

Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen

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INTRODUCTION

It is not well known that during the years of Herman Bavinck's professorate at Kampen Bavinck taught not only dogmatics, but also ethics. Several documents which Bavinck used for his lectures in ethics are stored in the Bavinck archives.¹ For example, the archives contain a small lecture notebook which likely dates from the beginning of Bavinck's career at Kampen (or even earlier). In this notebook Bavinck arranges his ethics course into ten sections:²

1. Sin
2. Man as a moral creature
3. Election (foundation of Christian life)
4. Faith (source and principle of Christian life)

¹ Archive 176 of the Historical Documentation Centre, Free University, Amsterdam (hereafter abbreviated as "Bavinck Archives").

² Bavinck Archives, box 4/32, no. 42: §1. De zonde; §2. De mens als zedelijk wezen; §3. De verkiezing (grondslag van het christelijk leven); §4. Het geloof (bron en principe van het christelijk leven); §5. De boete (ontstaan van het christelijk leven); §6. De wet (regel van het christelijk leven); §7. De vrijheid (voorrecht van het christelijk leven); §8. Het altruïstisch karakter van het christelijk leven; §9. De verhouding van het christelijk tot het burgerlijk leven; §10. Het christelijk leven in de gemeenschap.

5. Penance (origin of Christian life)
6. Law (rule of Christian 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

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In addition to this small notebook the archives contain an extensive manuscript entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek* (*Reformed Ethics*).³ The numerous notebooks which Bavinck used to write the manuscript have been severely damaged: Many pages have been torn from each other, and the paper is crumbling. Furthermore, the manuscript is not finished. It breaks off in the middle of a discussion about the Christian family. In the margin of the text, Bavinck

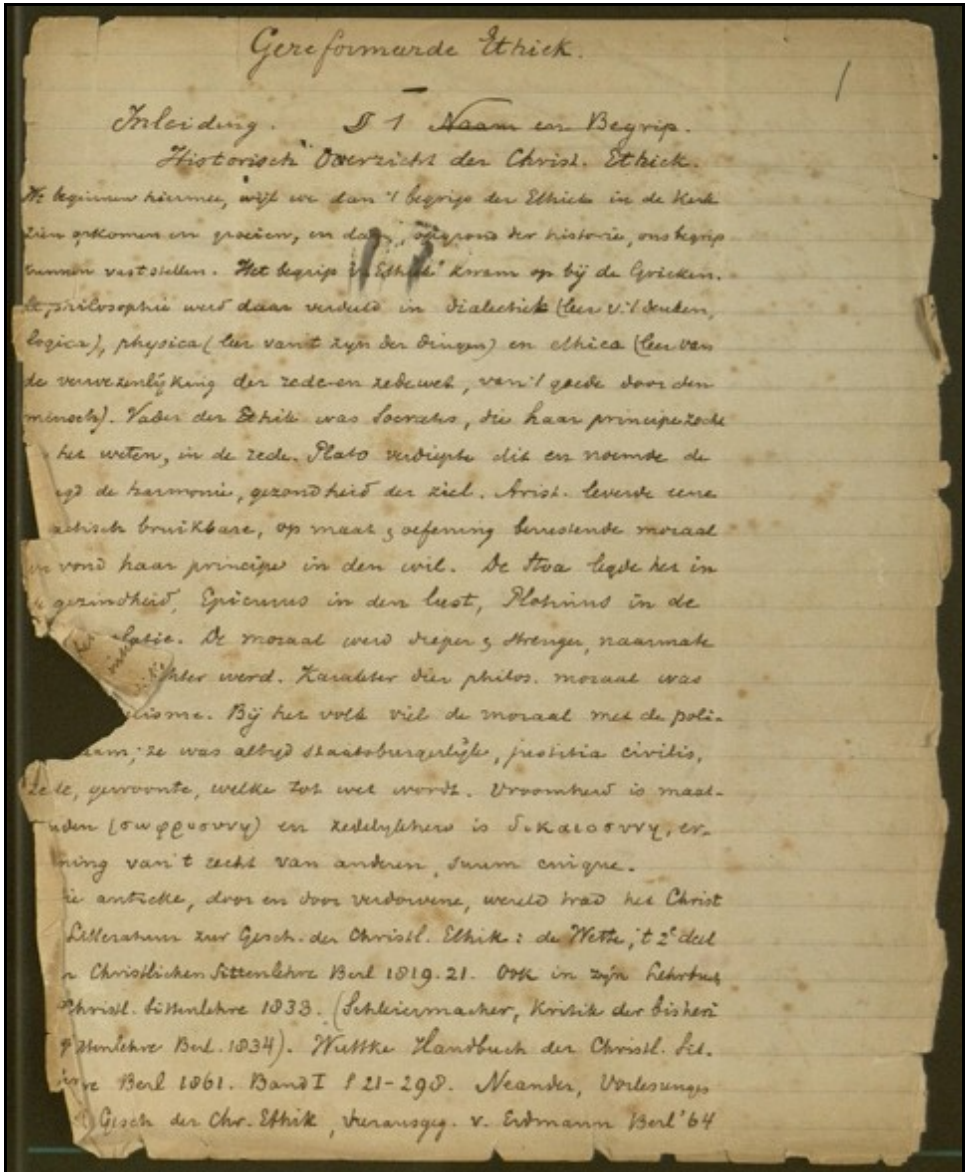
³ Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Ethiek*, in Bavinck Archives, box 13/32; no. 186 (hereafter abbreviated as *GE*). Since the pages are not numbered, I will refer to the paragraph numbers, followed by page numbers if necessary (e.g. *GE*, §1, p. 1). At each paragraph the page numbers will restart at 1 (e.g. *GE*, §2, p. 1).

has added notes and references to literature studied or published after he wrote his text.



Bavinck's Reformed Ethics (Gereformeerde Ethiek) manuscript

It is difficult to date the document. Because of its length and elaborate references to Holy Scripture as well as to sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century Protestant theologians, Bavinck must have worked at it for years. In fact, the manuscript is virtually an unpublished monograph.

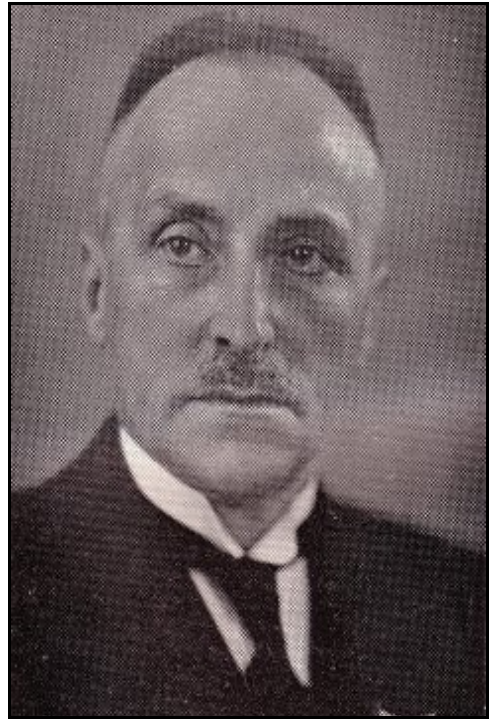


A damaged page from Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* manuscript

Although it is not possible to date the origin of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* based on the data in the manuscript itself, there is correlative evidence which suggests that Bavinck used his *Re-*

formed *Ethics* manuscript during the academic years 1884–1886 and 1894–1895. This evidence is found in two other unpublished, handwritten manuscripts.

The first manuscript, entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek. Acroam. van: Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck* (“Reformed Ethics. Class Notes of Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck”),⁴ was made by Reinder Jan van der Veen (1863–1942),⁵ who studied theology at Kampen from September 1878 until July 1886.⁶ Van der Veen’s manuscript, which numbers 327 pages, originally consisted of two volumes, but unfortunately the first volume has been lost. On several pages in the second volume Van der Veen dates his class notes, providing evidence that these notes refer to Bavinck’s lectures in ethics of the years 1884–1885 and 1885–1886. The lost first volume probably contained notes on Bavinck’s lectures of the year 1883–1884—the first year of Bavinck’s professorate at Kampen!



Cornelis Lindeboom (1872–1938)

The second manuscript is entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek—Dictaat van Prof. Bavinck* (“Reformed Ethics—class notes of Prof. Bavinck”).⁷ This 406-page manuscript was registered at the Kampen library archives in 1983. Unfortunately there is no information available on the

⁴ Library of the Protestant Theological University at Kampen, shelf mark 101A20 (hereafter abbreviated as *GE-Van der Veen*).

