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Herman Bavinck and John Calvin
on the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Image of God:
A Comparison

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Preface

First and foremost, I would like to praise God and dedicate this dissertation to Him. I want to express my thanks to God, confessing that "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen." (Rom 11:36). I believe that God gave me an opportunity to conduct this research project with the ongoing support of the congregation and numerous people. I confess that His grace allowed me to study theology in the Netherlands and led me to meet my supervisor and second supervisor. During my lonely research, I remember that God was a spring of water in my soul and body, like an ever-flowing stream. I worship that the Lord my God is gracious and compassionate, abounding in love, grace, and peace.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

After completing of the translation of Herman Bavinck's four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck's theology has been given considerable attention over the past few years. Since then, recent years have witnessed the further appearance of the English translation of Bavinck's other writings.[1] This wider availability of Bavinck's writings has facilitated the comparative study between Bavinck and other theologians. Although recent studies on Bavinck largely focused on an aspect of his thought, there remains a large piece of uncharted terrain in terms of a comparison between the thoughts of Bavinck and other theologians. Indeed, a comparative study of the thoughts of Bavinck and others was still in its infancy.[2]

In light of this, a comparative study of Herman Bavinck and John Calvin has received relatively little attention from Reformed scholarship in general and neo-Calvinism scholarship in particular.[3] It is taken for granted that Bavinck inherited his theology from the

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[1] Herman Bavinck, "General Biblical Principles and the Relevance of Concrete Mosaic Law for the Social Question Today (1891)," trans. John Bolt, *Journal of Markets & Morality* 13, no. 2 (2010): 437-46; Id., "'Forward' to the First Edition (Volume I) of the Gereformeerde Dogmatiek," trans. John Bolt, *Calvin Theological Journal* 45 (2010): 9-10; Id., "John Calvin: A Lecture on the Occasion of his 400th Birthday, July 10, 1509-1909," trans. John Bolt, *The Bavinck Review* 1 (2010): 57-85; Id., "The Kingdom of God, The Highest Good," trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, *The Bavinck Review* 2 (2011): 133-70; Id., "Preface to the Life and Works of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine," trans. Henk van den Belt, *The Bavinck Review* 3 (2012): 167-77; Id., *The Christian Family*, ed. Stephen J. Grabill, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian's Library Press, 2012); Id., "The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl," trans. John Bolt, *The Bavinck Review* 3 (2012): 123-63; Id., "Letters to a Dying Student: Bavinck's Letters to Johan van Haselen," trans. James Eglinton, *The Bavinck Review* 4 (2013): 96-102; Id., "Addendum: The Influence of the Protestant Reformation of the Moral and Religious Condition of Communities and Nations," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 25 (2014): 75-81; Id., "The Pros and Cons of a Dogmatic System," trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, *The Bavinck Reviews* 5 (2014): 90-103; Id., "Conscience," trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, *The Bavinck Review* 6 (2015): 113-26; Id., "Herman Bavinck's Modernisme en Orthodoxie: A Translation," trans. Bruce R. Pass, *The Bavinck Review* 7 (2016): 63-114; Id., *Herman Bavinck on Preaching and Preachers*, trans. James Eglinton (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017); Id., "Herman Bavinck's 'My Journey to America'," trans. James Eglinton, *Dutch Crossing* 41, no. 2 (2017): 180-93; Id., "Herman Bavinck's Preface to the Synopsis Purioris Theologiae," trans. Henk van den Belt and Mathilde de Vries-van Uden, *The Bavinck Review* 8 (2017): 101-14; Id., *The Philosophy of Revelation*, A New Annotated Edition, ed. Cory C. Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2018); Id., *Christian Worldview*, trans. Cory C. Brock, James Eglinton and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2019); Id., *Reformed Ethics: Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity*, vol. 1, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019); Id., *The Sacrifice of Praise*, trans. Cameron Clausing and Gregory Parker (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2019); Id., *On Theology: Herman Bavinck's Academic Orations*, trans. Bruce R. Pass (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

[2] Timothy Shaun Price, "Pedagogy as theological praxis: Martin Luther and Herman Bavinck as sources for engagement with classical education and the liberal arts tradition," PhD thesis University of Aberdeen (2013); Wolter Huttinga, "Participation and Communicability: Herman Bavinck and John Milbank on the relation between God and the world," PhD thesis Kampen Theological University (2014); Jessica Joustra, "Herman Bavinck and John Howard Yoder in Dialogue on the Imitation of Christ," PhD dissertation Fuller Seminary (2019).

[3] There is no comprehensive work dealing with the comparative study between Bavinck and Calvin other than articles on several specific topics. Ronald N. Gleason, "Calvin and Bavinck on the Lord's Supper," *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 273-303; John Bolt, "Getting the 'Two Books' Straight: with a

Reformed tradition. Since theologians have been used to regarding both theologians to be in the same line of the Reformed tradition, little has been known of proper comparison of Bavinck and Calvin. Bavinck was generally perceived simply as Calvin's follower, belonging together with Abraham Kuyper in the Dutch neo-Calvinist movement. Hence, indeed a comparative study of Bavinck to Calvin has not yet been researched so far. Admittedly, when we turn to Bavinck's theology, given the significance of Calvin's theology, the great Reformer of Geneva, and one of the principle founders of the Reformed tradition, it comes as no surprise that the preeminent influence of Calvin can be found in Bavinck's theology. Moreover, considering the fact that Calvin is indeed one of Bavinck's most frequent dialogue partners in his theological formulation and elaboration, at first glance, it seems highly probable that there is an intimate theological relationship between them. Nevertheless, when we think of Bavinck's theology, the query arises: is it reasonable to assume that he is a slavish follower of Calvin? If not, in comparison with Calvin, in what respect does Bavinck develop and promote Reformed theology with his distinctive voice and insight?

