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“Anything from the pen of J.H. Bavinck is important to read. This work is even more valuable for the western church than it was when written, for the great religions of the world are now present in Europe and North America in numbers that could not have been imagined in the mid-20th century. Beyond that, the ‘magnetic points’ are crucial for helping us speak to the religious and non-religious as well. Read this little gem of a book!”

–TIM KELLER, Redeemer City to City

“J. H. Bavinck is a sublime but neglected thinker. Through his psychological insights, global focus, and rich biblical theology, his works offer the reader a uniquely Reformed perspective on Christianity (and the Western culture it produced) in relation to other faiths, and the cultures most deeply shaped by them. This book provides a sterling example of that. *The Church Between Temple and Mosque* is essential reading for Christians looking to understand other faiths, as well as the uniqueness of their own.”

–JAMES EGLINTON, Meldrum Senior Lecturer in Reformed
Theology, University of Edinburgh

“This book, which in spite of its modest size is a masterpiece, brings together all the theological and psychological lines that Bavinck traced in the course of his working life in the light of Scripture. His drive to interpret the uniqueness of the gospel broadly, especially in missionary contexts, motivated him to try to fully grasp the essence of non-Christian religions theologically and psychologically. His aim was to bring the insights he had gained into dialogue with the core of the Gospel and to show in a convincing way that all religious striving of people asks for the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The very results of his research confirmed Bavinck in his conviction that this remains the redeeming turning point in the (religious) history of this world.”

–PAUL J. VISSER, Author, *Heart for the Gospel, Heart for the World:
The Life and Thought of a Reformed Pioneer Missiologist,
Johan Herman Bavinck, 1895-1964*

“I was first introduced to J.H. Bavinck’s work in my missions class during seminary. His classic, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* was foundational to my understanding of missions. Equally helpful is this reproduction of his *The Church Between Temple and Mosque*. Bavinck masterfully identifies the five questions that various world religions seek to answer and then interacts with them from a Christian worldview. For those who are eager to engage with those from other religions, this book is a wonderful resource. Very grateful for this republication!”

–LLOYD KIM, Coordinator,
Mission to the World

“With the rage and lure of contemporary ‘religious fantasies’, and the swelling demands for unqualified acceptance of all faiths, philosophies, and moral paradigms, the republication of this book comes as a welcome gift to the Church. Like an expert world art historian, J. H. Bavinck explains the common features of world religions as they have been crafted throughout the centuries, yet punctuates their distinct religious colors and contours. He then, with both insight and compassion, distinguishes Christianity from all other religions, and compellingly affirms why the Christ of Scripture delivers what other faiths simply cannot. No fabrication of human idolatry, Christ alone is the true Logos, the true Savior, the true Hope. This seasoned missionary-scholar writes not as a remote academic, but as a man among religious men, pressed by their assertions, but finally and blessedly impressed only by the Christ of Scripture. Even as your nagging religious questions receive compelling answers, you will find yourself more deeply amazed and touched afresh by the gospel of God in his Son.”

–DAVID B. GARNER, Professor of Systematic Theology,
Westminster Theological Seminary

“After evaluating various theories of how to categorize religions Bavinck concludes that ‘universal religious consciousness’ is mysterious and continuous, demonstrating a fundamental unity. This religious consciousness is broken down into five magnetic points, of questions to which all people are drawn. The answers one comes to in responding to these questions determine one’s conduct and attitude to life. For instance, all religions to some extent are concerned with the problem of redemption. Bavinck analyses the major religions, skillfully describing the deeper aspects of the faith in regard to each of the magnetic points. But the particularly insightful points made are how these religions relate to common themes addressed by the Christian Scriptures. This is first brought out through an exposition of Romans 1, followed by the unique distinctives of the Bible from other religions, including the meaning and direction of history toward the inauguration of his Kingdom. Bavinck ends with an insightful biblical response to each of the five magnetic points he previously described in the other major religions. In interacting with other religions, he maintains the primacy of God’s sovereignty and the proclamation of his transforming Word.”

–BRUCE MCDOWELL, President of Santiago
Theological Seminary, Dominican Republic

“There isn’t a place on earth that is not a mission field for the Reformed Christian, making Reformed missiology, religious studies, and cultural reflection imperatives for faithful service to the church today, and this little gem from Johan Bavinck is a great place to start. The rich but supple theological heritage of neo-Calvinism bolsters Bavinck’s remarkable cross-cultural and inter-religious sensibilities, making this text as much a tour of a great man’s heart, mind, and experience as it is a dazzling lesson in missiological instinct and principle. Cheers to Westminster Seminary Press, and may it be widely read.”

–NATHAN D. SHANNON, General Editor,
The Great Thinkers Series

The Church Between Temple and Mosque

The Church Between Temple and Mosque

A Study of the Relationship between
Christianity and Other Religions

J.H. Bavinck

Introduction by Daniel Strange

WSP WESTMINSTER
SEMINARY PRESS

*The Church Between Temple and Mosque:
A Study of the Relationship Between Christianity and Other Religions*

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Printed and Bound in the United States of America

Creative Direction and Design by Foreknown
Typeset in Adobe Garamond by Katherine Lloyd

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-955859-05-9

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Introduction

The little book you are about to read preserved my spiritual sanity. In the early 1990s, I was a fresh-faced, zealous but somewhat naïve first-year undergraduate studying theology and religious studies in a so-called “secular” British university. My search for intellectual and emotional points of contact between the tenets of my evangelical faith, and my university lectures and reading lists was producing a lot of angst. Just how did my commitment to the ultimate authority of the Bible, the exclusivity of Christ, and the imperative of Christian mission relate to the classroom discussions where my fellow students and teachers were literally scandalized by my particularity? Furthermore, I wondered how my faith related to the discipline of religious studies, where I was being taught that in order to explain phenomena accurately and perceive their essence, I needed to learn the discipline and processes of blocking biases and suspending judgement.¹ I had thought my Christian discipleship was about setting *apart* Christ the Lord as holy in my heart,² but now my university discipline was telling me to set Him *aside*.

In my first year we had had a guest lecture from none other than the godfather of religious studies phenomenology, Ninian Smart. This is the same Ninian Smart who once declared theology the “conceptual albatross around the neck of religious studies.”³ Somewhat discombobulated, I remember wandering around the university library that first term looking

1 What in the discipline of phenomenology is known as *epoché* and the *eidetic vision*.

2 1 Pet. 3:15.