⁵ Van der Veen’s signature is on the title page of this manuscript.

⁶ J. van Gelderen and F. Rozemond, *Gegevens betreffende de Theologische Universiteit Kampen 1854–1994* (Kampen 1994), 110.

⁷ Library of the Protestant Theological University at Kampen, shelf mark

manuscript's author and origin. It is possible that the library obtained the manuscript in 1983 and failed to note its origin. But it is also possible that the manuscript was present in the library for many years and was not catalogued until 1983. Whatever the case may be, comparison with other manuscripts in Kampen's library suggests that the author may be Cornelis Lindeboom (1872–1938), who studied theology at Kampen from September 1889 until July 1895.⁸ The manuscript can be tentatively dated to the year 1895.⁹

Both manuscripts offer a fine impression of Bavinck's lectures on ethics. The text of the manuscripts is written down very carefully. Every sentence is completely written out and grammatically correct. The style is typically Bavinck's. When, for instance, biblical references to a theme are listed, this is done in exactly the same way biblical references are listed in Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*. The style of the manuscripts, therefore, gives the impression that the text was verbally dictated by Bavinck. There is, nevertheless, some

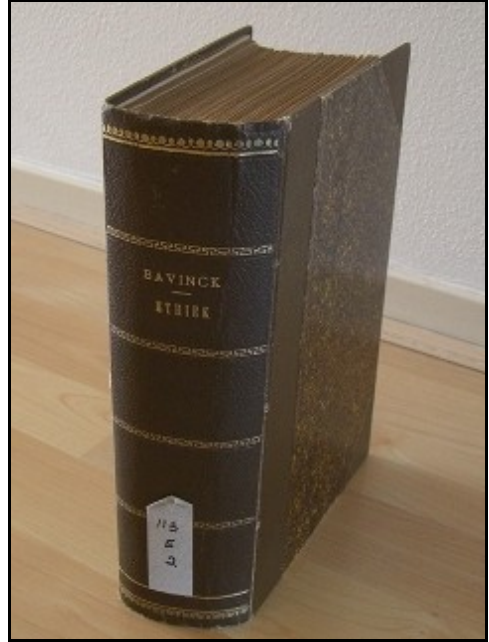
113E2 (hereafter abbreviated as *GE-Lindeboom*).

⁸ Cornelis Lindeboom, the only son of Kampen's New Testament professor Lucas Lindeboom (1845–1933), studied theology at Kampen from September 1889 until July 1895 (Van Gelderen and Rozemond, *Gegevens*, 116). After one year of study at Lausanne he worked as a minister in Sprang (1896), Bolnes (1900), Apeldoorn (1905), Gorinchem (1908) and Amsterdam (1914–1937). See *In uwe voorhoven. Ter herinnering aan het leven en den arbeid van Ds. C. Lindeboom* (Amsterdam: S.J.P. Bakker, 1938); B. Wielenga, "Ds. C. Lindeboom," in *Jaarboek ten dienste van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* 23 (1939), ed. F.C. Meijster and K. Schilder (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1939), 430–434; H. Mulder, "Lindeboom, Cornelis," in *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, vol. 3 (Kampen: Kok 1988), 249–250.

⁹ The manuscript refers once to volume one of the first edition of Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* (*GE-Lindeboom*, 38). Because this volume was published in 1895, the manuscript must be dated to this year or later. If it is true that Cornelis Lindeboom is the author of the manuscript, the date can be determined exactly to the year 1895; for, Lindeboom ended his studies at Kampen in the summer of that year. This date would also explain why the manuscript is incomplete. The notes break off in the middle of a discussion of the Ten Commandments. Bavinck probably continued this discussion after the summer of 1895. But at that time Cornelis Lindeboom no longer attended Bavinck's classes.

distance between Bavinck and the text. Probably Van der Veen and Lindeboom worked out their notes in detail after class.¹⁰

It is striking, moreover, that the structure of Van der Veen's and Lindeboom's class notes is almost identical to the composition of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* manuscript. This similarity makes it likely that Bavinck had given his lectures in ethics in the years 1884–1886 and 1894–1895. If this inference is correct, then Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* manuscript can be dated to the first years of Bavinck's professorate at Kampen.



*Bound copy of the
Lindeboom manuscript*

¹⁰ Extracurricular editing can be inferred, for instance, from a passage in *GE-Lindeboom*, 150: “Geloof is het werk Gods, Joh. 6:29 (deze tekst is wellicht foutief gekozen door den Prof: “Gods” is Gen. Obj. hier).” (“Faith is the work of God, John 6:29 (this scriptural passage was perhaps chosen wrongly by the professor: “of God” is here an objective genitive).”) It is most unlikely that Lindeboom added this comment during the lecture. Nevertheless the manuscript offers a fine impression of Bavinck's lectures on Reformed ethics in 1895. Lindeboom's comment on John 6:29 also makes it clear that the references to Scripture were mentioned by Bavinck. The same must be said of the many references to works of 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th century Protestant (Reformed and Lutheran) theologians. It seems impossible that these could have been inserted by a student. For that reason, not only the structure and the main lines of the text but also many details reach back to Bavinck.

THE STRUCTURE OF BAVINCK'S *REFORMED ETHICS*

As mentioned above it appears that Bavinck worked on the manuscript of *Reformed Ethics* for years. In the same period he was also working at his *Reformed Dogmatics*. The four volumes of the latter were published successively in the years 1895, 1897, 1898 and 1901. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* resembles his *Reformed Dogmatics* in several ways.

A good example of this resemblance is the similar structure of the two works. Bavinck starts the *Reformed Dogmatics* with an introduction to the science of dogmatic theology and its method and organization.¹¹ The introduction is then followed by a chapter on the history and literature of dogmatics.¹² Likewise, the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript has a similar introduction, although in reverse order. The manuscript starts with an outline of the history of Reformed ethics and its literature.¹³ The introduction is then followed by sections on terminology, organization, and methodology.¹⁴

Bavinck prefers the term "ethics" to "morality."¹⁵ The task of ethics is to describe the birth, growth and revelation of spiritual life (geestelijk leven) in reborn man.¹⁶ In other words, "ethics is the sci-

¹¹ Herman Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 25–112.

¹² Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 115–204.

¹³ *GE*, §1.

¹⁴ *GE*, §§2–4.

¹⁵ *GE*, §2, page 1: "Wij verkiezen Ethiek, wijl dat woord nog niet, als moraal (zedepreek) kwaden reuk heeft; en wijl men onderscheid maakt tusschen moraal, als practische moraal, serie van levensregelen, als beschrijvend het doen als meer uitwendig en inductief, en ethiek als meer streng-wetenschappelijk, als beschrijvend het zijn, als meer inwendig, principieel, deductief"; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 10.

¹⁶ *GE*, §2, page 4: "De Ethiek heeft nu te beschouwen, hoe de mensch als redelijk, verantwoordelijk wezen zich toeigent en verwerkt de gave en krachten der eerste schepping, en 't Evangelie der genade aanneemt; hoe hij wedergeboren wordt, hoe dat leven aan krankheid, verzoeking, strijd onderworpen is; hoe het in daden (v. verstand, wil etc) zich omzetten en in een zedelijk leven naar Gods wet in alle omstandigheden zich openbaren moet. Ze beschouwt dus de

entific description of the realization of the mercy of Christ in our personal human life.”¹⁷

According to Bavinck, although ethics and dogmatics are closely related, they also must be distinguished. In the *Reformed Dogmatics* Bavinck writes:

Dogmatics describes the deeds of God done for, to, and in human beings; ethics describes what renewed human beings now do on the basis of and in the strength of those divine deeds. In dogmatics human beings are passive; they receive and believe; in ethics they are themselves active agents. In dogmatics, the articles of faith are treated; in ethics, the precepts of the Decalogue. In the former, that which concerns faith is dealt with; in the latter, that which concerns love, obedience, and good works. Dogmatics sets forth what God is and does for human beings and causes them to know God as their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; ethics sets forth what human beings are and do for God now; how, with everything they are and have, with intellect and will and all their strength, they devote themselves to God out of gratitude and love. Dogmatics is the system of the knowledge of God; ethics is that of the service of God.¹⁸

In his *Reformed Ethics* manuscript Bavinck describes the difference in exactly the same way:

voorbereiding, geboorte, ontwikkeling en openbaring naar buiten van den geestelijken mensch. Zij is de ‘Entwicklungsgeschichte des von Gott erlösten Menschen’ (Harless), de wissenschaftliche Darstellung von der Verwirklichung der Gnade Christi, d.h. seines göttlichen Lebeninhaltes in der Form des menschlichen Personlebens (Beck S. 84).”

