems clear that 'the Van der Veen manuscript' and 'the Lindeboom manuscript' offer corroborating evidence indicating that Bavinck used his *Reformed Ethics* manuscript from 1884-1886 during his academic years and in 1894-1895 for his ethics class

³² Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Ethiek*, in Bavinck Archives, box 13/32: no. 186. Cited from Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 26. Van Keulen offers several manuscripts recorded by his students on his teaching of ethics: 'the Van der Veen manuscript' (1884-86), 'the Lindeboom manuscript' (1895), 'the De Jong manuscript' (1902).

³³ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 26.

s.³⁴ A comparison of two manuscripts suggests that Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* manuscript can be dated to the first years of Bavinck's professorate at Kampen (1883-1884). On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that the four volumes of Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* were published in 1895, 1897, 1898 and 1901. From this standpoint, Van Keulen strongly argues that "Herman Bavinck was not only interested in dogmatics, but also in ethics."³⁵ Thus, with regards to this point at least, one can conclude that Bavinck's time in Kampen was aimed at both dogmatics and ethics.

In addition to this, there exists a similarity between the manuscripts of Van der Veen and Lindeboom and Bavinck's own manuscript of *Reformed Ethics* in terms of their composition. According to Van Keulen, the outline of Bavinck's Reformed Ethics class was arranged into ten sections:

1. Sin; 2. Man as a moral creature; 3. Election (foundation of Christian life); 4. Faith (source and principle of Christian life); 5. Penance (origin of Christian life); 6. Law (rule of Christian

³⁴ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 28, 29. The first manuscript was discovered in Archive 176 of the Historical Documentation Centre, Free University, Amsterdam. This document entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek* was created by Reinder Jan van der Veen (1863-1942), who studied theology at Kampen from September 1878 until July 1886. The second manuscript is entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek-Dictaat van Prof. Bavinck*, which was widely known as "Dictaat" and was stored at the Kampen library archives. The third handwritten manuscript is entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek van Profess. Dr. H. Bavinck*, was made by Jelle Michiels de Jong (1874-1927), who began studying theology at Kampen in September 1901. In 1903, De Jong followed Bavinck to the Free University to continue his studies, as cited from Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 25-30, 44.

³⁵ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 53.

life); 7. Freedom (privilege of Christian life); 8. The altruistic character of Christian life; 9. The relationship between Christian and civil life; 10. The Christian life in community.³⁶

This similarity of structure between Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* manuscript and the Van der Veen and Lindeboom manuscripts, all of which are composed in a complete and grammatically precise manner, lend support to the credibility of its content. In this sense, it can be said that Van Keulen's discovery opens the way for further analysis of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*. In his article, 'Herman Bavinck on the Imitation of Christ', Van Keulen confidently states that "[it] would be a biased opinion to consider Bavinck only as a Reformed dogmatician. He has presented himself as an ethicist as well."³⁷

Furthermore, with respect to the relationship between Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics*, Van Keulen's study proposes that Bavinck's ethics must share the spotlight with his dogmatics for a proper understanding of his theology. Van Keulen makes several interesting points about the similarity between Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics*. First, there is a structural point of similarity between the two works. In his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck starts with an introduction of theology and its method of organization, which is then followed by a chapter on the history and literature of dogmatics.³⁸ Likewise, the manuscript of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* begins in a similar

³⁶ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 25, 26.

³⁷ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck on the Imitation of Christ", 79.

³⁸ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:25-204.

fashion, but with the topics in reverse order: an outline of the history of Reformed ethics, its literature, terminology, organization, and methodology.³⁹ Second, Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* resembles his *Reformed Dogmatics* in terms of method.⁴⁰ The threefold method that Bavinck provides in *Reformed Ethics* looks exactly the same as it does in *Reformed Dogmatics*. The three methodological steps he gives are as follows: (1) collecting and systematizing biblical data, (2) describing how these data have been adopted in the church, and (3) developing these data normatively with a view to the present.⁴¹ According to Van Keulen's observation, first, Bavinck deals with the ethical frameworks of several other Protestant theologians. Then, he comments on the ethical formulations of these theologians and selects a similar, traditional structure for his own formulation. Finally, he develops his ethical framework in relation to his own times. Based on his examination of the parallels between *Reformed Dogmatics* and *Reformed Ethics*, Van Keulen states that "the careful division of the subject matter between dogmatics and ethics shows that his *Reformed Ethics* was intended as a companion to his *Reformed Dogmatics*."⁴²

Particularly, Van Keulen points out that in terms of terminology, it appears that Bavinck prefers the term "ethics" to "morality." For Bavinck, the task of ethics was, Van Keulen adds, "to describe the birth, growth and revelation of spiritual life in reborn man."⁴³

³⁹ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 32.

⁴⁰ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 34.

⁴¹ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 34.

⁴² Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 42.

⁴³ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 32.

In accordance with his understanding human destiny in relation to ethics, Bavinck seems to have organized the structure of *Reformed Ethics* into three parts: (1) man before conversion, (2) man in the conversion, and (3) man after conversion. Then, Bavinck added a fourth part: “the social spheres in which moral life has to reveal itself.”⁴⁴ Based on earlier observations about Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics* manuscript, Van Keulen comments that this form of composition gives the impression that Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics* is entirely dogmatic in character. In this sense, for Bavinck, dogmatics preceded ethics, and ethics was completely dependent on dogmatics.

Among other manuscripts, the De Jong manuscript also provides new information about Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics*. That manuscript is divided into two parts: philosophical ethics and theological ethics.⁴⁵ In the first part, Bavinck provides an overview of the history of philosophical ethics by describing and analyzing six philosophical systems for ‘within man’ and nine philosophical systems for ‘outside of man’, which seek the principles and the norms for ethics.⁴⁶ According to Bavinck, Aristotle’s ethics is basi-

⁴⁴ Van Keulen, “Herman Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics*”, 35.

⁴⁵ Van Keulen, “Herman Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics*”, 46.