3 Ninian Smart, “Religious Studies in the United Kingdom,” *Religion* 18 (1998): 8.

for something, *anything* on the shelves that might give me both orientation, and yes, just a smidgeon of plausibility with my cohort. It was then that I providentially came across “Human Religion in God’s Eyes” by J.H. Bavinck⁴ in an edition of the *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* next to some titles by Lesslie Newbigin and Norman Anderson. In those few pages I found an oasis of insight and warmth.

Both in substance, and more unusually in *style*, Bavinck’s exposition of Romans 1:18–32 became a touchstone for me, providing the *framework* and *posture* I needed to construct a thoughtful evangelical theology of religions and an approach to religious studies I could use to engage with my fellow students. I was hooked. From that point on, I tracked down everything I could find of J.H. Bavinck in English (which wasn’t much then!), and eventually found a battered second-hand copy of the 1981 reprint of *The Church Between Temple and Mosque* (withdrawn from the shelves of a UK theological library!). It’s been much loved and much referred to since. I pray your experience in reading this new edition will be as formative for you as it was for me.



A detailed biography of J.H. Bavinck’s life and thought can be found elsewhere,⁵ but some broad outlines of his life may be in order, a life Paul Visser neatly encapsulates:

- 4 “Human Religion in God’s Eyes: A Study of Romans 1:18–32,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 12.1 (Spring 1994): 44–52. This article was reprinted from *Themelios* 2:2 (1964): 16–23, which was a tribute acknowledging Bavinck’s death the previous year as a “great loss to evangelical theology.” As it happens, it is also an abridged version of chapter 9 of this book that you are about to read.
- 5 Most extensively and authoritatively in the work of Paul J. Visser. See Paul Visser, *Heart for the Gospel, Heart for the World: The Life and Thought of a Reformed Pioneer Missiologist Johan Herman Bavinck, 1895–1964* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003). Visser has also written a shorter abridged “Introduction, The Life and Thought of Johan Herman Bavinck” in eds. John Bolt, James D. Bratt, and Paul J. Visser, *The J. H. Bavinck Reader* (Grands Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 1–92.

Johan Herman Bavinck was the premier twentieth-century missiologist in the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition. He extended the characteristic strengths of that tradition into new territories and a new era and did so compellingly enough that his thought reverberated in other schools of theology and nontheological disciplines as well. His work was marked both by broad range and a winsome sympathy to people of other convictions, intermixed with a resolute loyalty to historic Christianity as understood on a self-consciously Reformed slant.⁶

The fourth of eight children, born in 1895 into a ministry family of “unaffected piety,”⁷ Bavinck undertook doctoral studies in the psychology of religion, focusing on the medieval mystic Heinrich Von Suso. Apart from a short period of further study and ministry back in Holland, from 1919–1938, Bavinck served as an ordained minister⁸ in Indonesia for congregations in Medan, Bandung, and Solo in Java, before teaching at the theological school in Jogjakarta where he “[gave] much more attention to the cultivation of *theologia in loco*, i.e., the encouragement of indigenous expressions of the faith”⁹ than had previously been the case there. He returned to the Netherlands in 1938 to take up the position of Professor of Missions at Kampen, and then later in 1954 he became Professor of Practical Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam. During these times, he was able to teach, write, and travel, gaining a wider reputation and influence as he encouraged a more ecumenical and collaborative outlook within his denomination. He died in June 1964.

6 Visser, “Introduction,” 1.

7 Visser, “Introduction,” 5.

8 He was ordained in the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (GKN).

9 Visser, “Introduction,” 18.

Even as “the premier twentieth-century missiologist” it’s not surprising that J.H. Bavinck hasn’t dominated the theology and religious studies departments of secular universities. In fact, it’s pretty typical of the hermetically sealed worlds of theology done in “Athens” and theology done in “Jerusalem.” What is surprising, and frankly disturbing, is how he has been entirely forgotten or at best become a peripheral figure within evangelical and even Reformed theology, perennially over-shadowed by his uncle Herman, whose life and work is currently experiencing a resurgence.¹⁰ This neglect of Herman’s nephew is unfortunate given the richness and relevance of J.H. Bavinck’s thinking. But it is also perplexing given the standing that Bavinck’s major missiological statement, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, once enjoyed.¹¹

Thankfully, Bavinck’s legacy didn’t evaporate entirely. Ed Clowney, who had been using *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* in classes at Westminster Theological Seminary and even produced a rough translation used for its English publication, was quoted on its dust jacket as stating that Bavinck’s text was “not merely a text on missions; it is *the* text on missions of this generation. . . The stature of the author is enough to give significance to this major work.” That generation would include Harvie Conn, who drew on J.H. Bavinck extensively in his teaching at the seminary, and Tim Keller, who encountered Bavinck’s text at Gordon-Conwell before moving to Westminster to complete a DMin under Conn. Therefore, whilst he might be unknown to many and confusing to others (how many times have I had to explain “I’m talking about J.H., *not* Herman?”);

10 See for example James Eglinton, “Everybody loves Bavinck: How a Dutch neo-Calvinist thinker became the latest Christian theologian-du-jour” *Christianity Today*, February 16, 2022. See also the work of *The Bavinck Society* launched in 2009.

11 J.H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, trans. David Hugh Freeman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1960).

even with many of his writings yet to be translated into English, the impact of J.H. Bavinck through the teaching and influence of these acolytes has been considerable. Furthermore, and as I will reveal below, the provenance of *The Church Between Temple and Mosque* is surprising, even extraordinary, given what I have already said about the dysfunctional relationship between theology (*especially* historical Christian orthodoxy) and religious studies. All of which is further evidence of the stature of J.H. Bavinck's work and person.



J.H. Bavinck's *The Church Between Temple and Mosque* (CBTM) is a posthumous work published by Eerdmans in 1966.¹² Although a self-contained and stand-alone work,¹³ it is one of three titles which constitute the "high point"¹⁴ of Bavinck's published work, the others being *Religious Consciousness and the Christian Faith* (1949),¹⁵ and the aforementioned *Introduction to the Science of Missions* (1960).

