

This book showcases Bavinck's attentiveness to the empirical granularity of biblical teaching on humanity. Further, the text represents Bavinck's mature writings on these topics, so readers who want a fuller picture of his reflections on the issue cannot neglect reading these texts. The editors and translators should be celebrated for bringing this accessible yet profound work to a wider audience, and the incisive introduction by John Bolt makes it all the more worthwhile. Take and read!

—**N. Gray Sutanto**,
assistant professor of systematic theology,
Reformed Theological Seminary (Washington D.C.)

Bavinck spent his career as a theologian thinking about the human subject. Here you get his final thoughts on the psyche, consciousness, and particularly what the Bible teaches about human beings and how we respond to God's presence. This is the work of the mature Bavinck, which makes it worth paying attention to.

—**Cory Brock**,
minister in the Free Church of Scotland
at St. Columba's (Edinburgh, Scotland)
and lecturer in systematic theology,
Edinburgh Theological Seminary

In recent years there has been a renewal of interest in a "theological psychology." While a rift may have existed in the recent past between theology and psychology, this has not always been the case. Herman Bavinck was one of many theologians who thought deeply about the connection between these two disciplines. He did this in a time when psychology was asserting itself as a science. For anyone interested in how one can put the words "biblical" and "psychology" together, this is an important work to consider. The readers will find themselves challenged and encouraged to take up the task of constructing a "theological psychology" anew.

—**Cameron Clausing**,
lecturer in applied theology and missional engagement,
Christ College (Sydney, Australia)

As the 20th century dawned, the discipline of psychology celebrated its emancipation from the Bible and theology. As the new psychology was explaining more and more of the human experience, the rich, previously theologically informed constructs such as soul, spirit, and heart were being reduced to mere consciousness that could be measured in a laboratory. The divorce between psychology and theology seemed to be final. However, thanks to the work of Hanko, Ryskamp, and Parker, we now know this was not the case. In their very readable translation of Bavinck's *Biblical and Religious Psychology*, we see that Bavinck was still trying to carve out a place for a theologically informed psychology. Not only will this volume be of historical benefit, but Bavinck's treatment of the human soul in all of its fullness can and should inform contemporary psychology-theology integration discussions.

—**Bryan N. Maier**,
associate professor of psychology and counseling,
Cairn University (Langhorne, PA)

**BIBLICAL AND RELIGIOUS
PSYCHOLOGY**

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HERMAN
BAVINCK

Herman Hanko translator **Annemarieke Ryskamp** revisor
Gregory Parker Jr. editor and translator
introduced by **John Bolt**



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mail@rfpa.org

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TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Originally, Herman Bavinck divided his book into two parts, following the title. The first part dealt with “Biblical Psychology,” the second part with “Religious Psychology.”

This foreword has been added to the book because within the second part are to be found ideas with which I disagree. As anyone acquainted with him knows, Bavinck incorporated into his theology a view of common grace that had extensive implications in various areas of the truth. The translation and publication of this work of Bavinck must not be construed as my agreement with all that Bavinck writes, especially in this area of common grace. It is true that all things and all that transpires in the world is grace to God's people. However, what Bavinck and other Reformed theologians of his period called common grace is in Scripture spoken of as God's providence. According to the doctrine of providence, God so continues to rule and govern all things in the creation through Christ that all things serve the purpose and salvation of the church. This can hardly be called “grace” because it is the teaching of Scripture that there is no grace shown to the reprobate.¹ I have not entered my objections into the body of the material because I believe that such intrusion of material other than Bavinck's would interrupt the flow of thought. The reader shall therefore have to remember that Bavinck's views are not always presented with my endorsement.

Nevertheless, I consider this material to be of such interest and help, especially to those who are engaged in the work of teaching

1 For developed theological and exegetical treatments of this and related subjects, see Henry Danhof and Herman Hoeksema, *Sin and Grace*, ed. Herman Hanko, trans. Cornelius Hanko (Grandville, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2003); Henry Danhof and Herman Hoeksema, *The Rock Whence We Are Hewn: God, Grace, and Covenant*, ed. David J. Engelsma (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2015).

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covenant children, that a translation and publication of it is worthwhile in spite of elements with which I disagree. Bavinck did work in the area of Christian psychology that is not to be found in any English writings, at least so far as I know.

—Herman Hanko, 2023

EDITOR'S PREFACE

For the reader to benefit from the editorial work a few introductory notes are worth including.

The great German poet and playwright, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), whom Bavinck seemed to enjoy and indeed quotes throughout this work, as well as at the start of his 1874 diary, had notable thoughts on translation work.¹ Interestingly, the book in which Goethe speaks of translation philosophy, *West-östlicher Divan*, is referenced several times by Bavinck in the pages that follow, which implies at minimum that Bavinck was aware of this particular philosophy of Goethe, even if it was not his own.