By the same token, at the beginning of neo-Calvinism scholarship, Bavinck's and Kuyper's theological relationship had not been noticed, nor had it been studied in detail. It is no less dubious that both theologians are the chief architects of neo-Calvinism in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century European context. In the neo-Calvinist tradition, therefore, it does not seem too rash to suggest that Bavinck's theology is undoubtedly bound up with his fellow neo-Calvinist Kuyper's theology. In light of this, Bavinck's theology has been identified with that of Kuyper in the same breath without any legitimate reason. However, ever since Eugene Heideman called attention to the necessity of a comprehensive study of the relationship between Bavinck and Kuyper, numerous studies have begun to explore and compare the relation of the two representatives of neo-Calvinism in earnest.[4]

Little Help from Herman Bavinck and John Calvin," *Calvin Theological Journal* 46 (2011): 315-332; Timothy Shaun Price, "John Calvin and Herman Bavinck on the doctrine of justification in relation to ethics," in *Since We are Justified by Faith: Justification in the Theologies of the Protestant Reformation*, ed. Michael Parsons (Milton Keynes, Bucks: Paternoster, 2012).

[4] Anthony A. Hoekema, "Kuyper, Bavnick, and infallibility," *Reformed Journal* 11 (1961): 18-22; R. H. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus* (Kampen Kok, 1961); Jan Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*: *De Openbaringsen Schriftbeschouwing van Herman Bavinckresin Vergelijking met die der Ethische Theologie* (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1968); Harry Fernhout, *Man, faith, and religion in Bavinck, Kuyper, and Dooyeweerd* (Toronto: Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship, 1977); John Bolt, *The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck* (PhD dissertation, Toronto, University of St Michael's College, 1982); Albert M. Wolters, "Dutch neo-Calvinism: Worldview, Philosophy and Rationality," in *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1983): 113-131; M. E. Brinkman and Cornelis van der Kooi, *Het calvinisme van Kuyper en Bavinck* (Zoetermeer, Netherlands: Meinema, 1997); Dirk van Keulen, *Bijbel en Dogmatiek: Schriftbeschouwing en schriftgebruik in het dogmatisch werk van A. Kuyper, H. Bavinck en G. C. Berkouwer* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 2003); Richard B. Gaffin, *God's Word in Servant-form: Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck on the Doctrine of Scripture* (Jacksonville: Reformed Academic Press, 2008); J. Mark Beach, "Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, and 'The Conclusions of Utrecht 1905,'" *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 19 (2008): 11-68; Pieter L. Rouwendal, "The Reformed Dogmatics of Kersten Compared with those of his Older Contemporaries Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 1 (2009): 115-129; Cornelis van der Kooi, "The Concept of Culture in Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, and Karl Barth," *Crossroad Discourses between Christianity and*

Heideman notes, "It is unfortunate that no thorough study of the relation of Bavinck to Kuyper has ever been made. It has often been assumed that Bavinck was a more mild, deliberate, and peaceful reflection of Abraham Kuyper."[5] In response to Heideman's apparent challenge for the further study of Bavinck's relation to Kuyper, much comparative study between the two men has provided valuable insights with a balanced account of their theology to date. As the previous studies have demonstrated, Bavinck can be regarded as one of the architects of neo-Calvinism, who does share with Kuyper the fundamental principle of Calvinism, but in some aspects, theologians have tried to make clear the fact that Bavinck's own thinking is significantly different from Kuyper's. Consequently, there has been an increasing awareness concerning the similarities and differences between Bavinck's and Kuyper's theology.[6]

Viewed in this light, a comparative study of Bavinck and Calvin would be a significant contribution since this study attempts to make a contribution toward a deeper insight into Reformed theology by examining the characteristics and differences between Bavinck and Calvin. Particularly, this study aims to compare Bavinck and Calvin, focusing on two selected major theological themes: the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God. In so doing, this study would contribute to a better understanding of Bavinck and Calvin, shedding new light on the similarities and differences between them. It is the thesis of this study that Bavinck firmly stands in continuity with Calvin's theology, as a modern orthodox Calvinist throughout his whole life, but Bavinck's doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God differ from those of Calvin. While Bavinck shares with Calvin a fundamental trinitarian perspective in line with the Reformed tradition, Bavinck's emphasis upon his organic motif as a necessary aspect of his view regarding the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, particularly in relation to a human being as the image of the triune God, reflects and illuminates the distinctiveness of his thought in comparison with Calvin's theology. Then, why does this present study carry out a comparative study of Bavinck and Calvin's thoughts on the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God?

When comparing Bavinck's theology with that of Calvin, this study turns its attention to the doctrine of the Trinity and uncovers it as the central theme of Bavinck's theology. This study maintains that the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity is difficult to overestimate not only because for Bavinck, the doctrine of the Trinity lays a solid metaphysical foundation

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Culture (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010): 37-51; Timothy Shaun Price, "Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck on the Subject of Education as seen in Two Public Addresses," *The Bavinck Review* 2 (2011): 59-70; Harry Van Dyke, "Groen van Prinsterer: Godfather of Bavinck and Kuyper," *Calvin Theological Journal* 47 (2012): 72-97; John Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi: Between Pietism and Modernism* (Lewiston, NY : Edwin Mellen Press, 2013); George Harinck, "Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Concept of the French Revolution," in *neo-Calvinism and the French Revolution*, ed. James Eglinton and George Harinck (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 13-30; Jeffrey R. Skaff, "Common Grace and the Ends of Creation in Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 9 (2015): 3-18.

[5] Eugene. P. Heideman, *Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959), 6.