The origin of the material which became CBTM required a little investigative digging. From the original preface, we know that "these chapters were originally lectures given to a small class of students in an American University,"¹⁶ which was most probably the Federated Theological Faculty at the University of Chicago in late 1960 or early 1961, where Bavinck was a guest professor.¹⁷

12 It remains unknown exactly who was involved in these lectures becoming published by Eerdmans and whether they were translated from the Dutch. Anyone with information in this area is invited to contact Westminster Seminary Press.

13 Bavinck only references previous work on a few occasions.

14 Visser, "Introduction," 23.

15 This text is included in *The J. H. Bavinck Reader*, 145–299.

16 Written by the American missiologist R. Pierce Beaver, who was at the time Professor of Missiology at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

17 Thanks to Dr. James Eglinton of Edinburgh University who sourced for me a Dutch newspaper from December 16, 1960, advertising an upcoming Dutch radio program with Bavinck speaking from Chicago about his American experiences.

What adds even more interest here is a comment made by fellow Dutch missiologist Johannes Verkuyl in his own little summary of Bavinck's life and work: "Bavinck's careful, delicate analysis of the morphology of religions is striking in [*Religious Consciousness*], so striking, in fact, that the world's greatest scholar in morphology of religion today, Mircea Eliade, invited Bavinck to the University of Chicago to lecture to his students."¹⁸ Given the explicit and unashamed Reformed theological presuppositions of *CBTM* in terms of biblical authority, the idolatry of the religious Other, and the finality and exclusivity of Christ, it is remarkable to imagine Bavinck delivering such material at the University of Chicago: a missionary to the academy, Jerusalem coming to Athens, a Paul bringing his "strange ideas" to the Areopagus and proclaiming Christ. Once again it is testimony to Bavinck's reputation as a brilliant and sensitive scholar, and the respect he was accorded as a humane teacher of great pastoral and personal warmth.



In terms of the nature and characteristics of *The Church Between Temple and Mosque*, I would like to highlight six features.

First, *CBTM* is most straightforwardly a Reformed *theology of religions*. In Bavinck's words, "together we shall try to find an answer to the problem of the relationship between the Christian faith and other religions."¹⁹ The clay out of which "religion(s)" is fashioned is divine revelation and our response to it, for "religion is by its very nature a communion, in which man answers and reacts to God's revelation."²⁰ And again, "if we could fathom the life of man right

18 See Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 40. Eliade (1907–1986) was a Romanian scholar and novelist, and is still considered a giant in the history of the study of religion.

19 See page 6 in this volume.

20 See page 13 in this volume.

down to the bottom, we should see that the conversation with God, either in a positive or negative theme, is the decisive theme.”²¹ Such revelation and response is not only individual, but communal and cultural: “there is no other realm of human life where the individual is so much a part of the community to which he belongs as the religious life . . . Culture, in so far as it is real culture . . . is based upon the fundamental attitude of man toward the universe and the invisible powers.”²² The aforementioned “Human Religion in God’s Sight,” which is Chapter 9 of *CBTM*, is the hinge of Bavinck’s argument, constituting both its formal and material principles. Bavinck calls us to listen to what God says in his word about human religion, focusing on a psycho-analytically tinged exegesis of Romans 1:18–32, which centers on the “perilous exchange” that is humanity’s variegated but universal suppression and substitution of divine revelation, what Calvin called the *fabrica idolorum*:

Man has repressed the truth of the everlasting power and the divinity of God. It has been exiled to his unconscious, to the crypts of his existence. That does not mean though that it has vanished forever. Still active, it reveals itself again and again. But it cannot become openly conscious; it appears in disguise, and it is exchanged for something different.²³

Bavinck captures well the profound but true tension that human beings in their sin *both* know God yet are ignorant of him, and are *both* running to him yet running away from him. It is only through the preaching of the gospel and an encounter with the living Christ that one can be awoken from this living nightmare. Through all the creativity, suggestiveness, and sensitivity of the writing, Bavinck’s theological anthropology remains squarely within the bounds of

21 See page 160 in this volume.

22 See page 15 in this volume.

23 See pages 117–118 in this volume. Also see Calvin, *Instit.* 1.2.8.

historic Reformed confessionalism and issues a message, not a Western message, but one “without distinction of race and people.”

The message concerns God’s Kingdom, God Himself, and His world, in which we have a place. It concerns Jesus Christ, the Savior, on whose suffering, death, and resurrection the future of the Kingdom is founded. The message concerning the Kingdom is to a certain extent an unmasking—it reveals the very deep process of repression and substitution and makes us ashamed of what we have done with God.²⁴

Second, and more provocatively, *CBTM* is an exercise, indeed a paradigm, of what might be called a “*theological* religious studies” or a “*theological* comparative religions.”²⁵ This requires a little more explanation. The Roman Catholic theologian Gavin D’Costa has described theology’s “Babylonian captivity” in the modern university. In this narrative the “queen of the sciences” was eventually relegated to a knave, and which in an Oedipal move, “religious studies,” a discipline “birthed” from theology, has slowly sort to euthanize its parent.²⁶ Many religious studies, including the one I encountered and described above,²⁷ have presupposed an alleged *neutral* and *objective* scientific positivism which does not comport well with the confessional theological task. The work of D’Costa, and others within the post-liberal tradition, such as Alistair MacIntyre and John Milbank, have debunked some of this, but it is still prevalent in

24 See pages 199–200 in this volume.

25 The following paragraph is a reworking of a section of Daniel Strange “An Apology for *Elenctics*: The Unmasking of Sin in the Retrieval of a Theological Discipline,” in Gibson and Gibson, eds., *Ruined Sinners to Reclaim* (Wheaton: IL: Crossway, forthcoming).