According to Goethe, the darling of Romanticism, translations occur in three epochs: “First, the prosaic prose translation, which is useful as enriching the language of the translator with new ideas, but gives up all poetic art, and reduces even the poetic enthusiasm to one level watery plain.”² This is the stage in which I entered the translation. Without denigrating the laborious task of translation undertaken by Hanko—after all, Goethe compares the impact of such a translation style to that of Luther’s Bible—the translation at this stage lacked the eloquence of Bavinck’s own writing.³ Yet the laborious task was accomplished, and we were enriched by Hanko’s labor.

The second epoch of translation is the parodistic [*paradoistische*], that is, “the re-creation of the poem as a new poem, rejecting or altering all that seems foreign to the translator’s nationality, producing a

1 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, “Uebersetzungen” in *West-östlicher Divan* (Stuttgart, 1819), 526–32; “Dagboekjes” (23 Sept. 1874), 346, no. 16, Herman Bavinck Archive, Historical Documentation Center for Dutch Protestantism, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. The quotation is from Goethe’s *Faust*, “Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichni.”

2 Translated by William P. Andrews in “On the Translation of Faust,” *The Atlantic* (Dec. 1890): 733. Translation belongs to Andrews.

3 Goethe, “Uebersetzungen,” 526. My translation.

paraphrase which might, in the primal sense of the word, be called a parody.”⁴ The effect is such that “one makes foreign words their own.”⁵ Goethe uses the example of how the French “frenchify” a word to make it French, although properly speaking it belongs to another language. We might think for example of bananas. The word likely derives from the Wolof word *banaana* and passed into French as *banane*. The French word acts as a “parody” of the Wolof word. Apart from Dutch/English cognates, this translation participates in “parody” when we occasionally include the Dutch word in brackets. Our hope is that this brings the reader closer to Bavinck—perhaps parody as flattery rather than mockery. The inclusion of the Dutch in brackets, however, finds its greatest consonance not with parody, but with the third kind of translation.

In this work, we strove for Goethe’s highest form of translation, the third epoch, “where one strives to make the translation identical with the original; so that one is not instead of the other, but in the place of the other.”⁶ In other words, we attempted to recreate the piece in a manner that both respected modern English words, phrases, and prose, while being attuned to Bavinck’s own originality; it is Bavinck whom you desire to read, after all. As such, this editorial work will go largely unnoticed by the reader. Or in the words of Goethe, “In this way, we are led, and even driven, back to the original text, and thus the entire circle is finally closed, in which the convergence of the foreign and the native, the familiar and the unfamiliar moves.”⁷ The nature of the work, grappling with psychology, requires navigating various coterminous words such as soul and spirit or mind and intellect. The hope is that the reader will not find the inclusion of certain Dutch words in brackets—such as soul [*ziel*], spirit [*geest*], mind/heart [*gemoed*], intellect/understanding/mind [*verstand*]⁸—cumbersome, but rather informative and therefore valuable. Our hope is that they make evident new horizons of research. Readers may take for granted that there is a certain continuity to

4 Translated by Andrews in “On the Translation of Faust,” 733.

5 Goethe, “Uebersetzungen,” 528. My translation.

6 Translation by Andrews in “On the Translation of Faust,” 733.

7 Goethe, “Uebersetzungen,” 532. My translation.

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the translation unless otherwise noted by drawing attention to the Dutch.

One other editorial feature to draw attention to is that in addition to the various footnote annotations, which we hope enrich the reader's experience, we have taken the liberty of identifying the occasional veiled reference to Scripture in brackets; like many gifted theologians of his era, Bavinck often puts forth his thoughts in the idioms of Scripture and this we hoped to make more explicit, while not detracting from the translation itself. Dutch words in brackets are original to Bavinck. With respect to the footnotes, I am indebted to the labor of Marco Barone, who contributed a number of significant editorial annotations to the volume (Bavinck did not include any footnote in this work, so all footnotes are editorial). I am likewise grateful for the revision work by Annemarieke Ryskamp, whose close reading of Hanko's translation was fundamental to arriving at the third epoch. Finally, I am thankful for Lauren Raab and Michelle Mathias for their help in the final weeks of ushering this project to the finish line and to N. Gray Sutanto for encouraging me to take the project on. Our hope then is that what lays before the reader is quite readable, but also distinctively Bavinck, so that, to use Goethe's phrase, "this poem"—or biblical and psychological treatise—may be "in all its peculiarity enjoyable and native."⁸

—Gregory Parker Jr.
Langhorne, PA, July 2023

8 Goethe, "Uebersetzungen," 531. My translation.