[6] Heideman, *Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck*, 6, 143, 178, 196-97; Bolt, *The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman*, 262-84; Harinck, "Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Concept of the French Revolution," 13-30.

for his account of God and the world, including humanity, but also because this doctrine enables him to answer theological epistemological questions of his days, providing the epistemic principle as being rooted in the triune God. The investigations of this study of Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity and his distinctive application to the doctrine of the image of God, compared to that of Calvin, among other doctrines, sheds considerable light on a broader scope of the Reformed understanding of the respective thoughts of Calvin and Bavinck by finding proposing an insight into the similarities and differences between them. In this regard, it is hoped that this study contributes to the current discussion of the central dogma of Bavinck's theological system.

In Bavinck scholarship, recent years have witnessed a flowering in Bavinck studies and a new focus on the reappraisal of his theology and life. One of the most exciting developments in systematic theology in the early twentieth-first century has been a renewed international scholarly interest in Bavinck's theology and its application to the Christian life. However, somewhat surprising is the fact that Bavinck's systematic theology has been far less studied and cataloged than his pedagogy and psychology at the outset of Bavinck scholarship. Of course, in addition to his publications on the dogmatic-theological topic, it must be remembered that Bavinck published numerous books and articles on pedagogy and psychology of religion.[7] These works show that the studies on Bavinck's pedagogy and religious psychology had dominated early Bavinck scholarship.[8] As such, at the beginning of

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[7] While there had been no full-length scholarly treatments, dealing with Bavinck's systematic theology at the doctoral level for about four decades, remarkably, at least five major works have been written on the topics of his pedagogy and religious psychology within sixteen years after Bavinck's death among Bavinck scholars. S. Rombouts, *Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck, Gids Bij de Studie van Zijn Paedagogische Werken* ('s-Hertogenbosch-Antwerpen: Malmberg, 1922); J. Brederveld, *Hoofdlijnen der Paedagogiek van Dr. Herman Bavinck, met Critische Beschouwing* (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1927); L. van der Zweep, *De Paedagogiek van Bavinck* (Kampen: Kok, 1935); Cornelius Jaarsma, *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936); L. van Klinken, *Bavincks Paedagogische Beginselen* (Meppel: Boom, 1937). Cited from John Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck" (PhD diss., University of St. Michaef's College, Toronto, 1982), 3. In addition to these studies, one should notice that Anthony A. Hoekema also drew attention to Bavinck's psychology in his "The Centrality of the Heart: A Study in Christian Anthropology, with Special Reference to the Psychology of Herman Bavinck" (Grand Rapids: Calvin College, 1948). Though it is not well-known to Bavinck scholarship, Hoekema submitted a dissertation mainly on the psychology of Bavinck to Princeton theological seminary on February 28, 1948. However, he obtained a doctorate for another dissertation on Bavinck's doctrine of the Covenant instead of this dissertation five years later.

[8] Jaarsma, *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck*, 212-14, 130. Concerning Bavinck's contribution to Christian education, in his *Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck*, Cornelius Jaarsma classifies Bavinck as a fundamental educator along with such men as "Horne, Foerster, Willmann, and Rein." He highlights the idea that Bavinck did play a crucial role in protecting Christian education from Dualism, Pluralism, Subjectivism, Agnosticism, Pantheism, Materialism, Empiricism, Rationalism, Pragmatism, and Humanism. Over against the trends in the pedagogy of Bavinck's days, which attempted to make education independent from theology and philosophy, it is reasonable to think that he diligently endeavored to defend Christian education. For more of Bavinck's educational principles and his thoughts on the so-called secularized education, see Herman Bavinck, "Richtingen in de Psychologie," *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift* 1 (1909): 4-15; Id., "Klassieke Opleiding," *Stemmen des Tijds* 7 (1918): 46-65; 113-47. Cf. John Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 193.

Bavinck scholarship, Bavinck's educational philosophy and pedagogy have been given considerable scholarly attention, standing out as its prominent value of Reformed psychological foundation for education and pedagogy.[9] If so, afterward, how did Bavinck scholarship pay attention to the themes of Bavinck's theology?

Anthony Hoekema's *Herman Bavinck's doctrine of the Covenant* of 1953 that he submitted to Princeton theological seminary is the signal for studies of Bavinck's systematic theology in earnest.[10] In the preface of his dissertation, Hoekema not only declares the doctrine of the covenant as "one of the key doctrines of Reformed theology," for an understanding of the Scriptures, particularly in relation both to the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man but also explicitly singled out this doctrine that "forms an integral aspect of his theology among many theological subjects in Bavinck's theology."[11] Hoekema points out that the significance of Bavinck's doctrine of the covenant is confirmed by the official doctrinal formulations from 1905 to 1946 in the Netherlands and the CRC of America.[12] In a similar vein to Hoekema, recently, Brain G. Mattson emphasizes the significance of Bavinck's doctrine of the covenant in relation to his anthropology and eschatology.[13] While Mattson concedes the well-known theme of 'grace restores nature' in Bavinck's theology, he further maintains that Bavinck's covenant theology is the most basic rational, which functions to preserve the relationship between nature and grace in an eschatological sense.[14] Mattson argues that a failure to understand Bavinck's eschatology, rooted in the covenant of works, results in a misunderstanding of the central motif of his entire theology as well as a misconstrual of his well-known synthesis that grace restores

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[9] From the late twentieth century, Bavinck's education and his pedagogy have received much attention again from the scholars. Jacob A. Belzen, "Herman Bavinck en de godsdienstpsychologie," *Radix* 20 (1994):242-59; Id., "Tremendum et Fascinans: On the Early Reception and Nondevelopment of the Psychology of Religion among Orthodox Dutch Calvinists," in *Aspects in Contexts: Studies in the History of Psychology of Religion*, ed. Jacob A. Belzen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000): 91-127; Id., "The Introduction of the Psychology of Religion to the Netherlands: Ambivalent Reception, Epistemological Concerns, and Persistent Patterns," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 37 (2001): 45-62; Price, "Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck on the Subject of Education as seen in Two Public Addresses," 59-70; Id., *Pedagogy as Theological Praxis: Martin Luther and Herman Bavinck as Sources for Engagement with Classical Education and the Liberal Arts Tradition* (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 2013); Hanniel Strebel, "Proposal for a Theological Prolegomena of Education: Lessons from Herman Bavinck's Legacy," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 39 (2015): 128-43.