¹⁷ *GE-Lindeboom*, 14: “[...] de Ethiek beschouwt de voortbrenging, de geboorte, de ontwikkeling, en de openbaring van het geestelijk leven in den mensch, en wel in den wedergeboren mensch. Ze is dus: de wetenschappelijke beschrijving van de verwerkelijking van Christus’ genade in ons menscheeljk persoonlijk leven; met andere woorden ze beschrijft de verwerkelijking van het heil Gods in den mensch.”

¹⁸ Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 58.

In dogmatics we get an answer to the question: what does God do for us? In this regard, we as human beings are only passive and receptive. Ethics tells us what we, as a consequence, have to do for God [...]. In dogmatics God descends to us; in ethics we ascend to God; in dogmatics we receive God, in ethics we give ourselves to Him; in dogmatics we say: God first has loved us with an eternal love; in ethics we say: and because of that we love Him.¹⁹

The method of ethics, Bavinck argues, is the same as in dogmatics. The point of departure is God's revelation. Holy Scripture is the principle of knowledge (*kenbron*) and norm (*norma*).²⁰ Accordingly, three methodological steps must be distinguished: (1) collecting and systematizing biblical data, (2) describing how these data have been adopted in the church, and (3) developing these data normatively (thetically) with a view to our own time.²¹ This threefold method in his *Reformed Ethics* manuscript is exactly the way Bavinck proceeds in the *Reformed Dogmatics*.

With respect to the composition of his ethical theory, Bavinck first discusses the ethical frameworks of several other Protestant theologians, including Antonius Driessen, Willem Teellinck, Campegius Vitringa, Benedictus Pictetus, Petrus van Mastricht, August Friedrich Christian Vilmar, Hans Lassen Martensen, Heinrich Heppe, and Adolf von Harless. After having noticed that the ethical formulations of these theologians are more or less the same, Bavinck chooses a similar, traditional structure for his own formu-

¹⁹ Quoted from *GE-Lindeboom*, 14–15; cf. *GE*, §2, p. 5: “In de dogmatiek: wat doet God voor, in ons? Hij is daar alles. De dogmatiek is een woord Gods aan ons, van buiten, boven tot ons komende; wij passief, luisterend, ons latende bewerken. In de Ethiek: wat wordt er van ons, als God ons zoo bewerkt, wat doen wij voor hem? Wij actief, juist door, op grond der daden Gods aan en in ons, wij psalmzingend en lovend en dankende God. Dogmatiek: God tot ons afdalend. Ethiek: wij tot God opstijgend. Dogmatiek: Hij de onze. Ethiek: wij de zijne. Dogmatiek: zij zullen zijn aangezicht zien. Ethiek: Zijn naam zal op hun voorhoofden wezen. Dogmatiek: uit God. Ethiek: tot God. Dogmatiek: Hij heeft ons liefgehad. Ethiek: daarom hebben wij hem lief.”

²⁰ *GE*, §4, p. 4; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 21.

²¹ *GE*, §4, p. 5; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 22.

lation. Thus he organizes the structure of his ethics into three parts: (1) man before conversion—the state of sin, conscience, morality, *ethica naturalis*; (2) regenerate man—the new life in its preparation, origin, parts, states, conditions, resources, blessings, marks, sicknesses, and consummation; and (3) regenerate man in his family, occupation, society, nation, and church.²² Bavinck indicates that he intends to end his ethics on an eschatological note with some reflections on the Kingdom of God.

Later in the manuscript Bavinck elaborates on this threefold plan, adjusting the titles of the three parts as follows: (1) man before conversion; (2) man in the conversion; and (3) man after conversion.²³ Furthermore, Bavinck adds a fourth part, “The social spheres in which moral life has to reveal itself.”

Part One of *Reformed Ethics*

Of course in this article it is not possible to discuss the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript in detail. Thus I will have to confine myself to a few comments on its main outlines. A quick glance at the titles of the three parts gives the impression that Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics* is entirely dogmatic in character. Dogmatics precedes ethics, and ethics is completely dependent on dogmatics. This interrelationship is confirmed when we read the first part of Bavinck’s *Reformed Ethics*: man before the conversion. This part is divided into three chapters and twelve sections.²⁴

²² *GE*, §3, p. 2: “Zoo krijgen we dus drie deelen: I. De mensch voor de bekering, in den toestand der zonde, geweten, zedelijkheid, ethica naturalis. II. De mensch wedergeboren; ’t nieuwe leven in zijn voorbereiding, oorsprong, deelen, staten, toevallen, hulpmiddelen, zegen, kenteekenen, krankheid en dood, voltooiing [...] III. De wedergeboren mensch in het huisgezin, beroep, maatschappij, staat, kerk”; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 18.

²³ Cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 23, 137, 256.

²⁴ Deel 1. De mensch voor de bekering. Hoofdstuk 1: De menschelijke natuur, op zichzelf beschouwd (§5. De mensch geschapen naar Gods beeld; §6. De inhoud der menschelijke natuur; §7. De levensvertrouwingen/betrekkingen van den mensch). Hoofdstuk 2: De mensch in de toestand der zonde (§8. De oude/natuurlijke mensch; §9. Beginsel en verdeeling der zonden; §10. Zelfzuchtige zonden in engeren zin; §11. Zonden tegen den naaste; §12. Zonden

In the first chapter, entitled, "Human nature, considered in itself," Bavinck states that man is created in the image of God.²⁵ In ethics, man's creation in the image of God is a crucial given. According to Bavinck, three basic principles can be derived from man's creation in God's image, namely: (1) Originally man was good; (2) Morally man cannot be properly understood apart from God; (3) Man's nature was corrupted by sin. Bavinck defends these basic principles against Fichte, Hegel, Rothe, and Darwin.²⁶

Bavinck devotes the second chapter of the first part of *Reformed Ethics* to the doctrine of sin. He starts by clarifying that he will not talk about the nature, guilt, and punishment of sin. These issues should be treated in dogmatics.²⁷ Another part of the doctrine of sin, however, should find its place in ethics. Bavinck tells his students that he learned this from theologians like Vilmar, Lampe, Buddaeus, and others, all of whom developed their doctrines of sin in both dogmatics and ethics.²⁸

Accordingly, in the second chapter Bavinck designs a detailed system of sins. He distinguishes three types of sin: selfish sins, sins against one's neighbor, and sins against God. Each can be divided into sensual (zinnelijke) and spiritual (geestelijke) sins.²⁹ For example, sins against one's neighbor are sins in which the neighbor or

tegen God; later Bavinck adds a section about Graden in de zonden). Hoofdstuk 3: De zedelijke natuur des menschen in den toestand der zonde (§13. Het beeld Gods in den gevallen mensch; §14. Het geweten; §15. De wet; §16. De justitia civilis). In the *GE-Lindeboom* manuscript the titles are almost identical.

²⁵ Bavinck elaborates on the image of God in the second volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics*. Therein he begins the chapter about human nature with these words: "The essence of human nature is its being [created in] the image of God" (Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation*, vol. 2 of *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 530).

²⁶ *GE*, §5, pp. 3–9; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 25–30.

²⁷ *GE*, §9, p. 1; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 49. Bavinck discusses the origin, spread, nature, and punishment of sin in the third volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics* (Herman Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, vol. 3 of *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 25–190).

²⁸ *GE-Lindeboom*, 49; cf. *GE*, §9, p. 1.

²⁹ *GE*, §§10–12; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 70–80.

what belongs to him is used for oneself. These sins can be sensual in character: sins against the neighbor's decency, property, or life. They also can be spiritual in character: sins against the neighbor's good reputation or his authority.³⁰ Bavinck's ethical doctrine of sin, therefore, is clearly a supplement to the doctrine of sin offered in his *Reformed Dogmatics*.

