

Editorial

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This is a unique issue of the *Bavinck Review* with a single item as its content: an English translation of Herman Bavinck's *Foundations of Psychology* (*Beginselen der Psychologie*). Details about the two Dutch editions as well as the English translation are provided in the Editor's Preface and will not be repeated here. Rather, I want to comment on the importance of this work in the larger corpus of Bavinck's thought.

The fact that Bavinck published *Beginselen der Psychologie* in 1897 helps correct an old and significant misperception about Bavinck's career. Bavinck's first biographer, Valentijn Hepp, is the primary source for this misperception. Hepp says that after completing the revision of his *Reformed Dogmatics* (final volume published in 1911), Bavinck had plenty of material for his dogmatics lectures at the *Vrije Universiteit* and these would therefore not require any "new effort" (*nieuwe inspanning*).¹ Immediately after this comment, Hepp highlights the fact that several years before his death, Bavinck divested himself of "the most significant theology books, among them especially older works of Reformed theology, because, he said, 'after all, I am not going to do anything with it anymore.'"² Instead, according to Hepp, "he tirelessly devoted himself to psychology, and even more to pedagogy."³

¹ Valentijn Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck* (Amsterdam: W. Ten Have, 1921), 317.

² Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 317–18 ("want," zei hij, "ik doe daaraan toch niet meer").

³ Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 318.

This deliberate contrast between an earlier theological focus and a later emphasis on psychology and pedagogy (Hepp says “daartegenover,” i.e. “opposite that”) leaves an impression that is corrected by noting that Bavinck published this work in psychology four years before the fourth and final volume of his *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* in 1901. When one considers the level of detail in Bavinck’s scholarly treatment of the young discipline of psychology and how he was abreast of the latest work in the field, it is clear that Bavinck had been working on the material in *Begin-selen der Psychologie* for a decade or so before he left Kampen for the *Vrije Universiteit* in Amsterdam, in 1902. Bavinck considered this new field of psychology as crucial for the work of a theologian.

After working on *Foundations of Psychology* for more than a year, I judge that it is not only one of Bavinck’s most important books, next to the *Reformed Dogmatics* and his Stone Lectures, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, but also underappreciated and underexamined by the resurgent Bavinck scholarship of the past fifty years.⁴ We present this translation confident that this situation will now change. *Foundations of Psychology* provides current and future Bavinck scholars with a rich treasure of material for their pleasure, stimulation, and theological growth.

⁴ This in contrast to the first generation after Bavinck’s death when five studies of Bavinck’s pedagogy were published, each of them including at least some discussion of his psychology: Fr. S. Rombouts, *Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck, Gids Bij de Studie van Zijn Paedagogische Werken* (’s-Hertogenbosch-Antwerpen: Malmberg, 1922); J. Brederveld, *Hoofdlijnen der Paedagogiek van Dr. Herman Bavinck, met Critische Beschouwing* (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1927); L. van der Zweep, *De Paedagogiek van Bavinck* (Kampen: Kok, 1935); Cornelius Jaarsma, *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936); and L. van Klinken, *Bavinck’s Paedagogische Beginselen* (Meppel: Boom, 1937). To the best of my knowledge there has so far only been one book-length study of Bavinck’s psychology, Anthony A. Hoekema’s undefended and unpublished Princeton Th.D. dissertation: “The Centrality of the Heart: A Study in Christian Anthropology, with Special Reference to the Psychology of Herman Bavinck,” submitted February 28, 1948.