⁴⁶ Van Keulen, “Herman Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics*”, 47: Van Keulen explains that the philosophical systems analyzed by Bavinck as the principle and the norm for ethics *in man itself* is as follows: “(1) the rational ethics of classical Greek philosophy, (2) the ethics of a special moral faculty, a *semen virtutis* or moral sense (Ralph Cudworth, Henry More, Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson), (3) the ethics of moral sentiment (Adam Smith), (4) the ethics of aesthetic formalism (Johann Friedrich Herbart), (5) the ethics of practical reason (Immanuel Kant), and (6) the ethics of intuitive cognition (Thomas Reid).” According to Van Keulen, the philosophical systems analyzed by Bavinck as the principle and the norm for ethics *outside of man* is as follows: “(1) in God,

cally the best philosophical system of ethics out of those that lack the notion that man can achieve the ethical ideal by his own strength, in accordance with his own moral nature.⁴⁷ In addition, Bavinck desperately opposes the ethics of evolutionism, which were put forth by Darwin. On the other hand, in the second part of the manuscript, Bavinck examines theological ethics over three chapters: “The doctrine of the moral subject,”⁴⁸ “The doctrine of the law,”⁴⁹ and “The purpose of morality.”⁵⁰

In his overview to the comparison between Bavinck's *Reformed*

(2) in nature (Heraclitus, Stoa, Tolstoy), (3) in the government (Thomas Hobbes), (4) Hedonism (Aristippus), (5) Eudemonism (Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius), (6) the ethics of self-improvement (Spinoza), (7) Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill), (8) the ethics of Evolutionism (Charles Darwin, John Spencer), and (9) Positivism (Auguste Comte).” In addition, Bavinck discusses ‘the despair of all morality or pessimism’ (Eduard von Hartmann, Arthur Schopenhauer).

47 Van Keulen, “Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*”, 48.

48 Van Keulen, “Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*”, 50: The first chapter regarding *the doctrine of the moral subject* consists of the following: “(1) man as the image of God, (2) the disturbance of the image of God by sin, (3) man's moral nature in the state of sin, (4) man as a moral creature, (5) the moral capacities of man, (6) the moral acts of man, (7) the insufficiency of natural morality, (8) special grace, (9) spiritual life, (10) the development of spiritual life, (11) the relationship between spiritual and moral life, and (12) special gifts.”

49 Van Keulen, “Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*”, 51: The second chapter regarding *the doctrine of the law* consists of as the following: “(1) the law as the rule of gratitude, (2) the nature of law, (3) the division of law, (4) the breaching of law (i.e. a detailed doctrine of sin), and (5) ten sections on the Ten Commandments.”

50 Van Keulen, “Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*”, 51: The third chapter regarding the purpose of morality consists of the following: “(1) the purpose of morality in general, (2) the honor of God, (3) the purpose of morality with regard to individual man, (4) the purpose of morality with regard to families (i.e. the Christian family), (5) moral good in society, (6) moral good in company (including art, science and education), (7) moral good in the nation, (8) the church seen from a moral point of view, and (9) the kingdom of God.”

Ethics manuscript and the De Jong manuscript, Van Keulen offers several characteristics of the two, considering both their similarities and differences. The similarities maintain that Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* starts with the doctrine of creation, especially regarding man as being the image of God, and ends with the kingdom of God. The biggest difference between Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* and the De Jong manuscript concerns the existence of a section of philosophical ethics. In his *Reformed Ethics*, Bavinck hardly pays attention to philosophical ethics; however, in the De Jong manuscript, the entire first section is devoted to it. In Van Keulen's comparison of all the manuscripts, Bavinck's interest in philosophical issues might have increased during his years at Kampen. Van Keulen argues that at a minimum, in 1902, philosophy became Bavinck's serious discussion partner.⁵¹ Another difference between the two manuscripts is related to the title of the main section and the composition of the manuscripts; however, most of the contents of the compositions do correspond to each other.

Having noted that two manuscripts by Bavinck's students provide corroborating evidence for Bavinck's work on *Reformed Dogmatics* during his academic years of 1884-1886 and 1894-1895, Van Keulen strongly contends that Bavinck devoted himself to preparing and giving lectures on ethics while at the same time writing his *Reformed Dogmatics*. He also asserts that there is a close relationship between Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics*, pointing out the similarities

51 Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*", 55.

between the two works in terms of their structure and methodology. Based on these observations, it can be said that Van Keulen's discovery provides supportive evidence of Bavinck's identity as an ethicist. In what follows, we will explore Bavinck's two essays on the imitation of Christ in order to ferret out the core of Bavinck's thoughts on ethics.

4. Bavinck's First Essay: *The Imitation of Christ* (1885)

Five years after completing his doctoral study, at the beginning of his career in 1885-1886, Bavinck wrote a significant essay on the imitation of Christ, and he also wrote an essay on the same theme three years before he died in 1918.⁵² Bolt points out that Bavinck's original interest in the imitation of Christ theme can be found in the title of the sixth chapter of his dissertation: "The Guiding Norm of the Christian Life: The Law and the Example of Christ."⁵³ Bavinck considers the imitation of Christ to be "the heart of spiritual life."⁵⁴

This first essay provides a superb historical overview of the

⁵² Bavinck, "The Imitation of Christ", ("De navolging van Christus, I, II, III", in *De Vrije Kerk* 11 (1885): 101-13, 203-13; 12 (1886): 321-33); "The Imitation of Christ and Life in the Modern World", ("De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", in *Schild en Pijl* 1, no. 3 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1918) in Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2013), 372-401, 402-40.

⁵³ Bavinck, *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli*, 75-88. Cited from John Bolt, "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck", in *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993): 49, 50.

⁵⁴ Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen", 38.

imitation of Christ theme in the Christian Church. According to Bolt, Bavinck's first treatment of this theme was written due to "a concern about the relative isolation of the *Afscheiding* church and its failure to participate in the public, cultural, political, theological, educational, and scientific struggles of the Dutch nation."⁵⁵ Bolt maintains that Bavinck's deep-rooted commitment to and love for the CRC must have been a source of his continual contributions, which consisted of approximately twenty articles spanning thirteen years, from 1880 to 1893.⁵⁶ In his first essay on the imitation of Christ, Bavinck identifies several significant areas of this practice.

First of all, Bavinck presents the life of self-denial and cross-bearing as being a true form of the imitation of Christ. In particular, Bavinck notes the genuine imitation of the early Church and references the description in the *Epistle to Diognetus* of the lifestyle among early Christian congregations as a representative portrayal of such. Bolt writes, "He [Bavinck] is especially appreciative of the distinctive, self-denying, cross-bearing life-style of the early church."⁵⁷ In addition, Bavinck also considers the Waldensians as true Christians in terms of pious imitation.

⁵⁵ Bolt, "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck", 56. Furthermore, Bolt offers five important themes in Bavinck's published writings from 1880 to 1893: the relation between Christian faith and ethics; the nature of theology as science; the kingdom of God and the Church; and the doctrine of the Trinity, creation, and law. For more detailed and invaluable comments, see Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 98-114.

⁵⁶ Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 81.

⁵⁷ Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 92.

Bavinck writes, "It is important for our discussion to note the imitation of Christ is of utmost significance for all these sects, especially for the Waldensiate."⁵⁸ In Bavinck's judgment, however, there have been several misunderstandings of the imitation of Christ theme. He writes, "As in many other aspects of Christian doctrine and practice, the history of the imitation of Christ is a history filled with error and misconception."⁵⁹ Bavinck singles out the four main types of false imitation, as described below.