[10] Anthony A. Hoekema, *Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant*, Unpublished Th.D. Dissertation (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953). S. P. van der Walt's study on Bavinck's Philosophy was published in the same year, which was written in the Afrikaans language. S. P. van der Walt, Die Wysbegeerte van Dr. Herman Bavinck (Potchefstroom, South Africa: ProRege, 1953); followed by Bastian Kruithof, *The Relation of Christianity and Culture in the Teaching of Herman Bavinck* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Edinburgh, 1955); R. H. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus* (Kampen: Kok, 1961).

[11] Hoekema, *Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant*, iii, iv, 12.

[12] Hoekema points out Bavinck's decisive influence on the so-called Conclusions of the Synod of Utrecht (1905) and ongoing influences on the Declaration of the Synod (1942) and the Substitute Formulation of the Synod (1946) in the Netherlands. Hoekema, *Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant*, 177-95.

[13] Brian G. Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology & the Image of God in Herman Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012).

[14] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 20, 237.

nature.[15] Instead of saying that Bavinck's opposition to the dualism between nature and grace is based on the trinitarian framework, Mattson put more emphasis on the covenant framework in explicating nature's restoration by grace.

After Hoekema's study, Bavinck scholarship has made perceptive strides towards discussing the central theme of Bavinck's theology, particularly by Eugene Heideman's *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck* (1959) and Jan Veenhof's *Revelatie en Inspiratie* (1968). In his dissertation, Heideman singles two themes out for the central feature of Bavinck's entire theology: One theme is that "Grace restores nature." The other theme is that "Reason sees by the spectacles of Scripture." In comparison with B. Kruithof's emphasis on the role of common grace in Bavinck's theology, notably Heideman argues the greater importance of the theme of 'grace restoring nature' in Bavinck's system, regarding it as the fundamental theme in Bavinck's theology, based on Bavinck's own writings, mainly on his addresses, "De wetenchap der H. Godgeleerdheid"(1883), "De Katholiciteit van Christendom en kerk"(1888), and "De Algemeene Genade"(1894).[16] In his *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, Jan Veenhof concurs with and adopts Heideman's thought that the theme of 'grace restoring nature' is one of pivotal importance for the understanding of his theology.[17] Concerning the centrality of the grace restores nature theme in Bavinck's theology, Veenhof comments as follows: "It is the central theme that recurs in numberless variations, the refrain that is unceasingly repeated, the *leitmotif* that we hear everywhere."[18] Veenhof subscribes to the notion that grace restores nature is, indeed, Bavinck's foundational principle, but also states that this notion is the central content of the catholicity of Christianity in his theological argument.[19] In a certain sense, it can be said that the theme of 'grace restoring nature' was introduced by Heideman, and a conclusion of this theme was corroborated by Veenhof.[20] In light of these considerations, since Heideman has highlighted the theme of 'grace restoring nature' as the central motif in Bavinck's theology, there has been a general scholarly consensus concerning the significance of this theme in Bavinck scholarship for many decades.

Many Bavinck scholars have reached a nearly universal consensus regarding the centrality of the 'grace restoring nature' theme in Bavinck's theology, but beyond this consensus, various attempts to grasp his whole theology from a variety of perspectives have surfaced continuously within Bavinck scholarship. In his *Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption*, Syd Hielema locates the centrality of Bavinck's theology in his eschatological understanding of redemption, agreeing with G. C. Berkouwer's viewpoint

[15] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 4-9.

[16] Heideman, *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck*, 191. Cf. Ibid., 101, 178, 184, 196, 201, 203, 216, 218, 221, 225, 228, 237.

[17] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 346. Cf. Id., *Nature and Grace in Herman Bavinck*, trans. Albert M. Wolters (Sioux Center, Iowa: Dordt College Press, 2006), 7.

[18] Veenhof, *Nature and Grace in Herman Bavinck*, 17.

[19] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 345-65.

[20] John Bolt, Review of *Restored to our Destiny*, by Brain G. Mattson and *Trinity and Organism*, by James P. Eglinton, *Calvin Theological Journal* 48 (2013), 172.

on the central motif in Bavinck's theology.[21] While Hielema acknowledges the importance of the theme of grace restoring nature in the overall scheme of Bavinck's thought, Bavinck's understanding of the eschatology of redemption has been brought to the forefront by Hielema's argument.[22] Ronald Gleason argues that the doctrine of the *unio mystica* ought to be considered as the true central motif in his theology.[23] While Gleason affirms the significance of 'grace restoring nature' that Heideman introduced, he further argues that God's grace of which Bavinck stressed is the grace of God *in Christ*. When considering Bavinck's emphasis on the *unio mystica* as a key concept, Gleason insists that a proper understanding of nature and grace in Bavinck's theology is possible.[24] What is striking about Bavinck's manner in which he sharpens the focus on the *unio mystica* is, argues Gleason, that Bavinck calls attention to first the *ordo salutis* in general and second his sacramentology in particular.[25]

Most recently, in the secondary literature, it is notable that Bruce R. Pass carefully articulates the centrality of Christology, functioning as its centre and heart of Bavinck's whole theology.[26] In Pass's view, Bavinck's Christology plays a crucial role as the starting

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[21] Rather than the 'grace restores nature' motif, Hielema suggests that the 'God so loved the world' motif that Berkouwer proposed describes Bavinck's theology much more accurately. G. C. Berkouwer, *Zoeken en Vinden*, 49. "The relation between catholicity and common grace points in the direction of Bavinck's deepest motif, namely, that God so loved the world." Cited from Syd Hielema, *Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption* (Th.D. diss., Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, 1998), 287.

