

# Editorial

*John Bolt*

This volume is the tenth anniversary edition of the *Bavinck Review*. I find myself a bit awestruck by this and can think of no better way to express this than by repeating what I wrote in the opening of my editorial in Volume 1:

The coming into being of this online journal, the *Bavinck Review* . . . is the result of a providential confluence of events beyond Herman Bavinck's wildest dreams. For starters, take the computer and the internet. Add to these the facts that he wrote his *Reformed Dogmatics* from within the church and for the church with the hope that it would "stimulate further study"<sup>1</sup> and that his modesty would have prevented him from thinking that after a half-century of dormancy, a pioneering group of Bavinck scholars—Heideman, Bremmer, Veenhof—would help bring about a renaissance of Bavinck studies in his own country that has yet to cease, and the present resurgence of interest in Bavinck's theology becomes amazing. He might have hoped for it, but he never would have expected it.

Much has happened since 2010: First, the appearance of new translations and editions of Bavinck's works, such as *Philosophy of Revelation* (see the review in this issue), *Saved by Grace: The Holy Spirit's Work in Calling and Regeneration*, *The Christian Family*, *Herman Bavinck on Preaching and Preachers*, and more recently *The Sacrifice of Praise* and *Christian Worldview*. In addition, the *Reformed Dogmatics* has been translated into the Korean, Indonesian, and Portuguese languages and is being translated into Mandarin. A glance at the annual bibliographies in the *Bavinck Review* reveals the explosion of Bavinck scholarship that is now international in scope and outreach.

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<sup>1</sup>Herman Bavinck, trans. John Bolt, "Herman Bavinck, Foreword to the First Edition (Volume 1) of the *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45, no.1 (2010): 10.

I want to saunter through the ten volumes of the *Bavinck Review* and highlight what I take to be some of its major contributions. The most significant article in the first volume was Dirk van Keulen’s “Herman Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen” (*Bavinck Review* 1 [2010]: 25–56) because it led to the transcription, translation, and publication of Bavinck’s lectures on Reformed ethics. For the full story of this discovery’s significance, see my preface to the first volume of *Reformed Ethics*.<sup>2</sup>

Volume 2 featured articles by young scholars (Robert S. Covolo, Timothy Shaun Price, Laurence O’Donnell, Michael S. Chen, Travis Ryan Pickell) on topics as diverse as Bavinck’s theological ethics, and comparisons between Bavinck and: Abraham Kuyper (on education), Cornelius Van Til (apologetics), and Augustine (epistemology and the incomprehensibility of evil). We also introduced two research projects: Wolter Huttinga on Bavinck, *Radical Orthodoxy*, and participation; and Aart Goedvree on Bavinck’s concept of regeneration.

Volume 3 had a missiology emphasis with three essays on the topic of general revelation, a comparison between Bavinck and Lesslie Newbigin on mission activity in the workplace, and an application of J. H. Bavinck’s missiology to a specific question about how to translate the biblical name for God into the Korean language.

The broad area of general revelation, religion, natural law, and the doctrine of the two kingdoms (and whether or not there are “two Bavincks”) has given rise to lively scholarly debates about Bavinck, and Volume 4 laid bare some areas of disagreement among “friends of Bavinck.” While these may sound like abstract, academic issues, they practically affect such things

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<sup>2</sup> John Bolt, preface to *Reformed Ethics*, by Herman Bavinck, vol. 1, *Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity*, ed. John Bolt, with Jessica Joustra, Nelson D. Kloosterman, Antoine Theron, and Dirk van Keulen (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), ix–xvi.

as our understanding of Islam as a religion and how we put our Christian public discipleship into practice.

Volume 5 repeated the missiological theme of Volume 3 with a look at Abraham Kuyper's visit to the Holy Land and two essays on J. H. Bavinck's missiology. Volume 6 included the first of two essays comparing Bavinck's epistemology/psychology and understanding of knowledge with that of Thomas Aquinas, along with a *Bavinck Review* first, a visual reproduction of a painting by Dutch artist Piet Mondrian (a son of the Reformed church) as an aid in showing how Bavinck's Reformed theology helps us to understand Mondrian's art. The second essay comparing the epistemologies of Bavinck and Aquinas appeared in Volume 7. Volume 8 celebrated the publication of a new, annotated edition of Bavinck's *De Zekerheid des Geloofs* (*The Certainty of Faith*) with three essays prepared for the book's launch on December 22, 2016. Volume 9 was a unique issue of *Bavinck Review* with a single item as its content: an English translation of Herman Bavinck's *Foundations of Psychology* (*Beginselen der Psychologie*).

Volume 10 returns to the regular format and includes a translation of a November 1921 eulogy of Bavinck religion by the renowned scholar of world religions W. B. Kristensen, delivered to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). We also introduce to our readers an important leader in the American Reformed world, Dr. Nicholas (or Nicolaus) Martin Steffens. Steffens was a contemporary of Bavinck; he came from the same (German) Reformed ecclesiastical world, and, as George Harinck's introduction shows, shared a great deal of Bavinck's path of life, as well as his thought. In fact, Harinck tells us: "Bavinck's wife noted, 'Herman finds him the only scholar, thus far, with whom he agrees.'" Steffens's inaugural address, which we republish in this issue, demonstrates how truly Bavinckian his thought was.

One of the main contributions of *Bavinck Review* has been to add to the treasury of English translations of important Bavinck essays. Here, in order of their appearance, are the translated texts: "John Calvin: A Lecture on the Occasion of his 400th Birthday, July 10, 1509–1909" (*Bavinck*

*Review 1* [2010]: 57–85); “The Kingdom of God, The Highest Good” (*Bavinck Review 2* [2011]: 133–70); “The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl” (*Bavinck Review 3* [2012]: 123–63); “Preface to the Life and Works of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine” (*Bavinck Review 3* [2012]: 164–77); “Letters to a Dying Student: Bavinck’s Letters to Johan van Haselen” (*Bavinck Review 4* [2013]: 94–102); “The Pros and Cons of a Dogmatic System” (*Bavinck Review 5* [2014]: 90–103); “Conscience” (*Bavinck Review 6* [2015]: 113–26); “Herman Bavinck’s *Modernisme en Orthodoxie*: A Translation” (*Bavinck Review 7* [2016]: 63–114); “Herman Bavinck’s Preface to the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*” (*Bavinck Review 8* [2017]: 101–114); *Foundations of Psychology* (*Bavinck Review 9* [2018]: 1–244); and “Collision of Duties” (*Bavinck Review 10* [2019]: 109–113).

My final observation, highlighted in my rereading of the nine previous issues of *Bavinck Review*, is a confirmation of Bavinck as a pastor-theologian. Though it is evident in many places, in Bavinck’s own writing as well as the scholarship about him, if you would like to see this most clearly in action, take a look at his letters to the dying Kampen student, Johan van Haselen, in *Bavinck Review 4*.