In the third chapter Bavinck sketches "The moral condition of man in the state of sin." He describes the consequences of sin for the nature of man, for soul and body, for reason, will and feelings, and he concludes that natural man lacks every capability to do what is right.³¹ God conserves humanity, however, via his general grace which curbs man's inclination to do evil. Although man has fallen into sin, he still has a reasonable, moral nature³² which reveals itself in human conscience.³³ According to Bavinck human conscience is bound to God's law.³⁴ For that reason he follows with sections on natural law (*lex naturalis*) and on how this law takes shape in individuals, state, and society.³⁵

Part Two of *Reformed Ethics*

The second part of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* offers a compre-

³⁰ *GE*, §11; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 75–79.

³¹ *GE*, §13, p. 7; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 86: "[...] de natuurlijke mensch mist alle vermogens om het goede te doen."

³² *GE*, §13, §15, p. 1; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 81–91, 124; Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 32.

³³ *GE*, §14, §15, p. 1; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 124. In the third volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics* Bavinck argues that "before the fall, strictly speaking, there was no conscience in man" and that "human conscience is the subjective proof of humanity's fall" (Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 173). Otherwise Bavinck does not pay much attention to human conscience in the *Reformed Dogmatics*. He was probably of the opinion that that this topic should be discussed in ethics. In any case he devotes a long section to human conscience in *Reformed Ethics* (*GE*, §14; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 91–124). Bavinck already wrote an article on human conscience in 1881: Herman Bavinck, "Het geweten," in *Kennis en leven. Opstellen en artikelen uit vroegere jaren* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, s.a. [1922]), 13–27.

³⁴ *GE*, §15, p. 1; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 124.

³⁵ *GE*, §15, §16; cf. *GE-Lindeboom*, 124–136.

hensive analysis of the spiritual life of the Christian organized into ten sections.³⁶ Bavinck starts with a description of the nature of spiritual life. Its basic principle is loving God, and this love is brought about by the Holy Spirit.³⁷

After sections on the origin of spiritual life (i.e. regeneration), its fundamental activity (i.e. faith), and objections to the views of mysticism, pietism and Methodism,³⁸ Bavinck arrives at the heart of spiritual life: the imitation of Christ—a subject which interested Bavinck during his whole career.³⁹ Christ is not only a king, a priest and a prophet, he argues, but also a model, an example, an ideal. This implies that we have to follow Him.⁴⁰ According to Bavinck the imitation of Christ does not mean that we have to duplicate Christ's way of living literally or physically, especially not his poverty, chastity, and obedience.⁴¹ Thus, Bavinck rejects the way of life in Roman Catholic monasteries. Neither does imitating Christ involve any kind of mysticism or a rationalistic obedience to Christ's commandments.⁴² For Bavinck, rather, imitating Christ consists in "the recognition of Christ as a Mediator." Inwardly, Christ must take shape in us. Outwardly, our lives must be shaped in conformity with the life of Christ. The imitation of Christ becomes manifest in vir-

³⁶ Deel II. De mensch in de bekering. §17. De natuur van het geestelijk leven; §18. Oorsprongen van het geestelijk leven; §19. De (eerste, grond)werkzaamheid van het geestelijk leven; §20. Mysticisme, Pietisme en Methodisme; §21. De vorm van het geestelijk leven (De navolging van Christus); §22. De ontwikkeling van het geestelijk leven; §23. De verzekering (en Verzegeling); §24. De krankheden van het geestelijk leven en hare oorzaken; §25. Middelen tot herstel; §26. Volmaking van 't geestelijk leven; *Meditatio mortis*. In the *GE-Lindeboom* manuscript the titles are almost identical.

³⁷ *GE*, §17, p. 8; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 5; *GE-Lindeboom*, 139.

³⁸ *GE*, §20; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 19–41; *GE-Lindeboom*, 144–174.

³⁹ Cf. John Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck," PhD diss., St. Michael's College, 1982; *idem*, "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck," *Calvin Theological Journal* 28, no. 1 (1993): 45–73.

⁴⁰ *GE*, §21, p. 1; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 41v.; *GE-Lindeboom*, 174.

⁴¹ *GE*, §21, p. 22; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 56v.; *GE-Lindeboom*, 184ff.

⁴² *GE*, §21, p. 23; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 57v.; *GE-Lindeboom*, 185.

tues like righteousness, sanctity, love, and patience.⁴³

Bavinck continues with sections on the growth of spiritual life, the assurance of faith, sicknesses of spiritual life (i.e. the struggle between flesh and spirit, temptations and spiritual abandonment), remedies to restore spiritual life (i.e. prayer, meditation, reading the Word of God, singing, isolation, fasting, watching, and vows), and finally the consummation of spiritual life after death.⁴⁴

The very long section on the assurance of faith is especially striking since one can ask whether it is proper to treat this theme in ethics. After a long historical survey of the topic Bavinck gives special attention to the doctrine of the marks (kentekenen) of the believer, such as, grief over sin, love of God's Word, and serving God. This section undoubtedly reflects the situation of the Dutch Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland) in Bavinck's day including Bavinck's own responsibility as a seminary professor for this church. In the tradition of the Secession the doctrine of the marks of grace was a difficult theme, one which directly influenced the spirituality of the congregation. Moreover, discussions about this doctrine could be linked to heated disputes over Abraham Kuyper's theory of presumptive regeneration.⁴⁵ It is telling, then, that we find in Van der Veen's and Lindeboom's class notes on this section a reference to Bavinck's own years as a minister in the congregation of the Christian Reformed Church (Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk) at Franeker!⁴⁶ In both sets of

⁴³ *GE*, §21, pp. 24ff.; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 58v.; *GE-Lindeboom*, 185–187.

⁴⁴ *GE*, §§22–26; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 60–77, 77–125, 125–156, 156–159, 159–160; *GE-Lindeboom*, 187–199, 199–233, 233–251, 251–254, 255.

⁴⁵ See Jan Veenhof, "A History of Theology and Spirituality in the Dutch Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken), 1892–1992," trans. Harry Boonstra, *Calvin Theological Journal* 28, no. 2 (1993): 268–271; *idem*, "Discussie over het zelfonderzoek—Sleutel tot verstaan van het schisma van 1944. Terreinverkenning ten dienst van verder onderzoek," in *Vrij gereformeerd: Verzamelde artikelen*, ed. Dirk van Keulen, et al. (Kampen 2005), 183–190.

⁴⁶ *GE-Van der Veen*, 89: "Prof. B. vertelde, dat een vrouw uit zijn vroegere gem. verzegeld was geworden door Jesaja 27:1!"; *GE-Lindeboom*, 208: "Ja zelfs heb ik in mijne Gemeente te Franeker—aldus verhaalde Prof. Bavinck—eene vrouw gekend, die verzegeld was met Jes. 27:1." The reference to Franeker is

class notes there are no other references to Bavinck's pastorate at Franeker. It is interesting, too, that Bavinck twice criticizes Abraham Kuyper in this section, which is also noted in both Van der Veen's and Lindeboom's class notes.⁴⁷ In light of Kuyper's highly controversial views on presumptive regeneration among the Secession churches Bavinck's criticism can hardly be accidental. We can only conclude, therefore, that for Bavinck the assurance of faith and the doctrine of the marks of grace were vitally important.

Part Three of *Reformed Ethics*

The third part of Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* is entitled "Man after conversion." It comprises three chapters. In the first chapter⁴⁸ Bavinck discusses "Sanctification in general," a theme he also discusses in the fourth volume of the *Reformed Dogmatics*.⁴⁹ In *Reformed Ethics* Bavinck concentrates on the doctrine of duty. A general discussion of the relationship between the Christian and the law⁵⁰ is followed by discussions about the difference between precepts or commands (*praecepta*) and counsels (*consilia*)—Bavinck explicitly rejects the Roman Catholic view of counsels—about acts which are morally indifferent (*adiaphora*), and about the clash (*collisio*) of duties.⁵¹ Bavinck mentions some of these topics briefly in the *Reformed Dogmatics*,⁵² but the broad elaboration of them in the *Reformed Ethics* clearly shows that Bavinck deliberately divided

lacking in *GE*.

⁴⁷ *GE*, §22, pp. 25, 37. See *GE-Van der Veen*, 101v., 113; *GE-Lindeboom*, 217, 226. We do not find Kuyper's name elsewhere in the *GE-Van der Veen* and *GE-Lindeboom* manuscripts.

⁴⁸ Deel III. De mensch na de bekeering. Hoofdstuk 1: De heiliging in 't algemeen (§27. De leer (theorie) van de plicht; §28. *Praecepta en consilia*; §29. De plicht en het geoorloofde; *Adiaphora*; §30. *Collisio van plichten*; §31: *Verdeeling der plichten*).