[22] Syd Hielema calls into question Veenof's argument of 'grace restoring nature' motif in Bavinck's theology, pointing out a problem in terms of his one-sided stress on the restoration motif in relation to God's work in creation over against divine work in redemption. In Hielema's view, Veenhof overemphasizes the doctrine of creation, as well as the significance of common grace than Bavinck himself, had intended in his theology. Hielema insists that the idea of grace restoring nature may not be able properly to account for "certain discontinuities between the present and the new creation," and thus, he argues that Veenhof overstresses these doctrines of creation and grace, considering Bavinck's thinking on redemption. On this basis, Hielema maintains that Veenhof's arguments regarding Bavinck's restoring thoughts as his central theme are "valid," but they are also "incomplete." Hielema criticizes that Veenhof's distinction between restoration and repristination in Bavinck's understanding of redemption and his account of Bavinck's rejection of a Roman Catholic view of elevation are both valid, but they have an incomplete character. Syd Hielema, *Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption* (Th.D. diss., Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, 1998), 253, 258. Cf. Hielema warns against the possible danger of reductionism when summarizing Bavinck's theology via the theme of grace restoring nature. Ibid., 286.

[23] Ronald N. Gleason, *The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck* (Th.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 2001), 1, 38, 45.

[24] Gleason criticizes Hielema's dissertation that too little attention is paid to the notion of the *ordo salutis* or the *unio mystica* in Bavinck's theology, and thus it may cause one to miss one of the keys to understanding Bavinck's thoughts on "the relation of creation and the eschaton." Gleason, *The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck*, 39. Cf. In Gleasson's view, Veenhof also paid relatively little attention to the *unio mystica* in Bavinck's thought. Both Heideman and Veenhof devoted much attention to Bavinck's earlier writings and addresses. In comparison, Gleason comments that John Bolt correctly explains the significance of the notion of the *unio mystica* rather than Heideman's and Veenhof's dissertations, by discussing "aspects of the Imitation of Christ accepted by Bavinck" and analyzing Bavinck's two articles on the imitation theme. Ibid., 24, 29-33.

[25] Gleason, *The Centrality of the Unio Mystica in the Theology of Herman Bavinck*, 45, 109, 118, 358-72.

[26] Bruce R. Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics: Christology and Christocentrism in Herman Bavinck* (Göttingen,

point or central dogma of his dogmatic system.[27] Fascinatingly, offering distinction that Bavinck himself draws between midpoint (*middelpunt*) and the starting point (*outgangpunt*), Pass maintains that Christology gradually shifted more and more to the central dogma in terms of its place and purpose of Christology in Bavinck's thinking.[28] In light of this, Pass suggests that Bavinck's Christology provides the foundation for the organic motif to reconcile Christianity with modern culture.[29] Pass carefully develops the role of Bavinck's Christology, particularly with respect to his bibliology, ecclesiology, and eschatology.[30] In Pass's view, Bavinck used the Christological metaphors in order to account for these doctrines.[31] He also maintains that Bavinck's emphasis on Christology can provide an abundance of material in support of the criticism of the two Bavincks hypothesis.[32] In a similar vein, Hans Burger's study on *Being in Christ*, which includes a large chapter on Bavinck's understanding of mystical union, also maintains that the mystical union with Christ is a central and significant motif in Bavinck's theology.[33] Burger regards Bavinck's idea on the mystical union as a fairly representative perspective of the Reformed tradition on the concept of 'being in Christ.'

Both John Bolt and James Eglinton suggested that the doctrine of the Trinity plays a more significant role in Bavinck's theology than the theme of 'grace restoring nature.' This study is fundamentally in agreement with their position that the doctrine of the Trinity functions as the central dogma of Bavinck's theology. Bolt is one of Bavinck scholars who emphasize the theme that grace restores nature should be understood as the central theme of Bavinck's theology against the dualistic construal of the relation between nature and grace.[34] Concerning Heideman's influence on the central theme in Bavinck's theology, Bolt comments that "Bavinck scholarship will be forever in Heideman's debt thanks to his achievement in

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Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 16, 37-56, 90, 196; Id., "The Question of Central Dogma in Herman Bavinck," *Calvin Theological Journal* 53 (2018): 33-63. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 274.

[27] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 43, 55.

[28] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 38; Ibid., 37-47. Cf. the specific stage in the development of Bavinck's thought can be discerned in Herman Bavinck, "Confessie en Dogmatiek," *Theologische studiën* 9:3 (1891), 273, 274; Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:110; 2:29; 3:274, 321, 344, 345, 380, 402, 474; Id., *Philosophy of Revelation: the Stone Lectures for 1908-1909, Princeton Theological Seminary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman, 1953), 27; Id., *De wetenschap der heilige godgeleerdheid* (Kampen, 1883), 9, 10; Id., *The Sacrifice of Praise: Meditations before and after receiving access to the table of the Lord* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1922), 4; Id., "Ethics and Politics," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*, ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 46, 47. Cited from Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 37-44.

[29] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 129.

[30] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 20, 165.

[31] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 171.

[32] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 196. Cf. Pass insists that Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* is a Christocentric dogmatics. Ibid., 24.

[33] Hans Burger, *Being in Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Investigation in a Reformed Perspective* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 28, 87. Burger stresses that Bavinck is not only "a trinitarian theologian" but also "a Christocentric thinker." Ibid., 89, 90. Cf. Brian G. Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology & the Image of God in Herman Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 157-201.