26 Gavin D’Costa, *Theology in the Public Square: Church, Academy and Nation* (Malden, MA: Wiley–Blackwell, 2005).

27 D’Costa was on the faculty where I studied.

religious studies teaching in all levels of religious education.²⁸ Unashamedly, D’Costa argues that contra modernity’s construal of the academic study of religion, the fullest understanding and interpreting of the religions are seen “in the light of the triune God who is the fullness of truth. Only from this theological narrative can other religions be truly understood, simply because Christianity is true.”²⁹

As co-belligerents in fighting against the forces of the modernistic scientific study of religions, post-liberal/postmodern theologies have been helpful. However, such post-liberalism/postmodern theologies cannot truly be allies because often they have an epistemological foundation (or rather non-foundation) which makes it difficult to propose any universal claims about the human religious condition that might lead to legitimate comparisons between Christian faith and the Other. Rather, for these theologians, “religion” and “religions” (terms which some of these thinkers reject as a *genus*; their being variously Western/Enlightenment/Colonial/Imperialistic social constructs), are incommensurable. While this is argued as the only way to truly respect the Other (in other words, not forcing them into a controlling, Western narrative), it means that “religions” cannot easily be judged as false, opposed to, or anti-Christian. From an evangelical point of view, this is troublesome since evangelicals do make universal claims and do not want to end

28 The evangelical religious studies scholar Terry Muck writes, “I remember having a conversation a number of years ago with such a scholar of religion about this very topic. At one point in our conversation he said, ‘What really scares me about evangelical Christians is that they bring a theology to the study of religion.’ My response was this: ‘What really scares me are scholars who study religion and think that they don’t bring a “theology” to their study of religion.’” In “The Study of Religion” in eds Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott, *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker books, 2014), 16.

29 Gavin D’Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 91.

up with only a fideistic apologetic. As a result, evangelicals are in danger of becoming stuck between the incommensurability of religions—which undermines evangelism and the universalism of the gospel call—and the religious bigotry of the Western metanarrative. Therefore, what is needed is an evangelical “*theological* religious studies” or “*theological* comparative religions”³⁰ which is not neutral, but rather demonstrates a “partisan objectivity”³¹ which is still concerned with careful listening to how others understand themselves from the inside, before outside interpretation can proceed.

I would contend that *CBTM* is a model framework of a Reformed “theological religious studies” with plenty of potential for growth and development. On the one hand, Bavinck’s exegesis leads him to a theological anthropology which acknowledges a unity and continuity of the human experience, what he calls a “universal religious conscious.” In his words, “Man is always restricted by his anthropological structure, and although, this structure gives him the chance to make choices among a few possibilities, he cannot outgrow his own qualities and dispositions. That must be the reason why man always returns to the same conceptions and in a monotonous way grasps at the same suppositions again and again.”³² The majority of *CBTM* is Bavinck’s unpacking this religious consciousness in his five “magnetic points,”³³ “the canvas on which all religions are embroidered”:³⁴ *I and the cosmos, I and the norm, I and the riddle of my existence, I and salvation, I and the Supreme power.* As Bavinck writes, “since they are rooted in our existence, they are stronger than ourselves, and

30 The outstanding example here is Muck, Netland, and McDermott, *Handbook of Religion* (Baker, 2014).

31 See Muck, *Handbook of Religion*, 4.

32 See page 25 in this volume.

33 These magnetic points also appear in Bavinck’s *Religious Consciousness* but in a slightly different order.

34 See page 133 in this volume.

somehow we must come to grips with them.”³⁵ Even if they are never consciously articulated, human beings still answer them by “their entire conduct” and “attitude to life”— their “whole way of living already implies an answer, and *is* an answer.”³⁶

What we are presented with in *CBTM* is a morphology of religion which enables commensurability and comparison but which is not a Western controlling construct; instead, it is rooted in ontological, epistemological, and anthropological realities revealed in Scripture. However, far from religious consciousness and the magnetic points entailing a homogenous rigidity, Bavinck recognizes the mysteriousness of religious consciousness—it is “vague and nebulous,” “a complicated thing, full of tensions and contrasts.”³⁷ This complexity invites us, indeed urges us with a partisan objectivity, to the careful scholarly study of religion. It encourages advancement in disciplines dear to Bavinck and represented in *CBTM* in terms of the psychology of religion, history of religion, phenomenology of religion, and philosophy of religion,³⁸ but all these disciplines would be considered within the theology of religions, and all would recognize personal and lived religious experience.³⁹

While there is a structure and morphology to human idolatrous responses to divine revelation, and while classification and

35 See page 26 in this volume.

36 See page 28 in this volume.

37 See page 24 in this volume.

38 Bavinck mentions each of these disciplines directly in his *Introduction to the Science of Missions*.

39 As Terry Muck has noted, “Religion must be increasingly seen as a dynamic quality of the human experience: people and cultures change the way they embrace and express their religions. To use a mathematical analogy, this means the introductory course in the religion will need to become more of a calculus capable of observing constantly changing dynamics than either an arithmetic (just the facts, please) or an algebra (religion as symbol systems).” Muck, *Handbook of Religion*, 9.

categorization is always a necessary part of the *science* of study of religion, *otherness* must be recognized in its diverse forms, which strictly speaking would give every individual human being their own category. Note Bavinck's lovely touch in titling Part One not the "content" of the universal religious consciousness, but rather the "Continent."⁴⁰ Theological religious studies, and the phenomena within its purview, is a vast arena for exploration, and Bavinck intrepidly blazes a path. Not that we have to, or can, agree with every point of Bavinck's own phenomenological descriptions of the Other in *CBTM*. Bavinck was a fallible, time-situated scholar, and the intervening sixty years have seen development and growth in the study of particular phenomena which may well supersede Bavinck's own observations and analysis. However his *method* is as robust and relevant today as it was then, and one we would do well to follow.

Third, and the *telos* of one's theology of religions and theological religious studies, is the missiologistical task of connecting, comparing, contrasting, and confronting the religious consciousness with the Kingdom of God and the unique and incomparable Jesus Christ. The way Bavinck does this in *CBTM*, as he returns to the magnetic points one by one, is a masterclass in subversive fulfilment.⁴¹ Rather than a generic exposition of the Christian faith which ends up being superficial and anemic, this is deep theological exposition as Bavinck expertly draws on the full encyclopedia of exegesis, biblical theology and systematic theology, giving us a rich repository of figures, patterns, and themes to mine. As such, we are presented not with a contextualization model that

40 See page 40 in this volume.

41 A term not used by Bavinck but originally used by the missiologist (and mentor to Bavinck) Hendrik Kraemer and which I have expounded in my own theology of religions and theology of culture, and which others such as Tim Keller are now using. See Daniel Strange, *Their Rock Is Not Like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), and *Plugged In: Connecting your faith to what you watch, read, and play*. (Epsom: Good Book Company, 2019).

accommodates itself to the religious consciousness, but a radical vision that, in comparison to every expression of religious consciousness, offers its own continent to explore endlessly and to marvel at continually. Indeed, this is the biblical *world-view* of which all other constructions are but parasitic and distorted imitations.