First, Bavinck discusses the erroneous glorification of martyrdom as a deviation from the true imitation of Christ. Referencing persecutions of Christianity by the Roman State owing to the claim by the Christian church that Christianity was the only true religion, Bavinck does esteem the martyrdom of the early Christians highly:

The martyrs were the body-guards of the Christian army, the impenetrable column against which the power and fury of the enemy was ineffectually hurled. The Christians were killed but their dying was life and their defeat was triumph; their death-days were regarded and remembered as birth-days.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, Bavinck rejects a misguided glorification of martyrdom, which became considered as a matter of glory and fame for its own sake. Bavinck criticizes the fact that "those martyrs who actually sought the glory of martyrdom as the purest way

⁵⁸ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus", 206.

⁵⁹ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus", 101.

⁶⁰ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus", 105.

to imitate Christ forgot that what made one a true witness was not martyrdom itself but the cause for which a martyr died.”⁶¹ For Bavinck, this glorification of martyrdom was the result of an infusion of the pagan notion that “fame is the highest good.”⁶²

A second aspect of the imitation of Christ rejected by Bavinck deals with monasticism. According to Bavinck, while the ideal of martyrdom was to imitate the final suffering and passion of Christ, the monk understood the meaning of the imitation of Christ as a simple repetition and copying of the entire life and life style of Jesus Christ. In this regard, Bavinck notes, “Disdaining marriage and possessions, monks either wandered through the land or isolated themselves in lonely places to spend their lives in prayer and fasting.”⁶³ Bavinck asks, “Why did so many members of the noblest and highest levels of society desire the lonely life of hermit or monk?”⁶⁴ In Bavinck’s judgement, their motivation to flee to the world and to live in loneliness resulted from a desire to “find improved fellowship with God in loneliness, to increase the effectiveness of the struggle with sin and to cleanse it from their hearts.”⁶⁵ However, Bavinck argues that monasticism gave rise to two serious problems. He says, “It [monasticism] promoted pride and trust in good works among those striving for perfection, and a complacent indifference to the ideals of holiness in the practical daily lives of ordinary people.”⁶⁶ Bavinck makes an assessment

61 Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 321.

62 Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 106.

63 Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 322.

64 Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 110.

65 Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 111.

66 Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 112.

that “it is all too possible for someone outwardly to be Christ-like yet inwardly very unChrist-like, to appear to be one with him while actually very far from him.” Bavinck adds, “The essence of the imitation of Christ is lost in a number of external and obvious deeds which repeat those of Jesus.”⁶⁷

Third, Bavinck singles out medieval mysticism in a negative sense because of its externalism—in particular its excessive focus on and misuse of the suffering of Christ through its physical manifestation. According to Bavinck’s survey, there have been no less than sixty or seventy phenomena such as the tears, and nail wounds of Jesus Christ, so-called stigmata, especially in the Roman Catholic Church. It should be noted that Bavinck does not underestimate the phenomenon of stigmatism. Bavinck recognizes that “the condition of our spirit often comes to expression in bodily phenomena, some temporary and others permanent.”⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it is clear that Bavinck does not consider mysticism to be a true form of the imitation of Christ. Bavinck writes, “[P]ious the motives of this mysticism may have been, it is clearly one-sided. Indeed a genuine, hidden, mystical union of the soul with Jesus, his suffering and his glorification, is clearly attested by Scripture (cf. Rom. 8:17).”⁶⁹ Regarding the excessive attention paid by Christian meditation and contemplation to the suffering of Jesus, Bavinck clearly states that “there is no legitimate contemplation that goes beyond mediation and is characterized by the entry of the soul into heaven itself” aside from passages such as

⁶⁷ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 322.

⁶⁸ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 212.

⁶⁹ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 323.

Psalms 19:15; 49:4; 77:3; and Luke 2:19.⁷⁰ Bavinck maintains that this illegitimate mysticism should be prohibited because Christians live by faith and not by sight (1 Cor. 13:12, 2 Cor. 5:7).⁷¹

Bavinck also warns of the dangers of pantheistic tendencies in mysticism:

It [the illegitimate mysticism] regards the mind and will as barriers to full communication with God and attempts to transcend them in order to have an immediate experience of and fellowship with God apart from normal human consciousness, understanding and willing.⁷²

Bavinck highlights that “all forms of mediation between God and man, such as human understanding and will, the word of God, Christ himself, and even consciousness and will in God himself, must be set aside.”⁷³ For Bavinck, medieval mysticism was an attempt to take Christ’s position as mediator between God and humanity. However, for Bavinck, Jesus Christ did not merely accomplish atonement for sin through complete obedience but also became the example of mystical union with God. Therefore, Bavinck argues that medieval mysticism is one-sided because it overlooks the aspects of the imitation of Christ that are related to human renewal and sanctification by following Jesus.

The fourth type of false imitation that Bavinck considers is

⁷⁰ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 323.

⁷¹ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 323.

⁷² Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 324.

⁷³ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 324.

rationalism. From the point of view of a rationalist, Jesus came in order to be only an example of the ideal moral humanity. Bavinck argues that “only when we know and experience him as Redeemer, as the one whose suffering covers our guilt and whose Spirit fulfills the law of God in us, only then do we dare to look at him and consider him our example.”⁷⁴ According to Bavinck, however, it seems that modern man needs less of an example, if the historical Jesus is emphasized in terms of being a mere example without consideration for Christ’s reconciliation between God and humanity through his death on the cross. Within this point of view, Bavinck presents the rationalist concept in a negative light. Bavinck concludes his essay on the imitation of Christ by referencing the teaching of Scripture. What, then, are the keys that Scripture speaks of regarding the imitation of Christ, according to Bavinck?

Above all, Bavinck argues, “[T]his mystical union, this spiritual, living, communion with Christ is the primary element of the imitation of Christ.”⁷⁵ Bavinck insists that the imitation of Christ does not consist of simply copying or mirroring Christ outwardly. Instead, it means being holy (Lev. 19:2; 1 Peter 1:14-16), perfect (Mt. 5:48), and merciful (Luke 6:36; Eph. 4:32) as His children and His image (Eph. 5:1).⁷⁶ Bavinck highlights that Christians are incorporated into a living fellowship with Christ by means of baptism, according to the apostle Paul (Gal. 2:20; 3:28; 2 Cor. 13:15; Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:11; Phil. 1:8, 21). The imitation of this

⁷⁴ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 325, 326.

⁷⁵ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 328.