[34] Bolt, *The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck*, 162.

singling out this theme."[35] In considering Bavinck's theology in detail, Bolt affirms the importance of the theme of 'grace restoring nature,' saying that it is undeniable that "the evidence for 'grace restoring nature' being the fundamental defining and shaping theme of Bavinck's theology is not hard to find."[36]

However, Bolt declares that the doctrine of the triune God is the adequate theological framework for the understanding of Bavinck's 'grace restoring nature.' In his *The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck*, Bolt underlines the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity and the notion of the imitation of Christ in Bavinck's thought. Bolt maintains that the theme of 'nature is restored by grace' is the central thought of Bavinck's thought but further articulates that the doctrine of the Trinity has priority over the theme of 'grace restoring nature' in Bavinck's theology. From this point of view, Bolt attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of Bavinck's view on the cultural-ethical ideal via his doctrine of the Trinity. Bolt emphasizes Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, declaring that "It is the doctrine of the Trinity in its cultural-ethical significance that provides Bavinck with the theoretical resolution of the fundamental tension in his cultural-ethical ideal," so continues Bolt, "The Trinity thus provides the necessary perspective for viewing all reality. Both the ontological and economic Trinity are important for Bavinck's cultural-ethical views."[37] As regards an easy accommodation with contemporary culture justified by the slogan "grace restores nature" without proper qualification, Bolt warns against the possible dangers of such a trend that it might lead to a loss of the biblical tension.[38] In this regard, Bolt addresses the viewpoint that one needs to view that the Trinity is the heart of the Reformed theology and the 'grace restoring nature' theme should be subordinate to it, rather than the reverse that the doctrine of the Trinity is subordinate to and serves as a supporting doctrine for the theme of 'grace restoring nature.' Bolt is convinced that what ought to be written on the human heart and mind is not the restored nature itself, but the only triune God, and he also believes, it must be said, that this is indeed Bavinck's view.

In his *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif*, Eglinton calls for a paradigm shift in Bavinck studies by proposing a new general reading of Bavinck's theology. Eglinton suggests that Bavinck's frequent use of the organic motif is crucial to understand Bavinck's theology.[39] Particularly, suggests Eglinton, the notion of the organic is essential to grasp Bavinck's view regarding the relationship between the Trinity and creatures. Eglinton is convinced that there exists a definite correlation

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[35] John Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi* (Lewiston, NY : Edwin Mellen Press, 2013), 157.

[36] John Bolt, "Editor's Introduction," in *Reformed Dogmatics* 1: 18. Cf. Concerning Bavinck's rejection of the two extremes of dualistic elevation and annihilation, Bolt particularly points out the meaning of salvation as the restoration of creation: "the divine work of redemption does not elevate or annihilate creation but has as its proper goal the restoring of creation to its original goodness." Bolt, *The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck*, 128.

[37] Bolt, *The Imitation of Christ Theme in the Cultural Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck*, 127.

[38] John Bolt, "The Trinity as a Unifying Theme in Reformed Thought: A Response to Dr George Vandervelde," *Calvin Theological Journal* 22 (1987), 95, 96, 99.

[39] James P. Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 2012), 89.

between the triune God and creatures by examining the sense in which Bavinck views that the organic character of all creatures is analogous to the triune God. Concerning the central theme of Bavinck's theology, Eglinton acknowledges that 'grace restores nature' as a central place in Bavinck's thought, but he notes that this centrality must be carefully nuanced. Pointing out the glory of the triune God as central to both creation and eschaton in Bavinck's theology, Eglinton argues that the Trinity is the centerpiece of his theology.[40] This interpretation of Bavinck's thought reveals the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity in Bavinck's theology. Extending the emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity in Bavinck's theology a little further, Nathaniel Gray Sutanto suggests that Bavinck's doctrine of the triune God implicates not only s doctrine of the triune God implicates not only his cosmology but also his epistemology by emphasizing Bavinck's organic motif.[41]

This study agrees with the centrality of the doctrine of the triune God in the theology of Bavinck that the doctrine of the Trinity is the focal dogma that undergirds his entire theology. This study demonstrates that for Bavinck, the doctrine of the Trinity provides the ontological foundation for God's being and creation and epistemological grounds for the knowledge of God and the world, including humanity. If so, how and on what grounds does the doctrine of the Trinity serve Bavinck's theology as the starting point and the central point?

In comparison with that of Calvin, the distinct characteristics of Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity will be drawn from this present study. As will be seen in the following chapter on the doctrine of the Trinity, this study argues that Bavinck's vision for Christianity's engagement with modernism, including his both epistemology and ontology, is strongly rooted in his doctrine of the Trinity, particularly in relation to the relationship between the ontological and economic Trinity and the relationship between the unity and diversity of the ontological Trinity. It will become apparent in the course of this study that Bavinck's engagement with modern culture is firmly based on the Christian doctrine that God is the triune God and human being is created after the image of the triune God for the glory of God. Hence, the contribution of this study is to demonstrate that Bavinck's engagement with modernism defined by Harinck as "new, modernist approach of Christianity" can be best illuminated by focusing on Bavinck's doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God based on a theological sense that the ontological Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity. Since Bavinck's theology and his application of dogmatics to culture cannot be rightly understood apart from his understanding of a theology of the Trinity *ad intra* and cosmology of organism *ad extra*, we need to take a long, hard look at it.

As will be seen in the following chapters on the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God, Bavinck's use of the organic notion can be the pivotal point to Bavinck's trinitarian theology and his engagement with modern culture, showing development of Bavinck's thought in comparison with that of Calvin. By comparison to Calvin, Bavinck elaborated his doctrine of the Trinity, especially regarding the relationship between the ontological Trinity

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[40] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 96.

[41] Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, *God and Knowledge: Herman Bavinck's Theological Epistemology* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020), 9; Id., "Herman Bavinck on the Image of God and original sin," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 18 (2016): 174-78.

and the economic Trinity, through his notion of the organic motif. Admittedly, although Calvin didn't explicitly speak of the relationship of the ontological and economic Trinity, it seems that he clearly recognized the ontological Trinity is revealed in the economic Trinity. In light of this, Bavinck underscored human beings as the image of God among the creation. In its organic unity and diversity of all humanity, Bavinck argued that the fullness of the image of the triune God can be found.