Fourth is a comment on the style and flavor of *CBTM*. Visser rightly describes Bavinck as “more passionate thinker and prophetic seer than systematic theologian,”⁴² noting that Bavinck once said of himself, “I was born as it were, with a strong penchant for monastic mystical experience: that’s why I speak of it: I have to fight against it every day.”⁴³ This admission, coupled with his penchant for the psychoanalytic, does give an evocative, mysterious, and existential quality to his writing which I’m certain will not suit all tastes. Reformed scholasticism this is not. There are questions raised in *CBTM* that are left tantalizingly and perhaps uncomfortably open. For example, what does Bavinck mean when he states that God revealed himself, touched and wrestled with both the Buddha (in “the night of the *bhodi*”), and Mohammed (in “the night of power”), and that “the great moments in the history of religion are the moments when God wrestled with man in a very particular way”?⁴⁴ Whilst this may frustrate those of us who like the certainty of definite answers, Bavinck’s medium serves the message: the relationship between created human beings and their Creator as evidenced in “religion” is complex and not easily captured. Simply put, messy and real human life in all its vicissitude is not easily grasped. This more impressionistic and suggestive style of writing provokes the need for further investigation and once again exploration of the continents of religious consciousness and the Christian faith.

Fifth, I return to the personal and pastoral nature of *CBTM*, which seems typical of Bavinck the man. In his *Introduction*, Bavinck

42 Visser, *Heart for the Gospel*, 76.

43 Visser, “Introduction,” 8.

44 See page 121 in this volume.

speaks of the “meeting-in-love” and “warm undertone” of the missionary approach.⁴⁵ This is very much apparent in *CBTM*. The phrase *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*⁴⁶ is bandied about a lot in the teaching of apologetics. However, if there was ever an example of what this adage looks like we can find it in *CBTM*. Towards the end of the book, Bavinck considers the witness of the Church as we engage other religions. On the one hand, our calling is to unmask the “pernicious strength” of humanity’s repression and substitution of God’s revelation. However, we must note our posture as we do so:

The Church can confess this quietly and honestly, because it judges *itself* by this confession. . . In other words, the Church can say these things without any pride. Every Christian knows that he is always apt to hide the truth by his own unrighteousness, and that only God’s grace has taught him to acknowledge and confess this as sin. With such humility the Church can give it’s testimony in the world of the other religions.⁴⁷

Bavinck shows that our evangelism and apologetics must flow from our own discipleship. As we recognize the gospel of grace continually working in *our* hearts, unmasking *our* sin by God’s Spirit, so we will be in a position of solidarity and empathy to unmask religious consciousness as we call all people to Christ. Looking back, I wish I had understood this more in my own witness as that young undergraduate theology and religious studies student.

Sixth and finally, it would be most unfortunate to judge this book by its title and to think Bavinck’s context means *CBTM* is geographically limited, or that it is only for a small and niche “missions” audience. Certainly Bavinck’s experience, example and, as we have

45 Bavinck, *Introduction*, 126.

46 “Gentle in persuasion, powerful in substance.”

47 See page 194 in this volume.

seen, sensibility are rooted in the East rather than the West. However, remember it was in an American city that Bavinck gave these lectures. Furthermore, since its original publication we have seen sixty years of migration and immigration which means we encounter temples and mosques in our multi-cultural towns and cities across the world. Even this recognition, however, unnecessarily limits the scope of *CBTM*. As we noted above, “religion” as well as its conjoined twin “secular” are categories rightly being contested by many scholars (of religion!) in the academy. Although Bavinck uses the term himself throughout the book, he recognizes that his theological anthropology is relevant both to those labelled “religious” and the “so-called non-religious man.”⁴⁸ On the one hand, he notes that “sometimes it looks to me as if our modern civilization is speeding on without knowing where it is going or whither it is drifting, and as though it had lost sight of the ultimate realities with which every human enterprise is confronted.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, he can still conclude that “the history of the world compels us to reflect upon the course which had have taken in our civilization and as soon as we begin to do so we shall see that modern culture too, is a religious phenomenon, either in the positive or negative sense.”⁵⁰

While recognizing the different dynamics of Bavinck’s 1940s Indonesia and our 2020s secular age—a context where we are struggling to get apologetic traction with the “nones,”—Bavinck’s articulation of a universal religious consciousness unpacked in the magnetic points is a profoundly helpful framework which we must apply for our own context.⁵¹ Yes, the Church is between Temple and

48 See page 28 in this volume.

49 See page 16 in this volume.

50 See page 17 in this volume.

51 I have attempted this at a popular level in my *Making Faith Magnetic: Five hidden themes our culture can't stop talking about. . . and how to connect them to Christ* (Epsom: Good Book Company, 2021).

Mosque, but also, between mobile phone mast and football stadium, between government building and mass demonstration, between fulfillment center and internet server. We may need to dig down further to uncover the magnetic points, and it will require both patience and creativity for the soil is hard, but where there is humanity there is religious consciousness, and it is to this religious consciousness we proclaim the message that both confronts and connects: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

—Daniel Strange
England, May 2022

Preface

This posthumous work of a much loved and highly esteemed missiologist clearly illumines the right stance of Christians in dialogue with persons of other faiths. Its simplicity and profundity make it appealing to the serious layman; to missionary, evangelist, and pastor; and to the scholar. These chapters were originally lectures given to a small class of students in an American university, and they still have the tone of a superb teacher's quiet, intimate talking with concerned, inquiring hearers. This quality makes the book unusually well adapted to the understanding of serious readers who are for the first time approaching this weighty, urgent problem of the relation of Christianity to other religions and what it is to which Christians can testify. It takes them into the heart of other faiths as well as their own. A lifetime of scholarship and of missionary encounter with men of other religions, on the one hand, and a warm, sure personal faith in the Gospel, on the other, have been distilled into the pages of this book.