⁴⁹ Herman Bavinck, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, vol. 4 of *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 230ff.

⁵⁰ *GE*, §27; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 161–180; *GE-Lindeboom*, 256–266.

⁵¹ *GE*, §§28–31; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 180–245; *GE-Lindeboom*, 266–309.

⁵² Bavinck, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 239, 260.

the subject matter between dogmatics and ethics and that his *Reformed Ethics* was intended to be a companion to his *Reformed Dogmatics*.

In the second, third and fourth chapters of part three Bavinck connects the doctrine of duty with the Ten Commandments. In the second chapter he analyzes the first four commands as duties to God.⁵³ In the third chapter he discusses some duties to ourselves and links this duty to the fifth command. Bavinck writes concretely about duties to our physical life (i.e. one's care for food and clothing) and to our soul.⁵⁴ Finally, in the fourth chapter Bavinck discusses Christian charity and links this duty to the sixth through tenth commands.⁵⁵

Part Four of *Reformed Ethics*

In the fourth part of *Reformed Ethics* Bavinck planned to discuss how the Christian life should reveal itself in several social spheres. The first chapter is devoted to the family. For example, Bavinck explains in detail about the obligation to marry, impediments to marriage, degrees of consanguinity, engagement, the celebration of marriage, the nature of marriage, divorce, and the relationship between man and wife.⁵⁶ Then the document breaks off.

⁵³ *GE*, §§32–35; cf. *GE-Van der Veen*, 268–327; *GE-Lindeboom*, 325–385.

⁵⁴ Hoofdstuk 3. Plichten jegens onszelven (§36. In 't algemeen (de plicht tot zelfbehoud); §37. Plichten jegens het lichamelijk leven; §38. Vervolg: Zorg voor het voedsel; §39. Vervolg: Zorg voor de kleding; §40. Vervolg: Zorg voor het leven; §41. Plichten jegens 't lichamelijk leven, voortvloeiende uit het 7e, 8e, en 9e gebod; §42. Plichten jegens de ziel).

⁵⁵ Hoofdstuk 4. Plichten jegens den Naaste; §43. De naastenliefde in het algemeen; §44. Graden in de naastenliefde; §45. Zorg voor 't leven des naasten (zesde gebod); §46. Plichten jegens de eerbaarheid van den naaste (zevende gebod); §47. Plichten jegens den eigendom van den naaste (achtste gebod); §48. Plichten jegens den goeden naam van den naaste (negende gebod); §49. De begerlijkheid (tiende gebod).

⁵⁶ Deel IV. De levenskringen, waarin het zedelijk leven zich heeft te openbaren. Hoofdstuk 1: De familie. §50. De geschiedenis der familie; §51. De verplichting tot het huwelijk; §52. Beletselen van het huwelijk; §53. De graden der bloedverwantschap; §54. De verloving; §55. De huwelijksluiting; §56. Het

Bavinck probably would have added paragraphs about topics such as raising children, brothers and sisters, friendship, occupation, society, nation, and church. This much may be inferred from the introduction of the manuscript and from another unpublished document in the Bavinck Archives, which was likely used by Bavinck in his lectures on ethics, and which, I believe, also dates from the 1880s.⁵⁷

INTERMEZZO

As I noted above Bavinck must have worked on his *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics* at the same time for many years. 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*. This interrelation raises the question of why Bavinck did not finish and publish his *Reformed Ethics*. This question is even more compelling when we realize that around 1900 there was an urgent need for a Reformed ethics in the Dutch Reformed Churches. In 1897 Geesink, Professor of Ethics at the Free University, in his rectorial address entitled "Ethics in Re-

wezen van het huwelijk; §57. De echtscheiding; §58. Man en vrouw.

⁵⁷The document is entitled *Ethiek (Ethics)*, and it can be found in the Bavinck Archives, box 4/32, no. 43. After an introductory section covering terminology the *Ethics* document contains sections about philosophical ethics in general, principal schools of philosophical ethics, a brief outline of the history of philosophical ethics, and contemporary views of philosophical ethics. These sections are followed by a short sketch of Reformed ethics. The sketch consists of three main sections: (1) an introduction (with subsections on terminology, the history of Reformed ethics, and the foundations of Reformed ethics), (2) the first part, and (3) the second part. The first part, which has no title, is divided into seven subsections: (a) Doctrine of sin; (b) The origin of spiritual life; (c) Its development; (d) Its consummation; (e) Its resources; (f) Its blessing; and (g) Its norm. The second part, entitled, "Revelation of that [spiritual] life in the World," is divided into six subsections: (a) In the family (Bavinck plans to speak about marriage; monogamy; the single state; second marriage; adultery; celibacy; divorce; the duties, aim and blessing of marriage; parents and children; upbringing; education; brothers and sisters; shaping of the character; servants; family friends; friendship); (b) In the obligation; (c) In society; (d) In the state; (e) In the church; and finally (f) a section on the Kingdom of God.

formed Theology” (De ethiek in de gereformeerde theologie) complains about “the dearth in our time of specifically Reformed ethical studies.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, Bavinck himself was well aware of the need. In the preface of his small booklet, *Present-Day Morality (Hedendaagsche moraal)*, which was published in 1902, Bavinck writes:

In our circles [i.e. the Dutch Reformed Churches] we are greatly lacking in publications which discuss and elucidate the moral principles and questions of the present day. In this respect, we are suffering from a pitiful deficiency, which hopefully will be remedied soon by the cooperation and effort of many.⁵⁹

Why, then, did Bavinck not publish his *Reformed Ethics*? Was Geesink working on a Reformed ethics? And did Bavinck not want to obstruct his colleague by thwarting his plans? If this were true, Bavinck’s position would be comparable with Abraham Kuyper’s with regard to dogmatics. After the completion of his *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology* (1894) Kuyper planned to write a Reformed dogmatics, but he gave up his plan when he heard that Bavinck was working on such a project.⁶⁰ Geesink did in fact write a Reformed ethics, but he did not publish it during his lifetime. The Dutch Reformed Churches had to wait until 1931 for its posthumous

⁵⁸ W. Geesink, *De ethiek in de gereformeerde theologie. Rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat der Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam op 20 oktober 1897* (Amsterdam: Kirchner, 1897), 6: “Deze armoede van onzen tijd aan specifiek Gereformeerde ethische studie.”

⁵⁹ H. Bavinck, *Hedendaagsche moraal* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1902), 7: “Aan geschriften, die de zedelijke beginselen en vraagstukken van den tegenwoordigen tijd bespreken en toelichten, bestaat er in onze kringen een groot gebrek. Wij lijden ook in dit opzicht aan een jammerlijk tekort, dat door veler samenwerking en inspanning spoedig moge ingehaald worden.”

⁶⁰ J. Stellingwerff, “Over de bibliotheek en de boeken van dr. A. Kuyper en over enkele publicaties, die zijn ijdelheid zouden hebben gestreeld of zijn verweer opgeroepen indien ze tijdens zijn leven waren verschenen,” in *Geboekt in eigen huis: Bevattende een opsomming van de werken van Abraham Kuyper zoals vermeld in de catalogus van de bibliotheek van de Vrije Universiteit* (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1987), 31ff.

publication by Valentijn Hepp.⁶¹ Or did Bavinck have another reason for not publishing his *Reformed Ethics*? Perhaps another manuscript gives a clue here.

THE DE JONG MANUSCRIPT

The Bavinck Archives also contain a handwritten manuscript entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek van Profess. Dr. H. Bavinck (Reformed Ethics of Prof. Bavinck)*.⁶² Just like the Van der Veen and Lindeboom manuscripts, the De Jong manuscript is comprised of lecture notes. The manuscript's author is Jelle Michiels de Jong (1874–1927), who began studying theology at Kampen in September 1901. In 1903 De Jong followed Bavinck to Amsterdam to continue his studies at the Free University.⁶³ Subsequently, he worked as a minister in the small Frisian villages of Foudgum (1906), Wons (1913), and Duurswoude (1918–1924).⁶⁴



J. M. De Jong (1874–1927)

⁶¹ W. Geesink, *Gereformeerde ethiek, voor den druk gereed gemaakt en voorzien van een levensbeschrijving door Prof. Dr. V. Hepp*, 2 vols. (Kampen: J.H. Kok 1931).