In the case of Calvin studies, although Calvin's theology is also generally recognized as thoroughly trinitarian, it is noteworthy that the doctrine of the Trinity received relatively little attention from Calvin scholarship in general. [42] Just as the trinitarian thought of the Reformers is far less fully studied than other fields, Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity has received comparatively little treatment. Though the doctrine of the Trinity has not been researched extensively nor studied thoroughly with regard to Calvin's theology as a whole, his theology has been often considered as trinitarian and his thought is structured by the doctrine of the Trinity.[43] Many theologians perceived that Calvin deliberately fashions the *Institutes* after the Apostles' Creed from a trinitarian perspective.[44] When the organization

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[42] B. B. Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," ed. S. Craig, *Calvin and Augustine* (Philadelphia: P&R, 1974), 189-284; Wilhem Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin,* trans. Harold Knight (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 54-60; David J. Engelsma, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 23 (1989); T. F Torrance, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," *Trinitarian Perspectives* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1994); Philip Walker Butin, *Revelation, Redemption and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); C. B. Holdsworth, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity: A Summary and Evaluation," *A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 119-128; Francois Wendell, *Calvin: Origin and Development of His Religious Thought,* trans. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 165-169; Roger Beckwith, "The Calvinist Doctrine of the Trinity," in *Churchman* 115, no.44 (Winter 2001): 308-315; Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 35-57; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Philipsburg: P & R, 2004), 252-268; Douglas F. Kelly, "The True and Triune God: Calvin's Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Institutes 1.11-13," in *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis* (Philipsburg: P & R, 2008), 65-89; Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca.1520 to ca.1725,* 2nd ed., vol. 4, *The Triunity of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 24, 62-73; Jae Youn Kim, *The Relational God and Salvation: Soteriological Implications of the Social Doctrine of the Trinity - Jürgen Moltmann, Catherine LaCugna, Colin Gunton* (Kampen: Kok, 2008).

[43] Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," 192; Butin, *Revelation, Redemption and Response*, 123-124; ; Randall C. Zachman, *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics), 176; Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 36; Colin Gunton, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 7, 8; I. John Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 35-43. Cf. On the other hand, it should be noted that some theologians assert that Calvin's Trinitarian thought does not play central role in his theology. Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 41-3; François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origin and Development of his Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1987), 120, 121, 166.

[44] T.H.L Parker, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (London, 1952; rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 118-21; Richard Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 134; John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg: P&R Pub., 2002), 35; David C. Steinmetz, "The Theology of John Calvin," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge

has been modified in the final edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin seemed to revise either the form and the content of the *Institutes* to be the primary source for the understanding of his theology, emphasizing trinitarian and soteriological focus.[45] From the year after the first edition of the *Institutes* to the year before his death, Calvin's life apparently became dedicated to trinitarian controversy and the attempt to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, particularly against Pierre Caroli's suspicions of heresy and the objections of anti-trinitarianism like Michael Servetus and Valentine Gentile. For Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity is of particular importance since it is an attempt to speak about God. As a theologian of the Word of God, Calvin had to respond to the claims of antitrinitarian heresies of his days and deal with the use of the traditional trinitarian language and exegesis of his conviction that Scripture clearly has revealed himself as the triune God. In the light of these considerations, one can say that Calvin responded to the dearth of systematic theology through his exposition of the text of Scripture against the rise of antitrinitarians of his days. Most notably, in his *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid: de drie-eenheid bij Calvijn*, Arie Baars meticulously examined Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity through historical and systematic research.[46] Baars' study elucidates Calvin's trinitarian thought and presents a comprehensive assessment. This study takes one step further, based on Baars' investigation of Calvin's doctrine *per se*, by comparing Calvin's trinitarian dogma with that of Bavinck.

Considering that the final purpose of this study is to discern the similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity in the two theologians will be explored in terms of biblical exegesis, trinitarian terminology, analogical metaphor, trinitarian epistemology, and theological emphasis of the argument. On the one hand, against the anti-trinitarianism of his days, Calvin defended and promoted the doctrine of the Trinity, adhering to Scripture as the final authority of faith and the doctrine. Through the eyes of faith, Calvin sought to find and clarify the exegetical grounds for the doctrine of the Trinity rather than speculation concerning the divine essence and the use of analogical metaphors. For Calvin, the key to understanding the triune God in accordance with the teaching of Scripture by faith is to highlight the full essential equality of the deity of the Son and the Spirit and God's grace for the work of salvation in Christ. The most crucial purpose of the doctrine of the Trinity for Calvin is to give certainty of salvation for the believer by offering a firm biblical foundation for the economic Trinity.

On the other hand, the doctrine of the Trinity lays the metaphysical foundation for Bavinck's account of God and the world and provides the ontological grounds for unity and diversity in creation. The doctrine of the Trinity enables Bavinck to answer theological epistemological questions, providing the epistemic principle as being rooted in the triune God. Besides, the relationship between the ontological and economic Trinity plays a significant

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University Press, 2004), 118.

   [45] For a detailed discussion on the order and arrangement of the *Institutes*, see Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 118-39. In comparison with every previous edition, given his 1559 letter to the reader, the final edition of the *Institutes* of 1559 satisfied Calvin. Calvin himself comments that "though I do not regret the labour previously expended, I never felt satisfied until the work was arranged in the order in which it now appears." John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (1559), 23.

   [46] Arie Baars, *Om Gods Verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid: de Drie-eenheid bij Calvijn* (Kampen: Kok, 2004).

role in Bavinck's answer to the nineteenth-century mechanical determinism of monism and deistic and pantheistic views of the relationship between God and the world. Most importantly, Bavinck pays considerable attention to God's ontological immanent trinitarian relations. Focusing attention on the divine fecundity and the divine communicability of the being of God *ad intra*, Bavinck provides the ontological foundations for the goal of creation and re-creation and the relationship between God and humanity. Moreover, Bavinck passionately explains the economic works of God *ad extra*, providing a firm framework that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity. In this way, Bavinck attempts to guide and promote Christian ways of thinking about God, the world, and human beings.