Towards the end of the book Professor Bavink states that, standing between temple and mosque, the Church cannot avoid dialogue with them. It is not enough for the Church merely to witness. "It has the duty to speak honestly and with dignity with the other religions." The author shows where the Christian stands both in community with, and over against, other religions. That same irenic, understanding, appreciative spirit which made the writer of the book so effective a mediator and bridge-builder between Christians of divergent views, is here manifested again in the encounter

between differing faiths. But sympathy and understanding do not add up to syncretism. Confessing his own sins of repression of God's truth and will, humbly and without pride the disciple of Christ must assert: "God is different, totally different, from the way we humans have imagined Him in our religious fantasies. In Jesus Christ alone, the *Logos*, the Word, we hear His voice and see His image."

Dialogue is possible because of the common sharing in the universal religious consciousness among men and because of the reality of general revelation or the work of God among all peoples and all religions. The antagonisms and tensions, the often opposing polarities, within this religious consciousness are honestly exposed; but with equal clarity the author describes the "five magnetic points" which have drawn the attention of men and provide the common ground. The second part of the book is an attempt to listen to God's Word on the major issues, through reflection on Romans, chapter 1. In the light of what he hears spoken out of the Bible the Christian can then speak on these subjects in dialogue, and not in disputation, with persons of other faiths. Many a reader will finally put this book down with a new understanding of many aspects of the Gospel.

This last book by Professor Bavinck is undoubtedly "to the furtherance of [that] Gospel."

—R. Pierce Beaver

The Church Between Temple and Mosque

Introduction

Chapter I

The Christian Faith and Other Religions

The subject we are discussing here is a very old one. The relationship between the Christian faith and other religions was already discussed when the Christian Church was no more than a small group, scattered over the whole Roman Empire, despised, persecuted, and living in very difficult circumstances. Even in that time some Christians ventured to say something about this intriguing problem—remarkable words, sometimes, which today are still not forgotten, and still continue to play a part in the discussions of our time. Later on, when the Christian Church had spread over large parts of Europe and was preoccupied with itself, its confession, and organization, this matter had lost its urgency and was gradually pushed aside. Still, it was never lost sight of altogether, for it remained in the background of the history of the Church as a strange riddle. It was only waiting for the time when it would get a new chance to come to the fore.

And now this new chance has come. It had, in fact, already come when the Moslem armies began to threaten the Western world. It came again when the Pope sent missionaries to remote parts of the globe, to the Chinese empire far away in the East, to India, and to other countries. And it received new and overwhelming impetus when colonial empires were formed, when ships from Portugal, Spain, England and

the Netherlands discovered islands and continents, the existence of which had previously been unknown. In those days, especially, this problem arose anew and demanded serious consideration. Missionaries suddenly were compelled to wrestle with it. They had gone to other countries to preach the gospel, but they could not prevent adherents of other religions from asking them questions. Somehow they had to give an answer to these questions. They had to make it clear in which respects the teachings of Buddha or of Mohammed were different from the gospel. They were compelled to enter deeply into the problem of the relationship between the Christian faith and other religions.

It is certain that this problem has never been so urgent as in our own day. Today there are churches in almost every mission field in the world. These churches exist amidst millions of people who adhere to religions other than Christianity and who put their trust in other prophets. For those churches it is impossible to avoid discussion with the leaders and priests of non-Christian communities. The very existence of these churches is at stake. Their leaders have to reply to the indictments of their fellow countrymen, because they live with them in the same cities and country. It is no wonder that in our day the churches in India, China, and the Moslem countries search and seek with great intensity, studying and discussing that very old problem which is nevertheless new in every age. So let us join them in their investigations and deliberations, because we see the immense importance of their fierce struggle. Together we shall try to find an answer to the problem of the relationship between the Christian faith and other religions.

Preliminary Considerations

First of all, we must look at our subject more closely and more thoroughly. What are we aiming at when we intend to speak of the Christian faith and other religions? As soon as we begin to tackle our subject, it strikes us that an answer is already given, even though

vaguely. It is important to scrutinize that answer, nebulous though it may be.

The answer which lies concealed in our subject appears to be of an ambivalent character. It suggests that the Christian faith and those other religions have something in common, of course they have! A Christian who is accustomed to pray cannot help recognizing that the Moslem whom he sees praying is doing something similar. And seeing a Hindu bowing down before his god stirs the Christian, because he himself has learned to bow his head before the God who appeared to us in Jesus Christ. Indeed, he cannot deny that our Christian faith and those other religions have something in common, that there are certain similarities between them. The word *other* actually puts it very clearly: the Christian faith is also a religion. When we list the great world religions, we must mention the Christian faith alongside the others.

This simple fact has a deeper meaning than we may be inclined to admit. It means that Christianity and the other religions are somehow comparable. This does not mean, of course, that there are not also great differences. The republic of Andorra, and the United States, are both independent nations, and so they belong to the same category, although they greatly differ in size, economic power, and political prestige. But the resemblance between the Christian faith and other religions has more far-reaching consequences, one of which is that the Bible can be translated into every language and can be understood by all people of every language. There are words which can be used for God, the Creator of heaven and earth, or for sin or for salvation. It hardly needs to be said that each of these words which we borrow from other languages is infected with non-Christian concepts. In the context of the religions which have put their mark upon these languages these words have an entirely different meaning—their god is different from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, their idea of sin is wholly unlike the biblical concept of it. Nevertheless it is of extreme importance that these words exist, and

that we can use them. The preacher of the gospel who makes a serious effort to express the substance of his message in one of these languages has to be very careful. He must be aware of the fact that in employing the terms of that language he runs the risk of being completely misunderstood, because his audience inevitably hears in each term connotations which are different from what he has in mind. And yet he will feel very thankful that he *can* apply them. His situation would have been much worse, and much more hopeless, had he been confronted with nothing but an immense mental void. Then communication would have been utterly impossible.

Here we already touch upon the second suggestion hinted at in our subject. When we are dealing with Christianity and other religions we silently assume that, notwithstanding the fact that they are comparable, there exists a deep gulf between them. Although the Christian faith is one of several different religions, this does by no means imply that they are more or less identical and rooted in the same soil. Our subject suggests at least the possibility that they are radically different. When we compare the United States of America and the republic of Andorra, we see that there is a great quantitative difference between these two countries. But when we compare religions we find that quantity does not mean a great deal. What we are confronted with are *qualitative* differences, differences which cannot easily be fathomed because they originate from a difference in background. The Christian faith claims that it is something entirely different and of a unique character.