⁷⁶ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus”, 327.

living relationship with Christ is followed by suffering. Bavinck notes,

He [Paul] regarded his afflictions as a completion of what was lacking in Christ's suffering (Col. 1:24), and the marks on his body as the marks of Jesus, a sign of his communion with him (Gal. 6:17). Christ's suffering is shared by his followers (2 Cor. 1:5) and their sharing in Christ's suffering makes them like him (Phil. 3:10).⁷⁷

Bavinck maintains that Jesus had in mind this fellowship in suffering when he mentioned following him in relation to 'the double demand' of self-denial and cross bearing. In order to participate in a living fellowship with Christ, Christians are called to renounce many of the pleasures and possessions of the world. Bavinck writes,

The rich young ruler had to sell all his possessions (Mt. 19:21), the disciples were called to leave their ships and nets behind (Luke 5:11), and Matthew had to give up his tax-office (Matt. 9:9), and even one's father, mother, wife and children, the world, and one's own life (Mt. 16:25; Luke 14:26).⁷⁸

However, it should be noted that Bavinck clarifies that Christians' suffering in the imitation of Christ is suffering in a

⁷⁷ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus", 329.

⁷⁸ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus", 328, 329.

general sense, as opposed to a genuine reproduction of the suffering of Christ himself. This is because the suffering of Christ is due to our sin, and only Christ can suffer for our sin. In this sense, Christ's suffering is unique. Furthermore, Bavinck underscores the fact that the imitation of Christ is not only a sharing in his suffering but also a sharing in his glory. "Fellowship with Christ is his death is also fellowship in his resurrection and ascension (Rom. 6:5, 8; Eph. 2:6), in his life and glory (Col. 3:4)."⁷⁹

Bavinck states that the imitation of Christ involves a life which conforms to the law of God. A life of obeying God's word is a direct result and a specific expression of fellowship with Christ. In this sense, for Bavinck, the realm of the ethical is fundamentally rooted in the mystical union with Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus can be our example, and thus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to follow in his footsteps and walk in the way in which he walked, on the basis of the union with Christ.⁸⁰ In his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck is convinced that all the benefits of the covenant presuppose the objective mystical union with Christ.⁸¹ Ronald Gleason insists that the mystical union with Christ is a central theme of Bavinck's theology in his dissertation, *The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck*.⁸² In a similar line of thought, in his book *Being in Christ*, Hans Burger also elucidates the notion

⁷⁹ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus", 330.

⁸⁰ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus", 331.

⁸¹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:122-3.

⁸² Ronald N. Gleason, *The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck* (ThD. diss., PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 2001), 1, 38, 45.

of Bavinck's mystical union in detail.⁸³ For Bavinck, the imitation

⁸³ Hans Burger comments that Bavinck uses the concept of mystical union in different contexts : “the context of God’s councils, of religion in general, of Christology, and of the Trinity.” Hans Burger, *Being in Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Investigation in a Reformed Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 101. I will offer Burger’s exploration of Bavinck’s mystical union with Christ. It is as follows: First of all, Burger underlines that Bavinck uses the concept of mystical union between Christ and his people in the pact of salvation. According to Burger, Bavinck argues that the union between Christ and those who were given him was already concluded in the pact of salvation. In the divine decree, the mystical union was concluded between Christ and man, and Christ became a human being to achieve the work of substitutionary atonement in the eternal counsel of the Triune God. This means that the mystical union in the pact of salvation is the presupposition of restoration and the perfection of the image of God. Second, based on a mystical union of God and humans, Burger emphasizes that, for Bavinck, a human being can be a partaker of the divine nature as the image of God. The mystical union enables humanity to commune with God. In a similar vein, Calvin comments that there is no participation in the benefits of Christ other than by communion with his person. Third, Burger maintains that in Bavinck’s theology that Christ, as the head and mediator based on the mystical union with humanity, acquired for humanity the restoration of the relationship between God and humanity. In his person of Christ, God and man united. Thus, Bavinck highlights that the entire life of Christ is important for both human salvation and the lives of believers. Fourth, in Burger’s judgment, Bavinck regards the mystical union with Christ through the Holy Spirit as important to humanity in a Trinitarian context. Following the Reformed tradition, Bavinck maintains that Christ should be considered to be the mediator of both the acquisition and application of our salvation. Bavinck declares that the application of salvation is comprehended in the acquisition of salvation and is its “necessary development.” For Bavinck, the application of salvation is clearly distinct from its acquisition. Christ accomplished the acquisition of salvation on earth “by his suffering and death”, and he accomplishes the application of salvation from heaven “by his prophetic, priestly, and royal activity” through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, there is no subjective union with Christ if not by the Holy Spirit’s application of salvation, even though by incarnation the Son restores the relationship with God the Father. Thus, for Bavinck, Burger stresses that it is true that human beings can become the true image of God only with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In this respect, Bavinck maintains that, importantly, mystical union is rooted in the Trinity, the essence of the Triune God, and the economy of Him. For a detailed examination of Bavinck’s

of Christ stands on the firm foundation of the mystical union with Christ. Now that an introduction to Bavinck's concept of the imitation of Christ has been given, I will carefully consider Bavinck's treatment of the Sermon on the Mount in his second essay, *The Imitation of Christ and Life in the Modern World*, in the following section.⁸⁴

5. Bavinck's Second Essay: *The Imitation of Christ and Life in the Modern World* (1918)

In the preceding section, I have outlined Bavinck's fundamental understanding of the imitation of Christ. Bavinck regards a sacrificial, cross-bearing life style in the early Church as the genuine imitation of Christ and does not object to the imitation of Christ itself as a valid ideal for the Christian life. Rather, Bolt comments that "Bavinck is only critical of certain aberrations, deviations, excesses, of one-sidedness in these ideals as they came to actual expression."⁸⁵ In his second essay on the imitation of Christ, Bavinck maintains that the imitation of Christ should be understood as a universal ideal for all Christians. According to Bolt's assessment, Bavinck leads his reader to refuse any understanding of imitation that is not presented as a universal ideal for Christians. The persuasiveness of Bavinck's argument is strengthened by the

understanding of the mystical union with Christ, see Burger, *Being in Christ*, 101-8.

⁸⁴ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 115-45.

⁸⁵ Bolt, "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck", 60.

fact that “his not including those sectarian, Anabaptist, and pietist groups for whom the imitation of Christ and a literal following of the Sermon on the Mount did in fact represent a universal (at least for Christian) and social as well as individual and personal ideal.”⁸⁶

In his second essay on the imitation of Christ, Bavinck deals in particular with the problem of whether the imitation of Christ theme can be a valid and proper ideal in the modern world by posing a series of apologetic questions. When it comes to Bavinck’s focus on the imitation of Christ theme again in 1918, it should be noted that this second essay was released in changed circumstances from the situation in which his first essay was written. Due to the outbreak of the First World War, it is important to consider the role of the Dutch neo-Calvinists in social and political life in accordance with the imitation of Christ. In this context, Bavinck addresses a proper and biblical understanding of the imitation of Christ in relation to human culture from a hermeneutic perspective.⁸⁷ Bavinck probes the validity of the imitation of Christ as a valid ethical ideal in the modern world. He writes,

In the midst of all these questions arises one about the imitation of Christ and life in the modern world. Is there even room

⁸⁶ Bolt, “Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck”, 59.