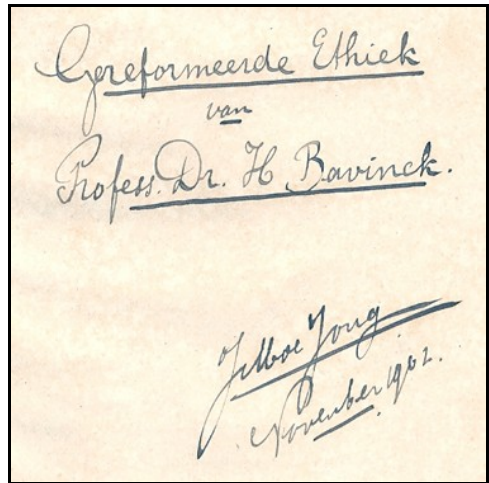
⁶² *Gereformeerde Ethiek van Profess. Dr. H. Bavinck*, made by Jelle Michiels de Jong, Bavinck Archives, box 26/32 (HB Diktaten); hereafter abbreviated as *GE-De Jong*. The Library of the Protestant Theological University at Kampen preserves a handwritten duplicate of the *GE-De Jong* manuscript (shelf mark 187D15). This anonymous duplicate once belonged to G.C. Berkouwer, the former dogmatician of the Free University. He received the manuscript as a gift on the occasion of his inaugural address on 11 October 1940.

⁶³ Van Gelderen and Rozemond, *Gegevens*, 122.

⁶⁴ *Gemeenten en predikanten van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*, s.l. (uitgave Algemeen secretariaat van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, 1992), 316. See also D. v.d. Meulen, "Ds J.M. de Jong" in *Jaarboek ten dienste*

De Jong signed the title page of the manuscript and dated it “November 1902”—a few weeks before Bavinck moved from Kampen to the Free University on 16 December 1902.⁶⁵ De Jong’s date explains why the manuscript is incomplete: after November 1902 Bavinck no longer gave lectures in ethics at Kampen. Just like the manuscripts of Van der Veen and Lindeboom, the De Jong manuscript often gives the impression that the text comes close to Bavinck himself. We even find a sentence with the verb in the first person singular.⁶⁶

The De Jong manuscript, which numbers 331 pages, starts with ethical terminology. Bavinck explains, for example, the etymologies of selected Greek, Latin, and Germanic words,⁶⁷ and the meaning of and the difference between terms like habit (*gewoonte*), usage (*gebruik*), custom (*zede*), and morality (*zedelijkheid*)⁶⁸. As in the other manuscripts Bavinck prefers the term “ethics” rather than “morality” or the German “*Sittenlehre*.”⁶⁹ The task of ethics is “to let us see and know the principle and the system of morality.”⁷⁰



Cover page from the De Jong handwritten “dictaat” of Reformed Ethics

van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, vol. 12, ed. G. Doekes and J.C. Rullmann (Goes 1928), 355–357.

⁶⁵ Van Gelderen and Rozemond, *Gegevens*, 32.

⁶⁶ *GE-De Jong*, 26.

⁶⁷ *GE-De Jong*, 1–7.

⁶⁸ *GE-De Jong*, 7–12; cf. 153.

⁶⁹ *GE-De Jong*, 12–17.

⁷⁰ *GE-De Jong*, 17: “Ethiek heeft dus tot taak om ons te doen zien en kennen: Het Principe in de eerste plaats en het systeem van het zedelijke in de tweede plaats.”

Gereformeerde Ethiek.Inleiding.

§ I Begrip der Ethiek.

I De oudste getuigenissen welke ons een inzicht geven in 't ontstaan en de beteekenis vft menschelyke voorstellingen zijn ons bewaard in de Taal. De taal is het oudste document voor de vorming en ontwikkeling vft menschelyke begrippen. Daarom begint elke wetenschap en ook de Ethiek met de afleiding vft naam, waarmee deze wetenschap is aangeduid. Toch moet men er daarbij op bedacht zijn dat de beteekenis vft woorden nooit stil staat, verandert altyd zich ontwikkelt, en het dus licht gebeuren kan dat een woord eene beteekenis waarin wij het nu gebruiken voortpronkelyk niet gehad heeft en omgekeerd. Bij de etymologie moet dus tegelykertyd nagegaan de geschiedenis vft beteekenis vft woord.

De Jong manuscript, p. 1

After this general introduction the manuscript is split up into two parts. Surprisingly, in the first part (pp. 18–139!) Bavinck teaches philosophical ethics. He presents the characteristic questions which this discipline seeks to answer, such as, “What is good?” and “Why is it good?”⁷¹ In Bavinck’s view ethics is grounded in philosophy; thus, “someone’s philosophical ethics,” writes Bavinck, “will be in accordance with the principles of his philosophy.”⁷²

⁷¹ GE-De Jong, 24.⁷² GE-De Jong, 23, 142.

Bavinck aims to sketch a detailed outline of the history of philosophical ethics and opts for a systematic approach.⁷³ He starts by describing and analyzing six philosophical systems which seek the principle and the norm for ethics in man itself, namely: (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).⁷⁴

This survey is followed by an analysis of nine philosophical systems which seek the principle and the norm for ethics outside of man, namely: (1) in God; (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 (zelfvolmaking) (Spinoza); (7) Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill); (8) the ethics of Evolutionism (Charles Darwin, John Spencer); and (9) Positivism (Auguste Comte).⁷⁵ Finally, Bavinck discusses what he terms “the despair of all morality or pessimism” (Eduard von Hartmann, Arthur Schopenhauer).⁷⁶

For the most part these descriptions are stated in a neutral and instructional style, and Bavinck withholds his own opinions. Only a few times does he make comments. At the end of the section on classical Greek philosophy, for instance, Bavinck mentions that many scholastic theologians adopted Aristotelian thought in their ethics. According to Bavinck, “in itself there is no great objection to this.”⁷⁷ “We can profit,” continues Bavinck, “from Aristotelian thought, and without doubt Aristotle’s ethics is basically the best

⁷³ *GE-De Jong*, 25–26.

⁷⁴ *GE-De Jong*, 26–64.

⁷⁵ *GE-De Jong*, 64–18.

⁷⁶ *GE-De Jong*, 129–138.

⁷⁷ *GE-De Jong*, 36: “Op zichzelf is hiertegen niet zoo groot bezwaar.”

philosophical ethics.”⁷⁸ According to Bavinck Aristotle's only mistake is to think that man can achieve the ethical ideal—developing all his moral faculties and strengths in accordance with his own moral nature—by his own strength.⁷⁹ Bavinck is very critical in his description of the ethics of evolutionism.⁸⁰ Several times in the manuscript he severely opposes the theories of Darwin.⁸¹

It is striking for present-day readers that Bavinck hardly pays any attention to Nietzsche. Bavinck occasionally mentions his name,⁸² but compared with other philosophers Nietzsche comes off badly. This is understandable, however, when we realize that around 1900 Nietzsche was not well-known in the Netherlands.⁸³

⁷⁸ *GE-De Jong*, 36: “Ook met de gedachten van Arist[oteles] kunnen we onze winst doen en zonder twijfel is de Ethiek van Aristoteles de beste philos[ophische] Ethiek in hoofdzaak.”

⁷⁹ *GE-De Jong*, 36: “Want wat is het schone er in [Aristotle's philosophical ethics]? Dat hij met de Christenen hierin overeenstemt dat de mensch in het zedelijke al de hem geschonken gaven en krachten harmonisch ontwikkelen moet in overeenstemming met zijne zedelijke natuur. Hij dwaalt alleen daarin dat dat ideaal voor den mensch in eigen kracht bereikbaar zou zijn.”

⁸⁰ *GE-De Jong*, 100–120.

⁸¹ See, for example, *GE-De Jong*, 18ff., 161ff., 166, 174, 205, 281ff., 291ff. Many of Bavinck's other publications are likewise sharply critical of Darwin (Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 83, 511–520, 525ff., 535–537; *idem*, “Evolution” in *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 105–118; cf. Willem-Jan de Wit, “Beeld van gorilla en chimpansee of beeld van God?: De eerste pagina's van Herman Bavinck's manuscript ‘De mensch, Gods Evenbeeld’ (1884). Inleiding, tekst en commentaar,” in *Ontmoetingen met Bavinck*, ed. George Harinck and Gerrit Neven (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 2006), 165–182).