In our investigations we shall try to find out whether this claim is legitimate, and justifiable by the facts. It is clear that this will not be an easy task; it might even prove to be an impossible undertaking. Is not one of the most essential features of every religion that it demands a personal decision, and that such a decision is always a matter of faith? Philosophical reasoning does not take us very far when we are dealing with phenomena that are urged by the heart rather than by sophisticated deliberations. Nevertheless we cannot

avoid the necessity of giving an answer to the question: What does the Christian faith mean when it claims to be unique?

Before we can begin this examination, however, there are still other points which need further clarification, for otherwise we will constantly be in danger of becoming bogged down in a multitude of side-issues.

The first point we have to discuss is the meaning of the word *religion*. We have already used it many times, and in the course of our discussion we shall, quite naturally, have to make use of it on almost every page. But what does this word mean? What is the origin and the essence of religion, and which are the basic characteristics of it? As soon as we reflect on this problem we see that we shall have to make a choice between two possibilities.

The first possibility is that religion belongs to the nature and structure of man. The history of mankind shows very clearly that man is gifted with a variety of aptitudes and capabilities. Man is a thinker, a dreamer; he naturally wrestles with the riddles of the mysterious world in which he finds himself. Man is a technician; he likes to invent new gadgets which make life more comfortable and worthwhile. Man is an artist; he is born with a sense of music and beauty. Man is endowed with a sense of humor; he is, in fact, the only creature that can laugh. And among all those inclinations and capabilities we find that man is obviously a religious being. He cannot help being religious. He himself cannot account for it, nor does he have the vaguest inkling of where it comes from, but apparently his being religious belongs to the equipment which nature has given him, and that is why we find religion everywhere in the world. Even when a man turns his back upon the religious traditions in which he has been brought up and calls himself an atheist, he still remains in the grasp of his religious predisposition. He can never wholly rid himself of it.

Of course this is not to say that every man has this religious trait to the same extent. Man has a sense of music, but not every man has

it to the same degree. This also applies to man's religiousness. Among every people there are men and women in whose life religion seems to be the only important and dominating thing. But there are also men and women who only rarely show themselves to be religious in the real sense of the word. Apparently there is a variety of inclinations and aptitudes, but it cannot be denied that religiousness is proper to man.

It stands to reason that many philosophers in ancient as well as in modern times have paid attention to the unavoidable question of the origin and essence of religion. Some of them have assumed that our religiousness is somehow connected with our being reasonable creatures. Man is a thinker and a philosopher. That means that when he encounters problems and mysteries he is always busy trying to find the answers to them. He wants to know where this world came from; he is interested in the primeval cause of everything. He is not content to live, to love and to die; he wants to find out why everything is as it is, and to understand the purpose of his life. And all those questions with which he struggles make him realize that there was a god, or that there were gods, who built this wonderful palace which we call the world. Thus he is a religious creature—because he is a reasonable creature.

The great German philosopher Immanuel Kant defended the idea that religion is rooted in our awareness of our moral responsibility. During our life on earth we are confronted repeatedly with the mysterious “ought,” with the “categorical imperative,” which commands us to do what is morally justifiable. Man may try to excuse himself and to escape from the tyranny of this severe master, but he never succeeds in silencing this accusing voice. His religion is the result of the acknowledgment of his responsibility.

Others have emphasized that religion has something to do with our emotional character. We are religious because we are able to realize that the universe is great and that we are dependent on powers

which are immensely greater than we are. In all these conceptions, different though they may be, it is taken for granted that religion is an element in human nature. Man's religiousness is a quality which belongs to the structure of his being. Here and there the suggestion has been made that religiousness is characteristic only of man as long as he lives in a state of primitiveness and immaturity. Primitive man is naturally religious, therefore, because for him the world is not primarily an "it" but a "thou." He believes that the forces of nature are gods or spirits which intentionally favor him or hurt him. His relationship to nature is a reciprocal one; in his naive imagination he supposes that this amazing world is full of both friendly and hostile powers. This view holds that modern man does not need religion any more, because his eyes have already been opened and he has reached the state of maturity. Religiousness is not in the same sense a quality of man's nature as are his being a thinker and being susceptible to beauty. The latter are ineradicable, and will never vanish; but his being religious is characteristic of him only during a certain period of his development.

In recent times an even more pernicious verdict has been given on religion. Freudian psychology put forward the hypothesis that religion is a neurotic disease. The god whom we adore, on whom we feel dependent, whom we fear and whom we love, is nothing but a gigantic projection of the father-image of our youth. In a healthy mind this image dissolves naturally, and the "ego," the feeling of self-reliance, takes its place. But due to all kinds of circumstances this father-image in some people does not disappear, but it is projected and becomes a god. This projection is, of course, harmful for the development of one's personality, and people will never become sound and mature men and women as long as they live under the spell of this self-made god.

That is something of what certain philosophers and anthropologists have suggested regarding the origin and essence of religion. They assumed that religion is a human quality, that it belongs to our

human structure, and up to that point they were still unanimous. But they parted company when it came to the evaluation of this phenomenon. Some were inclined to place religion among the beneficial gifts of nature, while others believed that this is true only as far as primitive man is concerned. He needs religion; it is the atmosphere in which he lives; but modern man is mature enough to dispense with it. He can take the reins of his life in his own hands. Finally, there were some who could see religion only as something obnoxious, as a quality of the unhealthy man.

But there is a second possibility. It is possible to believe that religion by its very nature is a response. It is not just a human characteristic, properly part of our equipment. In his religion man feels that he is addressed by a supernatural power, that a god reveals and manifests himself to him. Religion is the human answer to divine, or at least allegedly divine, revelation. This response includes a variety of acts and attitudes. It means faith, surrender, prayer; it implies a feeling of guilt and a craving for salvation; it manifests itself in service and obedience. Religion is never a soliloquy, a dialogue of a man with himself. One of the first assumptions of every religion is that there are divine powers which interfere in our existence, and that there are gods or spirits who speak to us and deal with us. It is true that these gods sometimes seem to be the products of our own imagination, but even then it is clear that religion can only exist in the form of a response. In his religion man is aware that he is not alone, because he knows that he is living in the immediate presence of someone who is infinitely greater than he is.