⁸⁷ According to Bolt’s research, the series of brochures in which Bavinck’s second essay appeared, entitled *Schild en Pijl* (“Shield and Arrow”) had reflected the apologetic purpose as “a defense and shield of biblically revealed truth and an arrow directed at all opponents of a Christian world and life view.” Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck’s Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 292.

in the cultural life of the present for such an imitation? Can it still be taken seriously by people in the state, industry, business, marketplace, stock-exchange, office or factory, in science and art, in war, even at the front?⁸⁸

It is the Sermon on the Mount that Bavinck singles out in order to answer to this issue, based on Scriptural teaching concerning the imitation of Christ.

Before looking more closely at the Sermon on the Mount, Bavinck notes that the moral law of the Old Testament serves as the criterion for the imitation of Christ, highlighting that moral law is rooted in God's will, which was given by a special revelation of God.⁸⁹ According to Bavinck, the entire New Testament, including the teaching of Jesus, is founded on the Old Testament. Bavinck underscores that Jesus recognized the authority of the Old Testament: "Time and again Jesus indicates his agreement with it and acknowledges its authority, especially in its testimony regarding his own person and work (Luke 16:31; 26:44; John 5:39, 46; 10:35; 19:28)."⁹⁰ Regarding the claim of Marcion that Jesus is a new law-giver, promulgating the new law especially in the Sermon on the Mount, Bavinck apparently rejects it: "It is precisely the law and the prophets, which Jesus came not to annul but to fulfill, that are the yardstick by which these good words are measured."⁹¹ In this sense, Bolt rightly points out that "Bavinck's

⁸⁸ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 120.

⁸⁹ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 123.

⁹⁰ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 124.

⁹¹ Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 125.

emphasis on the primacy of creation led him to reject all notions that the gospel creates a new world, a new culture, a new social order.”⁹² Bavinck highlights the declaration of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount that “he has not come to annul the law and the prophets but fulfill them.”⁹³ Therefore, in a few words, Bavinck insists that the true imitation of Christ is to obey God’s will in love as Jesus perfectly fulfilled it. If this is the case, what does Bavinck seek to point out through the Sermon on the Mount?

Bolt comments that these three words summarize Bavinck’s interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount: *concrete, illustrative clarification* of the imitation of Christ.⁹⁴ First, the Sermon on the Mount is concrete in terms of describing “a mediating position between the Scylla of spiritualizing and the Charybdis of literalism.”⁹⁵ Bolt singles out the fact that Bavinck clearly distinguishes between “literal” and “concrete” as follows: “While they are not to be taken literally, all these examples are nonetheless to be understood practically and concretely.”⁹⁶

Second, according to Bolt, Bavinck emphasizes the *illustrative* nature of the Sermon on the Mount. Bolt notes that “Bavinck also introduces a new and significant qualification to the ongoing importance of the imitation theme: circumstance.”⁹⁷ The Sermon on the Mount was intended especially for the disciple, that is, “the relatively small band of disciples who were not members

⁹² Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 114.

⁹³ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven”, 124.

⁹⁴ Bolt, “Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck”, 64.

⁹⁵ Bolt, “Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck”, 64.

⁹⁶ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven”, 127.

⁹⁷ Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 114.

of the upper echelon of society but of the lower classes which possessed very little eminence and influence.”⁹⁸ In this sense, the most important conclusion of Bavinck’s emphasis on the illustrative nature of the Sermon is, Bolt makes an assessment, that it must be considered as a partial rather than comprehensive ethic for the Christian life in some sense.⁹⁹

A third aspect of Bavinck’s understanding of the Sermon on the Mount, according to Bolt, is a clarification of the law. Bavinck posits that as the interpretation and application of the Pharisees and Scribes was inadequate, a new understanding of the law was delivered by Jesus through the Sermon on the Mount. In particular, Bolt notes that the clarification of the law consists of Jesus’ setting aside “the traditions of men” and returning “to the very Word of God.”¹⁰⁰ In sum, it can be argued that Bavinck maintains that the nature of the imitation of Christ is clarified in the Sermon on the Mount with concrete examples and illustrative concretization.

Through the Sermon on the Mount, however, Bavinck maintains that the imitation of Christ ought to be regarded as an ethical ideal in all places and at all times on the basis of the theological notion of the union with Christ. When Jesus lived on Earth with his disciples, the imitation of Christ used to be considered as an external matter, involving a literal following Jesus. But the imitation of Christ acquired a much deeper meaning. Bavinck underscores, “[T]hey [the apostles] emphasize those virtues which

⁹⁸ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven”, 125, 126.

⁹⁹ Bolt, “Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck”, 65.

¹⁰⁰ Bolt, “Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck”, 66.

Jesus exhibited in his life of obedience to the Father's will."¹⁰¹ In this regard, Bavinck likens Christian principles to a posture toward the world, even though Christians consider themselves to be strangers and pilgrims in this world. The first principle that Bavinck asserts that Christians should consider is the incarnation, which is "a sign of the gracious love of God the Father through the Son."¹⁰² Second, according to Bavinck, Christians should keep in mind that the love of God in Christianity is not opposed to justice. In the gracious love of God at the same time God exercises His righteousness. Through the cross God shows the highest love and strict justice. Third, Bavinck points out that "the death of Christ is followed by his resurrection, his humiliation, by his exaltation."¹⁰³ If Christians have died with Christ, they shall also live with him now in principle, but at the resurrection in actuality. All Christians were called to follow Jesus Christ in the love of Christ, who gave his life as a ransom for man. In this regard, Bavinck considers the Sermon on the Mount to be "a new, perfect law and the life of Jesus as a model which we must reproduce."¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, Bavinck writes about Christianity and culture as follows:

The New Testament presupposes the Old Testament, redemption is accomplished on the foundation of creation, the work of the Son is bound to that of the Father, grace follows

101 Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 133.

102 Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 132.

103 Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 132.

104 Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven", 133.

nature, rebirth can take place only after birth. All the products of culture, marriage, family, state, etc., are good and perfect gifts which come down from the Father of lights.¹⁰⁵

According to Bavinck, grace restores nature and perfects it. It is obvious that Christianity never rejects culture, but only sin: “Christ only came into the world to destroy the works of the devil and thus to restore and renew the works of the Father.”¹⁰⁶ From this point of view, Bavinck emphasizes that “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 ... virtues that remain powerful through the ages and retain their validity in all circumstances.”¹⁰⁷ For Bavinck, all Christians should follow and imitate Jesus Christ through the voluntary obedience to preserve the world from sin and restore the nature for his glory, made possible because of the love demonstrated by willingly giving his life on the cross.

6. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to present an understanding of Bavinck's ethics as well as his theology. The central question under evaluation was this: is that of the evaluation: Did Bavinck engage sometimes in ethics as a dogmatist? In other words,

¹⁰⁵ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven”, 135, 136.

¹⁰⁶ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven”, 136.

¹⁰⁷ Bavinck, “De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven”, 143.

can we regard Bavinck as an important Reformed Christian ethicist as well as a Reformed dogmatic theologian? To answer this question, up to now, we have looked at how deeply concerned Bavinck was about ethics in his writings. From this paper, I believe that one can find supporting evidence that Bavinck must be regarded as an ethicist as well as a dogmatician.

First, as we have seen, Bavinck not only received his doctorate with a thesis on the ethics of Zwingli, but also wrote widely on ethical issues. In particular, during the years of Bavinck's professorate at Kampen, he lectured on ethics for over twenty years. Bavinck's handwritten *Reformed Ethics* recently discovered by Dirk van Keulen provides a decisive piece of evidence as to how Bavinck regarded Christian life in relation to dogmatics. According to analyses of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* manuscripts, there are structural and methodological similarities between Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics*. Regarding the structure of *Reformed Ethics*, Van Keulen points out that this composition gives the impression that Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* is entirely dogmatic in character. For Bavinck, dogmatics preceded ethics, and ethics was completely dependent on dogmatics. It can be said that this new discovery of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* and his engagement with ethics throughout his entire life provides a wide range of sources and crucial evidence to shed new light on the identity of Bavinck as dogmatician and ethicist.

Second, the imitation of Christ theme should be considered to be the heart of Christian life in Bavinck theology. In this regard, Bavinck's two essays on the imitation of Christ offer a stepping

stone for developing an account of Bavinck's understanding of ethics. His first essay on this subject, *The Imitation of Christ* (1885), deepens our knowledge of the history of the imitation theme in the Christian Church, particularly indicating both true and erroneous forms of the imitation of Christ. From Bavinck's vantage point, we see that the imitation of Christ does not mean merely copying or imitating Christ outwardly, but rather to manifesting God's attributes as His children and His image of God through union with the person and the work of Christ. Bavinck's second essay, entitled *The Imitation of Christ and Life in the Modern World* (1918), argues the catholicity of Christianity, regarding the imitation of Christ theme as a universal ideal for all Christians. Bavinck addresses a proper and biblical understanding of the imitation of Christ, especially by looking more closely at the Sermon on the Mount. According to Bavinck's interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, the validity of the virtues that Christians should practice in imitating Christ remains present across all circumstances. The eternal love of Christ causes all Christians to follow Christ through obedience of God's will by the Holy Spirit.

Proceeding from what has been said above, it can be concluded that Bavinck ought to be regarded as an important Reformed Christian ethicist as well as a Reformed dogmatic theologian. Central to this paper has been the question of how Bavinck applies his theology to ethics. This paper has presented the fact that Bavinck viewed Christian life as centered on the imitation of Christ with regard to ethical norms. As we have seen, the point Bavinck

insists most firmly on in his ethics is the imitation of Christ based on union with Christ. For Bavinck, following Jesus in lawful obedience is nothing other than the imitation of Christ at all times and in all places. Based on all the foregoing research, it is not too much to say that Bavinck should be regarded as a Reformed Christian ethicist as well as a Reformed dogmatician, rather than only as a dogmatician who sometimes engaged in ethical issues.

[초록]**헤르만 바빙크의 개혁윤리학**

최창준 (새서울교회)

헤르만 바빙크(1854-1921)는 성경과 개혁신학 전통에 충실한 위대한 개혁주의 조직신학자로 널리 알려져 있다. 바빙크의 교의학을 통하지 않고서는 20세기 화란 개혁신학을 이해할 수는 없다. 하지만 개혁주의 윤리학자로서의 바빙크 연구는 상대적으로 적은 관심을 받아온 것이 사실이다. 최근 Dirk van Kuel의 미출판되었던 바빙크의 개혁윤리학 원고 발견은 바빙크 학계의 많은 변화를 가져왔다. 바빙크 학자들은 개혁주의 조직신학자뿐만 아니라 개혁주의 윤리학자로서 바빙크의 이중적 정체성에 대한 활발한 논의를 진행중에 있다. 본 논문은 새롭게 발견된 바빙크의 개혁윤리학 원고를 중심으로 전 생애에 걸친 윤리학에 대한 그의 폭넓은 관심과 활동을 조명하고자 한다. 특별히 그리스도를 본받음(The Imitation of Christ)에 대한 바빙크의 두 개의 논문은 그리스도인의 삶에 대한 그의 이해를 잘 드러내준다고 할 수 있다. 본 연구를 통해 개혁주의 조직신학자뿐 아니라 개혁주의 윤리학자로서 바빙크의 신학에 대한 재평가에 기여할 수 있기를 바란다.

키워드: 헤르만 바빙크, 개혁윤리학, 그리스도를 본받음, 그리스도와의 연합, 산상수훈

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bavinck, Herman. "Bevoorrecht Nederland." In *De Bazuin* 48. No. 35 (1900).
- _____. "Bijbelsche psychologie." Pts. 1-24. In *Orgaan van het Gereformeerd Schoolverband* (4 Jan. 1912-5 Maart 1914).
- _____. "Calvin and Common Grace." Translated by Ray Van Leeuwen. In *Calvin Theological Journal* 24 (1989): 35-65.
- _____. "Christelijke jeugdarbeid." Pts. 1-8. In *Leidersblad Bond voor Gereformeerde Jeugd Organisatie* 3, Nos. 4-6 (1919); 4, Nos 1-5 (1920).
- _____. "Christendom en natuurwetenschap." In *Stemmen des Tijds* 2 (1913): 343-77.
- _____. "Christendom, oorlog, volkenbond." In *Stemmen des Tijds* 9, No.1 (November 1919): 1-26; 9. No. 2 (December 1919): 105-33.
- _____. "Christian Principles and Social Relationships." ("Christelijke Beginselen en Maatschappelijke Verhoudin-gen" In the series *Christendom en Maatschappij*, series 1, Vol. 1. Utrecht: Ruys, 1908: 121-50. In *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres. Grand Rapids. Baker Academic, 2008.
- _____. "De beroepsarbeid der gehuwde vrouw." In *Proces verbaal van het Tweede Christelijk Sociaal Congres*, gehouden te Amsterdam op 10-13 Maart 1919 (Rotterdam: Libertas, 1919): 206-25.
- _____. "De hedendaagsche wereldbeschouwing." In *De Vrije Kerk* 9, No.10 (October 1883): 435-61.