⁸² See *GE-De Jong*, 24ff., 136–138, 176, 251, 267. In the *Reformed Dogmatics*, too, Bavinck mentions Nietzsche's name only a few times: Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 118; *idem*, *God and Creation*, 44, 89, 210, 526; *idem*, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 59, 238, 531; *idem*, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, 258, 647.

⁸³ To the best of my knowledge Abraham Kuyper introduced Nietzsche's philosophy in the Netherlands in his 1892 rectorial address entitled *De verflauwing der grenzen* (Amsterdam: J.A. Wormser, 1892) (English translation: “The Blurring of the Boundaries” in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans/Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1998), 363–402).

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men het zoeken in rede, geweten, verstand, ge-
voel, in een byz. aandaling des gevoels byz.
van medelijden etc.

Of men kan het zoeken buiten den mensch. b.v.
in God, natuur, staat, overheid, eigen vol-
making, anderer geluk, welvaart, lusten
genot.

Of eindelijk kan men met velen vff tegenw. tijd
v. alle Philos. Eth. wanhopen.

Dienaangaande, dienovereenkomstig zal ik
trachten een overzicht te geven vff verschillende
stelsels vff Philos. Ethiek.

Hoofdstuk. I

A. Princiep en Norma in den Mensch.

§ 1. Ethiek v/d. Reeta Ratio.

Dit is die Eth., welke 't princiep en de norma vff sedel.
handelen vindt in 't menschen sedel. natuur. 't is
vff Rationeelle Ethiek (niet rationalist. Eth.).
Dere Eth. dagteekent vff Grieken. 't is die Eth. welke na
Socrates en Plato inzonderk door Aristoteles behan-
delt werd. Bij de Grieken lag de grondslag vff 't sedel.

De Jong manuscript, p. 26⁸⁴

The second part of the De Jong manuscript is devoted to theo-
logical ethics. Two sections can be distinguished. On pp. 139–160

⁸⁴ Ed. note: The last sentence before the beginning of Chapter 1 (lines 10-12 from top) reads as follows: “Concerning [all these possibilities] and corresponding to them, I will attempt to give an overview of the various systems of philosophical ethics.” [“Dienaangaande, dienovereenkomstig zal ik trachten een overzicht te geven v[an] d[e] verschillende stelsels van de philos[ophische] ethiek.”]

we find a short outline of Bavinck's theological ethics. It is possible that Bavinck started his 1901–1902 lectures on ethics in September 1901 with philosophical ethics.⁸⁵ Producing these lectures took so much time that Bavinck could not offer his students an elaborated theological ethics before the summer of 1902. For that reason he confined himself to an outline.

Bavinck begins the outline with an introduction to the following topics: related terminology; the question why philosophical ethics is insufficient (i.e. theoretically speaking philosophical ethics cannot find a norm for morality, and practically speaking it cannot overcome human selfishness); the relationship between dogmatics and ethics; and the history and organization of theological ethics.⁸⁶ After the introduction Bavinck divides his theological ethics into three chapters:

1. "The doctrine of the moral subject" contains sections on the following: man as the image of God; the disturbance of the image of God by sin; man's moral nature in the state of sin; man as a moral creature; the moral capacities of man; the moral acts of man; the insufficiency of natural morality; special grace; spiritual life; the development of spiritual life; the relationship between spiritual and moral life; and special gifts.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Other evidence, however, suggests that Bavinck taught theological ethics during the academic year 1901–1902 and again in 1902–1903 (*Handelingen der twee-en-zestigste vergadering van de Curatoren der Theologische School van "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland," gehouden 1–3 juli 1902 te Kampen* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1902), 26; cf. *Almanak van het studentencorps, "Fides Quaerit Intellectum," voor het jaar 1903* (Kampen: Ph. Zalsman, 1903), 37). During the year 1900–1901 Bavinck would have taught "Overzicht van de geschiedenis der Ethiek" (Survey of the history of ethics), which could be interpreted as philosophical ethics (*Handelingen der een-en-zestigste vergadering van de Curatoren der Theologische School van "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland," gehouden 3–5 juli 1902 te Kampen* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1901), 35; cf. *Almanak van het studentencorps, "Fides Quaerit Intellectum," voor het jaar 1902*, s.l. s.a., 33). Perhaps De Jong attended Bavinck's lectures in ethics one year before he officially started his theological studies.

⁸⁶ *GE-Lindeboom*, 139–145.

⁸⁷ *GE-De Jong*, 145–152: Deel A. Leer van het zedelijk subject (§1. De mensch als beeld Gods; §2. Verstoring van het beeld Gods door de mensch; §3.

2. “The doctrine of the law” contains sections on the following: the law as the rule of gratitude; the nature of law; the division of law; the breaching of law (i.e. a detailed doctrine of sin); and ten sections on the Ten Commandments.⁸⁸

3. “The purpose of morality” contains sections on the following: the purpose of morality in general; the honor of God; the purpose of morality with regard to individual man; the purpose of morality with regard to families (i.e. the Christian family); moral good in society; moral good in company (including art, science and education); moral good in the nation; the church seen from a moral point of view; the kingdom of God.⁸⁹

This brief survey of the outline and the organization of the De Jong manuscript reveals both similarities and differences between it and the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript. As for similarities both manuscripts start with man as the image of God and plan to end with the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the themes and contents of many sections can be found in both manuscripts. But there are also the following differences:

In the first place, the titles of the main parts differ. In the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript we have the dogmatic and schematic sounding “Man before the conversion,” “Man in the conversion,” and “Man after the conversion.” In the De Jong manuscript we find

De mensch als zedelijk wezen in de toestand der zonde; §4. De inhoud van het zedelijke in de mensch; §5. De zedelijke kwaliteiten van de mensch (leer van de deugd); §6. De zedelijke handelingen van de mensch; §7. Ongenoegzaamheid der natuurlijke moraal; §8. Bijzondere genade; §9. 't Geestelijk leven; §10. Ontwikkeling van het geestelijk leven; §11. Geestelijk leven in verband met het zedelijk leven; §12. Bijzondere gaven).

⁸⁸ *GE-De Jong*, 152: Deel A. Leer van het zedelijk subject 155: Deel B. Leer van de Wet (§13. De wet als regel der dankbaarheid; §14. De natuur der (zede)wet; §15. Verdeeling der wet; §16. Overtreding der wet; §§17–26. 1e-10e gebod).

⁸⁹ *GE-De Jong*, 156–160: Deel C. Het doel van het zedelijke (§27. Doel der zedelijkheid; §28. De eere Gods; §29. Doel van het zedelijk goede van den enkelen mensch; §30. 't Zedelijk goede van de familiën; §31. 't Zedelijk goede in de maatschappij; §32. 't Zedelijk goede in den kring van het gezellig leven; §33. De staat; §34. De kerk uit zedelijk standpunt; §35. Het rijk Gods).

the more philosophical sounding “The doctrine of moral subject,” “The doctrine of law,” and “The purpose of morality.”

In the second place, the first and the second parts of the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript have been fused together into the first chapter of the De Jong manuscript.

In the third place, the third and the fourth parts of the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript have become the second and the third chapters of the De Jong manuscript. As a result the composition of the De Jong manuscript corresponds more or less with the composition Bavinck sketched in the introduction of his *Reformed Ethics* manuscript.

Finally, the doctrine of sin, which could be found in the first part of the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript, has been moved to the second chapter of the De Jong manuscript. Page 161 of the De Jong manuscript restarts its numbering at chapter 1, section 1: “Man as the image of God.”⁹⁰ This section is followed by these topics: “The vocation of man as created in the image of God,” “Fallen man,” “Principle and classification of sins,” “Stages and development of sin,” and “The image of God in fallen man.”⁹¹ All of these sections have been worked out in detail.

I assume that Bavinck had again decided to deliver his lectures on theological ethics after the summer of 1902.⁹² Thus the placement of the doctrine of sin in chapter two of the De Jong Manuscript is striking, for Bavinck discusses sin again in the first part of his *Reformed Ethics*. This repetition may be due to the fact

⁹⁰ *GE-De Jong*, 161–180.

⁹¹ *GE-De Jong*, 180–205, 206–234, 234–279, 280–296, and 296–325 respectively. These sections are numbered §§6–10. The numbering of the section on “Man as the image of God” as §1 is probably a mistake. I assume that it should have been numbered §5. The section numbers §§1–4 were reserved for the introduction.