Is this awareness a lie, or perhaps just imagination? Here we reach a territory where we are beyond the boundaries of what human reason can prove or disprove. A Christian is quite sure that there is divine revelation, that God really speaks to man and concerns Himself with man. He acknowledges that this view is not based upon reasoning, but is instead a matter of faith. In Jesus Christ, God reveals

Himself to man and wrestles with man. There is only one adequate answer to this self-revelation of God—and that is humble surrender and a faithful reception of God's merciful love which has appeared to us in Jesus Christ. God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ is the root of His search for man and His ceaseless speaking to him. From age to age He addressed man and called him to repentance and conversion. The history of mankind is more than just a long account of what man has done, created and invented; its deepest mystery is the story of God's concern with man and man's response to God's revelation. Religion is by its very nature a communion, in which man answers and reacts to God's revelation.

This definition implies that there is a divine revelation, an act of self-disclosure on the part of God. It also implies that there is a human response to this self-disclosure, either in a negative or in a positive sense. Religion can be a profound and sincere seeking of God; it can also be a flight from God, an endeavor to escape from His presence, under the guise of love and obedient service. At the bottom of it lies a relationship, an encounter.

Religion and Culture

In this connection it is necessary to say a few words about the relationship between religion and culture. Our starting point is that religion is a human response to what is believed to be a revelation or manifestation of divine powers. It is obvious that we are now speaking of religion as a personal act and relationship. In the history of mankind, however, religion almost always appears to be a social phenomenon. Man acts collectively, especially when he responds to what he considers the deepest realities of life. In his response he is conscious of the fact that he is not an individual but a member of a group. He belongs to a religious community, and because of this he experiences communion with the unseen world. Therefore we

can say that, although there is a strictly personal element in religion, the great religions of the world have been and still are great social powers, whose influence can hardly be overestimated.

In almost every religion we find a remarkable oscillation between these two tendencies. Sometimes the emphasis is quite strongly on the system of thought, tradition and practice which belongs to the community as a whole, but every now and then the interest may shift to the personal experiences, the emotions and longings of the individual believer.

In Islam the theological heritage of the first centuries after Mohammed's hegira has played a dominant part. The tenets of the great scholars and the customs of the faithful believers of those days still have an almost unshakable authority. Nevertheless this religion has left room for personal piety during all the centuries of its history. Islamic mysticism is characterized by its own specific approach to the great problems of religious life; and, notwithstanding its emphasis upon the needs and the pilgrimage of the individual believer, it has always been tolerated.

Hinduism is a strong social force. Its moral regulations as they have come to expression in the caste system have framed the life of the people who practise it. Yet this religion has always left room for lonely travelers to withdraw themselves from the community and to pursue the object of becoming one with the immense glory of God in solitary hermitage. In Christianity, traditions and customs have always been an influential force. The individual believer knew that he was a member of the Church and that its creeds and ethical standards dominated his life. Yet the history of the Church shows that frequently people who individually sought God ventured to resist the authority of the leading men in the Church and like trailblazers tried to find new ways of communion with Christ for the sake of finding God.

This short survey shows that religion necessarily has a dual aspect. It is a personal response to what is considered supernatural

revelation; it is a personal decision, a personal surrender, a secret between the individual and his God. On the other hand, there is no other realm of human life where the individual is so much a part of the community to which he belongs as the religious life. Facing the inscrutable mysteries of the unseen world, man realizes that he is a member of a community, and that his actions and reactions are an aspect of the life of that community.

The undeniable fact that religion has a social character automatically implies that it has considerable influence upon the development of the group's culture. Bronislaw Malinowsky has rightly pointed out that it is not "a cultural epiphenomenon but a profound moral and social force which gives the ultimate integration to human culture."¹ That is why every aspect of culture originates from religious sources. Music and dance, science and medicine, agriculture and architecture have religious roots and originally had a religious character. Hence it is not correct to say that culture is nothing but a system of customs and traditions inherited from the forefathers, for it is more than that. Culture, in so far as it is real culture and not just an agglomerate of various elements which are not wholly integrated and not adjusted to each other, is based upon the fundamental attitude of man toward the universe and the invisible powers. This position implies his social relationships as well as his attitude towards nature, his sense of responsibility, his outlook upon life and death and his whole system of evaluations. All these various cultural elements are nothing but symptoms of the deeper existential attitude of man in the amazing complexity of the world in which he finds himself. And it is beyond doubt that this existential attitude bears a religious character from the very beginning.

One of the striking aspects of modern civilization seems to be that it has gradually loosened the ties with its religious background.

1 Bronislaw Malinowsky, *The Dynamics of Culture Change*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945, p. 48.

This is what we usually call the process of secularization by which our modern world is affected. There is much in this process for which we have every reason to be very thankful. We are much freer and more self-conscious than our ancestors were. We know that the ordinary things of life are only things, which we can take up and do with what we want to. There are no taboos retarding our progress; there is no superstitious anxiety hampering our development. Our science and art, our agriculture and our medical science, have created a freedom and a maturity which previous generations did not even dream of. But, on the other hand, we begin to understand that this whole process evokes a disintegration of life which in the long run may prove to be disastrous. There are disconcerting aspects of our civilization which are threatening to suffocate us. The main cause of our predicament obviously lies in the fact that we have neglected the basic problems of culture. We have forgotten that our culture, too, is rooted in a specific existential attitude, and that this attitude is by virtue of its essence a religious phenomenon. Sometimes it looks to me as if our modern civilization is speeding on without knowing where it is going or whither it is drifting, and as though it had lost sight of the ultimate realities with which every human enterprise is confronted. But all the while our modern civilization is undergoing its trial. It is spreading all over the world and fascinating peoples of remote countries, not seldom intoxicating them and filling their hearts with a burning desire to acquire the same freedom, power, and prosperity. But at the same time it is creating a strange vacuum in their lives, and it has an impoverishing effect on their social and religious feelings. It is time for us to acknowledge frankly that our modern civilization, disintegrated though it may seem, is based upon certain presuppositions about man, his place in the world and his responsibility towards God, and that this implies a definite world view, an outlook upon the function of the individual in the community and upon the greatness and the misery of man. We owe this to

the peoples to whom we are bringing the products of our scientific endeavors and with whom we are engaged in discussions. The history of the world compels us to reflect upon the course which we have taken in the development of our civilization and as soon as we begin to do so we shall see that modern culture, too, is a religious phenomenon, either in the positive or in the negative sense.

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