- _____. "De hoogeschool te Genève." In *De Bazuin* 48, No. 7 (1900).
- _____. "De huishouding Gods." Pts.1 and 2, In *De Vrije Kerk* 9, No. 5 (May 1883): 239-42.
- _____. "De navolging van Christus en het moderne leven." In *Schild en Pijl* 1, No. 3. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1918.
- _____. "De navolging van Christus en het moderne leven." In *Schild en Pijl* 1, No. 3 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1918).
- _____. "De navolging van Christus, I, II, III." In *De Vrije Kerk* 11 (1885): 101-13, 203-13; 12 (1886): 321-33.
- _____. "De oorlog." In *De Bazuin* 48, No. 22 (1900).
- _____. "De opvoeding der vrouw." In *Onze jonge Meisjes* 25 (1919).
- _____. "De paedagogische periode." In *De School met den Bijbel* 4 (1907).
- _____. "De theologie van Albrecht Ritschl." In *Theologische Studiën* 6 (1888): 369-403.
- _____. "De vrije school." In *De Bazuin* 48, No. 8 (1900).
- _____. "Een Christelijk gymnasium." In *De Bazuin* 33, No. 21 (1885).
- _____. "Eene belangrijke apologie van de Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing." In *Theologische Studiën* 12 (1894): 142-52.
- _____. "Ethiek en politiek." In *Stemmen des Tijds* 5, No. 2 (1916): 32-56, 96.
- _____. "Feminisme." In *De Bazuin* 49, No. 11 (1901).
- _____. "Gedachten van Bilderdijk over onderwijs en opvoeding." Pts. 1-3. In *De School met den Bijbel* 3 (1906), 37-39.
- _____. "General Biblical Principles and the Relevance of Concrete Mosaic Law for the Social Question Today (1891)." Translated by John Bolt. In *Journal of Markets and Morality* 13, No. 2

- (Fall 2010): 437-46.
- _____. "Godsdienstonderwijs." Pts. 1-10. In *De School met den Bijbel* 3 (1906), Nos. 6,8,10,12,17,18,19,21,22,25.
- _____. "Godsvrucht en wetenschap." In *De School met den Bijbel* 4, No. 26 (1907).
- _____. "Het Christelijk gymnasium." In *De Bazuin* 35, No. 41 (1887).
- _____. "Het geweten." In *De vrije Kerk* 7 (1881): 27-37, 49-58.
- _____. "Individualisme en individualiteit van het kind." In *Correspondentieblad van de Vereeniging van Christelijke Onderwijzers en Onderwijzeressen in Nederland en de Overzeesche bezittingen* (1916): 64-72.
- _____. "Individueele en sociale opvoeding." Pts. 1-4. In *Orgaan van het Gereformeerd Schoolverband* (20 Mei-18 Nov.1920).
- _____. "Kennis en leven." Pts. 1-15. In *De Bazuin* 48, Nos. 3-20 (1900).
- _____. "Kinderstudie." Pt. 3. In *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift* 6 (1914): 1-17.
- _____. "Kinderstudie." Pts. 1-3. In *Paedagogisch tijdschrift: Orgaan der Vereeniging voor Paedagogiek* 5 (1913): 241-52; 289-99; 6 (1914): 1-17.
- _____. "Klassieke opleiding." Pts. 1-2. In *Stemmen des Tijds* 7 (1918): 46-65; 113-47.
- _____. "Leven en dood." In *De Bazuin* 48, No. 32 (1900).
- _____. "Middelbaar onderwijs." In *De Bazuin* 49, No. 33 (1901).
- _____. "Moderne kunst." In *De Bazuin* 48, No. 38 (1900).
- _____. "On Inequality." ("Over de ongelijkheid" in *Stemmen des tijds* 2 (1913):17-43. In *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by Harry Boonstra and Gerrit

- Sheeres. Grand Rapids. Baker Academic, 2008.
- _____. "Onkerkelijkheid." In *De Bazuin* 49, No.11 (1901).
- _____. "Op reis." In *De Bazuin* 48, No. 35 (1900).
- _____. "Ouders of getuigen." Pts. 1-20. In *De Bazuin* 48-49, Nos. 35-50 (1900); 2-8 (1901).
- _____. "Paedagogiek als wetenschap." Pts. 1-17. In *De School met den Bijbel* 2 (1905): 11-46.
- _____. "Paedagogisehe beginselen." Pts. 1and2. In *De School met den Bijbel* 2 (1905): 7-8.
- _____. "Psychologie der religie." Verslagen en mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van wetenschappen. *Afdeeling letterkundes* 4, Vol. 9. Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1909.
- _____. "Psychologie van het kind." Verslag van de rede, gehouden op de jaarvergadering der Vereeniging voor Christelijk Nationaal Schoolonderwijs. *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift* 1 (1909): 105-17.
- _____. "Religieuze psychologie." Pts. 1-50. In *Orgaan van het Gereformeerd Schoolverband* (11 Juni 1914-22 April 1920).
- _____. "Richtingen in de paedagogiek." In *Handelingen van het Nationaal Christelijk Schoolcongres*, gehouden op 9, 10, 11 October 1913 te Utrecht, 61-66. Kampen:J. H. Kok, 1913.
- _____. "Richtingen in de psychologie." In *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift* (Orgaan der Vereeniging voor Paedagogiek) 1 (1909): 4-15.
- _____. "Schepping of ontwikkeling." In *Tijdschrift voor Gereformeerde Theologie* 8, No. 5 (1901): 217-57.
- _____. "Stemrecht der vrouw." In *De Bazuin* 48, No. 9 (1900).
- _____. "Ter toelichting en verdediging der psychologie." Pts. 1-8. In *Christelijk Schoolblad* 2 Juni to 21 Juli. (1899).

- _____. "Theological School." In *The Trumpet* 47, No. 34 (1899).
- _____. "Van schoonheid en schoonheidsleer." In *Almanak* van het Studentencorps aan de Vrije Universiteit (NDDD). Amsterdam: Herdes, 1914.
- _____. "Verslag van acht lezingen gehouden in het kader van de Vacantie-cursus, georganiseerd door het hoofdbestuur der Vereeniging van Christelijke Onderwijzers en Onderwijzeressen in Nederland en Overzeesche Bezittingen, van 26 tot 31 Juli 1915 te Amsterdam." In *De School met den Bijbel* 13, Nrs. 5-13 (1915).
- _____. "Verslag van rede op de vergadering der Vereeniging van Christelijke Onderwijzers over 'Individualisme en Individualiteit.'" In *De School met den Bijbel* 12, No. 49 (1915).
- _____. "Wat is wijsbegeerte?" Pts. 1-6. In *De School met den Bijbel* 1 (1904): 38-46.
- _____. "Werk of genade." In *De Bazuin* 49, No. 18 (1901).
- _____. "Woord en daad." In *De Bazuin* 49, No. 23 (1901).
- _____. *Bede en rede: Ter inleiding van de jaarvergadering van de Vereeniging voor Hooger Onderwijs op Geref. grondslag.* gehouden te Zwolle op 6 en 7 Juli 1898. Kampen: J. H.B os [Zalsman], 1898.
- _____. *Beginsel en der Psychologie.* Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1897.
- _____. *Bijbelsche en Religieuze Psychologie.* Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1920.
- _____. *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing.* Rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam op 20 October 1904. Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1904.