⁹² Cf. *Handelingen der twee-en-zestigste vergadering van de Curatoren der Theologische School van “De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland,” gehouden 1–3 juli 1902 te Kampen* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1902), 26: “Door Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck (zal D.V. in den cursus 1902/03 behandeld worden): [...] Ethiek: De leer van de zedelijke natuur des menschen in den toestand der zonde.”

that Bavinck, realizing that his forthcoming transfer to Amsterdam was taking more time than he liked, re-used his *Reformed Ethics* manuscript in the autumn of the year 1902.

HERMAN BAVINCK, REFORMED ETHICS, AND PHILOSOPHICAL ETHICS

During his long career, Herman Bavinck was not only interested in dogmatics, but also in ethics.⁹³ This fact is illustrated by Bavinck's various publications related to ethics. In 1880, for example, he obtained his doctorate with a thesis on the ethics of Zwingli.⁹⁴ One year later Bavinck published two articles on the human conscience.⁹⁵ In 1885–1886 he wrote a series of three articles on the imitation of Christ.⁹⁶ Later in 1918 Bavinck would rewrite these articles to form the booklet, *The Imitation of Christ and Modern Life* (*De navolging van Christus en het moderne leven*).⁹⁷ Previously I mentioned the booklet, *Present-Day Morality* (1902). We also could think of Bavinck's speech on "Ethics and Politics" (recently translated into English), which he delivered at a meeting of the Dutch Royal Academy of Science in 1915,⁹⁸ and of his publications on the war question in the days of the First World War.⁹⁹

In addition to writing on ethics Bavinck also lectured on ethics

⁹³ Cf. Bolt, "Christ and the Law in the Ethics of Herman Bavinck," 45ff.

⁹⁴ Herman Bavinck, *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli* (Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 1880).

⁹⁵ Herman Bavinck, "Het geweten," *De vrije Kerk* 7 (1881): 27–37, 49–58; Also published in *Kennis en leven. Opstellen en artikelen uit vroegere jaren* (Kampen: J.H. Kok s.a. [1922]), 13–27.

⁹⁶ Herman Bavinck, "De navolging van Christus," *De vrije kerk* 11 (1885): 101–113, 203–213; 12 (1886): 321–333.

⁹⁷ Herman Bavinck, *De navolging van Christus en het Moderne Leven* (Kampen s.a. [1918]); Also published in *Kennis en leven: Opstellen en artikelen uit vroegere jaren* (Kampen s.a. [1922]), 115–144).

⁹⁸ Herman Bavinck, "Religion and Politics" in *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 261–278.

⁹⁹ See Dirk van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck and the War Question," in Dirk van Keulen and Martien E. Brinkman, eds., *Christian Faith and Violence, Volume 1* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2005), 122–140.

during his years at Kampen. The extensive *Reformed Ethics* manuscript provides clear evidence that Bavinck must have worked simultaneously on his *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics*. The latter, which itself was dogmatical in character, was meant as a companion to the former.

Comparison of the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript with the Van der Veen and Lindeboom manuscripts brings to light that Bavinck, at least in 1884–1886 and 1894–1895, delivered his lectures on ethics on the basis of his *Reformed Ethics* manuscript.

Moreover, comparison of the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript with the De Jong manuscript reveals that Bavinck struggled with the composition of his ethics. In the introduction of *Reformed Ethics* he opts for a traditional composition in three parts. The subsequent, detailed elaboration, however, consists of four parts. The De Jong manuscript shows how Bavinck returned to a composition in three parts. In the De Jong Bavinck also says farewell to the titles “man before the conversion,” “man in the conversion,” and “man after the conversion.” Perhaps this structure was too schematic.

The biggest difference between the *Reformed Ethics* and the De Jong manuscripts is the place of philosophical ethics. In *Reformed Ethics* (and in the Van der Veen and Lindeboom manuscripts) Bavinck hardly pays any attention to philosophical ethics. In the De Jong manuscript, however, the whole first part is devoted to it.

We should not conclude from this difference that Bavinck taught philosophical ethics for the first time in the academic year 1901–1902. Previously I referred to another unpublished manuscript, *Ethiek*, which probably dates from the 1880s.¹⁰⁰ In this document Bavinck discusses philosophical ethics in general, gives a brief outline of its history, and surveys contemporary views of it.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Ethiek (Ethics)*, Bavinck Archives, box 4/32, no. 43. See note 57 above.

¹⁰¹ The brief outline of the history of philosophical ethics is divided into three sections: A. Greek philosophy; B. Newer times (Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza); C. Newest philosophy: criticism and speculation (Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schleiermacher). Furthermore Bavinck discusses five “contemporary views of philosophical ethics”: independent morality, Positivism, Utilitarianism, Evolution

Compared with the De Jong manuscript the outline in *Ethics* is somewhat simplified, although Bavinck voices critiques more explicitly. The *Ethics* manuscript also shows that Bavinck paid attention to philosophical ethics earlier than the academic year 1901–1902 in his lectures on ethics. Possibly Bavinck taught ethics in a biennial program in which philosophical ethics alternated with theological ethics.

In the Bavinck Archives we find another manuscript, though a relatively small one.¹⁰² I think it must date to Bavinck's last years at Kampen. After the introduction the manuscript is divided into two parts: (1) philosophical ethics and (2) Reformed ethics. The first philosophical sections are briefly worked out. Compared with the De Jong manuscript almost all the section titles are the same. Only in the philosophical part are two sections added: Buddhism and anarchism. Bavinck likely gave his 1901–1902 lectures in ethics with this smaller manuscript in front of him.

Comparison of all the manuscripts reveals that during his years at Kampen Bavinck's interest in philosophy increases.¹⁰³ At minimum we must admit that in 1902 philosophy has become Bavinck's serious discussion partner. It seems that, according to Bavinck, Reformed ethics could no longer afford to neglect philosophy. This thrust can also be seen in his booklet, *Present-Day Morality* (1902), and in his speech "Ethics and Politics" (1915). Philosophy holds an important position in both publications.

An analogous but opposite development can be observed with regard to the references to the works of Protestant theologians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In the *Reformed Ethics* manuscript (and in the Van der Veen and Lindeboom manuscripts) we find many references to the Protestant "fathers."

theory, and Pessimism.

¹⁰² Herman Bavinck, "Gereformeerde Ethiek," Bavinck Archives, box 15/32, no. 204.

¹⁰³ For a general analysis of Bavinck's attitude towards philosophy see Jan Veenhof, "De God van de filosofen en de God van de bijbel: Herman Bavinck en de wijsbegeerte," in *Ontmoetingen met Bavinck*, ed. George Harinck and Gerrit Neven (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 2006), 219–233.

In the De Jong manuscript the fathers can barely be found.

The differences between the *Reformed Ethics* and the De Jong manuscripts may also explain why Bavinck did not publish the former: he was not satisfied with it. Its composition had to be changed, and perhaps philosophy could no longer be ignored. Why Bavinck did not publish a Reformed ethics after his move to Amsterdam is a question I cannot answer. We can only guess. One reason could be that Geesink was responsible for ethics at the Free University.

Finally, it is often said in Bavinck scholarship that during his years at Amsterdam Bavinck lost interest in dogmatics and instead developed his interest in culture, philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy. The first part of this argument was refuted some years ago by George Harinck, Kees van der Kooi, and Jasper Vree. They published Bavinck's notes on the position of Rev. J.B. Netelenbos in his conflict with the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Churches.¹⁰⁴ The notes show that Bavinck did not lose his interest in dogmatics.

The ethical manuscripts in the Bavinck Archives, moreover, clearly show that in his time at Kampen Bavinck was already interested in philosophy and culture. This observation supports Jan Veenhof's proposition that we should not exaggerate the distance between Bavinck's first (Kampen) and second (Amsterdam) period and that we should not interpret the differences between both periods as a split.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ "Als Bavinck nu maar eens kleur bekende": Aantekeningen van H. Bavinck over de zaak-Netelenbos, *het Schriftgezag en de situatie van de Gereformeerde Kerken (november 1919)*, ed. G. Harinck, C. van der Kooi, and J. Vree (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1994).

¹⁰⁵ J. Veenhof, *Revelatie en inspiratie: De Openbarings- en Schriftbeschouwing van Herman Bavinck in vergelijking met die der ethische theologie* (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1968), 101; cf. George Harinck, "Eén uur lang is het hier brandend en licht geweest," in *Ontmoetingen met Bavinck*, ed. George Harinck and Gerrit Neven (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 2006), 107–117.