- _____. *Christelijke Wetenschap*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1904.
- _____. *Christendom, Oorlog, Volkenbond*. Utrecht: Ruys, 1920.
- _____. *De Algemeene Genade*. Rede gehouden bij de overdracht van het Rectoraat aan de Theologische School te Kampen op 6 Dec. 1894. Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 1894.
- _____. *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli*. Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 1880.
- _____. *De Nieuwe Opvoeding*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1917.
- _____. *De opleiding van den onderwijzer*. Voor onderwijs en opvoeding. No. 9; Rapport voor de Algemeene Vergadering van "Gereformeerd Schoolverband." Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1914.
- _____. *De Opvoeding der Rijpere Jeugd*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1916.
- _____. *De overwinning der ziel*. Rede uitgesproken in de Algemeene Vergadering van het achtste Nederlandsche Philologencongres te Utrecht, 26 April 1916. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1916.
- _____. *De theologie van Prof. Dr. Daniël Chantipie de la Saussaye: Bijdrage tot de kennis der ethische theologie*. Leiden: Donner, 1884.
- _____. *De toekomst van het Christelijk onderwijs*. Rapport en advies door het bestuur van de Vereeniging voor Gereformeerd Schoolonderwijs aangeboden aan de eerstkomende Algemeene Vergadering. Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1904.
- _____. *De Vrouw in de Hedendaagsche Maatschappij*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1918.
- _____. *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres. Grand Rapids:

- Baker Academic, 2008.
- _____. *Evangelisatie: Christendom en Maatschappij*. Vol. 5, No. 9. Utrecht: Ruys, 1913.
- _____. *Evolutie: Pro en Contra, Betreffende Vraagstukken van Algemeen Belang* 3, No. 3. Baarn: Hollandia-drukkerij, 1907.
- _____. Foreword to *Christendom en opvoeding*. Baarn: Hollandia-drukkerij, 1908.
- _____. Foreword to *De ethische richting: eene studie*. Rotterdam: Libertas, 1917.
- _____. Foreword to *Ongeloof en Revolutie: eene reeks van historische voorlezingen*. 3rd Edited. Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1904.
- _____. Foreword to *Opvoedkunde voor het huisgezin*. Nijverdal: E. J. Bosch Jbzn, 1917.
- _____. *Gereformeerde Ethiek*. In Bavinck Archives, box 13/32; No. 186.
- _____. *Hedendaagsche Moraal*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1902.
- _____. *Het probleem van den oorlog*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1914.
- _____. *Modernisme en orthodoxie*. Rede gehouden bij de Overdracht van het Rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit op 20 Oct. 1911. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1911.
- _____. *Opleiding en Theologie*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1896.
- _____. *Paedagogische Beginselen*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1904.
- _____. *Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena*. Vol. 1. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids. Baker Academic, 2003.
- _____. *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*. Vol. 2. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids. Baker Academic,

2004.

_____. *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ*. Vol. 3. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

_____. *Reformed Dogmatics: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*. Vol. 4. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

_____. *Saved by Grace: The Holy Spirit's Work in Calling and Regeneration*. Translated by Nelson D. Kloosterman. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008.

_____. *Schepping of Ontwikkeling: Lezing, gehouden te Arnhem, Zutphen, Amsterdam en Haarlem, 1901*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1901.

_____. *The Philosophy of Revelation*. The Stone Lectures for 1908-1909. Princeton Theological Seminary. Translated by Henry E. Dosker, Nicholas M. Steffens, and Geerhardus Vos. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909.

Bolt, John. "Bavinck's Use of Wisdom Literature in Systematic Theology." In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 4-23.

_____. "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck." In *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993): 45-73.

_____. "The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck." PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 1982.

_____. "Why the Covenant of Works Is a Necessary Doctrine: Revisiting the Objections to a Venerable Reformed Doctrine." In *By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of justification*,

- Edited by Gary L.W. Johnson and Guy Waters. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007.
- _____. *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*. Lewiston, NY : Edwin Mellen Press, 2013.
- _____. *Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015.
- Bremmer, R. H. *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus*. Kampen Kok, 1961.
- Burger, Hans. *Being in Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Investigation in a Reformed Perspective*. Eugene. OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009.
- De Bruijn, Jan and George Harinck, eds. *Een Leidse vriendschap*. Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1999.
- Dosker, Henry Elias. "Herman Bavinck: A Eulogy by Henry Elias Dosker." In Bavinck, Herman. *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Eglinton, James. "Guest Editorial: Bavinck, Dogmatics, and Ethics." In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 1-3.
- _____. "On Bavinck's Theology of Sanctification-as-Ethics." In *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice*. Edited by Kelly M. Kopic. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2014.
- _____. *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif*. Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 2012.
- Elliott, Mark W. "Bavinck's Use of Augustine as an Antidote to Ritschl." In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 24-40.
- Gleason, Ronald N. "The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck." ThD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 2001.

- _____. Herman Bavinck: Pastor, Churchman, Statesman, and Theologian. Phillipsburg, N.J. : P & R Pub., 2010.
- _____. *The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck*. ThD. thesis. PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 2001.
- Harinck, George. "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion: A Case Study of Herman Bavinck's Engagement with Modern Culture." In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 60-77.
- Heideman, Eugene P. *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959.
- Hielema, Syd. "Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption." ThD diss., Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, 1998.
- Hoekema, Anthony A. "Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant." ThD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953.
- Kruithof, Bastian. "The Relation of Christianity and Culture in the Teaching of Herman Bavinck." PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1955.
- Macleod, Donald. "Herman Bavinck and the Basis of Christian Certainty." In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 92-107.
- Mattson, Brian G. *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology & the Image of God in Herman Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012.
- Nimmo, Paul T. "Bavinck, Barth, and the Uniqueness of the Eucharist." In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 108-26.
- Van Den Belt, Henk. "Herman Bavinck and His Reformed Sources on

the Call to Grace: A Shift in Emphasis towards the Internal Work of the Spirit.” In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 4-23.

Van Keulen, Dirk. “Herman Bavinck on the Imitation of Christ.” In *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011): 78-91.

_____. “Herman Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen.” In *The Bavinck Review* 1 (2010): 25-56.