By analyzing their thoughts and pointing out the similarities and differences between them, the distinctive characteristics of their doctrine of the Trinity will be drawn from this study. Notably, Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity presents the rationale for a robust understanding of humanity created after the image of the triune God and its rich implications for the Christian life. More importantly, this study contributes to the understanding of humanity as the image of God both in Calvin and Bavinck and the distinctive manner in which Bavinck seeks to apply his doctrine of the Trinity in the origin, essence, and destiny of humanity. Research on both Calvin and Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God is still in its early stage, as the brevity of the bibliography attests. In the case of Calvin studies, there is a shortage of full-length studies on Calvin's understandings of humanity as the image of God. In the early twentieth century, T. F. Torrance's 1949 study is the only full-length secondary source on Calvin's thoughts concerning human nature.[47] We find some recent scholarly works that try to devote themselves to the understanding of Calvin's doctrine of the image of God over the past few decades.[48] This doctrine of human nature and the image of God have been given much less attention by Calvin scholarship than other topics of Calvin studies. In the case of Bavinck studies, the topic of the doctrine of the image of God is relatively young and, as such, is still establishing its basic tenets. As noted earlier, at the outset of Bavinck scholarship, there had been several full-length scholarly treatments concerning humanity in regard to pedagogy and psychology. While there is currently much discussion about Bavinck's understanding of the image of God, scholarship on Bavinck's contribution to the doctrine of the image of God is lacking, viewed from the perspective of systematic theology.[49]

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[47] T. F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949).

[48] There has been increasing interest in Calvin's view of humanity as the image of God with several full-length monographs for the last thirty years. Mary Potter Engel, *John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); J. van Eck, *God, mens, medemens: Humanitas in de theologie van Calvijn* (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1992); Shu-Ying Shih, *The Development of Calvin's Understanding of the Imago Dei in the Institutes of the Christian Religion from 1536 to 1559* (Heidelberg: Ruprecht Karls University, 2004); Jason van Vliet, *Children of God: The Imago Dei in John Calvin and His Context* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009).

[49] Brian G. Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology & the Image of God in Herman Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012); Jeongmo Yoo, "The Creation of Human Beings in the Thought of Herman Bavinck (1854-1921)," 성경과 신학 69 (2014): 75-104; Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck on the Image of God and original sin," 174-190; Jessica Joustra, "An Embodied Imago Dei: How Herman Bavinck's Understanding of the Image of God Can Help Inform Conversations on Race," *Journal of Reformed*

This study seeks to contribute to a broader scope of the Reformed understanding of humanity as the image of God by proposing an insight into the similarities and differences in the respective thoughts of Calvin and Bavinck. This study suggests that understanding the doctrine of the triune God for Bavinck's theology forms a core element in his understanding of the image of God. This study shows that the different emphasis on the Trinity, compared to Calvin, leads directly to Bavinck's own distinctive insights into humanity as the image of God. In this regard, it is essential to bear in mind the difference between Calvin and Bavinck's starting point of understanding humanity. In a basic sense, Bavinck grounds the doctrine of the image of God in the trinitarian being of God rather than merely the doctrine of God. Hence, Bavinck's understanding of humanity as the image of God, which is augmented by his emphasis on the doctrine of the triune God. Bavinck speaks less about humanity as the image of God and more about as the image of the triune God. In comparison, the underpinning of Calvin's view of humanity as the image of God is closely tied to the notion of God as an all-surpassing excellent God who is the spirit. These different foci, as will be demonstrated in chapter five, lead to disparate understandings of the nature and destiny of humanity. From the side of systematic theology, this study makes a helpful contribution to the image of God of Calvin and Bavinck by making a comparison between them, mainly to manifest Bavinck's own application of his doctrine of the Trinity centered on the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity to the doctrine of the image of God.

From this perspective, when Calvin and Bavinck's views on humanity as the image of God are investigated, several topics come up for lively discussion. This comparative study offers clarification concerning their understanding of the origin of humanity. Criticizing the views of human origins asserted by the Pantheism, Materialism, and Darwinism of his day, Bavinck wished to present the very rationale for Christian views of human origins that could stand the challenges of his day. While these alternatives concerning the origin of all things rest on empirical investigations and logical reasoning, Bavinck affirms the divine origin of humanity on the ground that it is scriptural teaching, which is largely shared by Calvin. Like Calvin, Bavinck lays the foundation for the existence of creation to God, but further, he emphatically states that humanity has a divine origin in the *triune* God.[50] This study focuses on Bavinck's emphasis on the triune God as the cornerstone for the definition of humanity as the image of God, making an important hermeneutical difference between Bavinck and Calvin.

On this basis, this study shows how the understanding of the origin of humanity as the image of God is essential to the understanding of the human essence and human destiny. Thus, this study illuminates Calvin's and Bavinck's primary definition of the essence of human nature and human destiny. Notably, at this point, Bavinck's emphasis on the image of the triune God promotes a difference with Calvin concerning the essence of humanity *per se* and the relation between the essence, the faculties, and the capabilities of humanity. The discussion of human nature in this study will center around finding the key scene to the

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Theology 11 (2017): 9-23; Ximian Xu, "The Dialogue between Herman Bavinck and Mou Zongsan on Human Nature and its Quality," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11 (2017): 298-324.

[50] Italics are mine.

differences between the relational and ontological emphasis of the image of God, between the soul and the whole person as the center of God's image, and between Christocentric understanding of gender unity and diversity and a trinitarian view of the unity and diversity of humanity as a whole. Moreover, this study offers Bavinck's distinctive insights into the image of God regarding the threefold office of prophet, king, and priest.

Throughout this study, the notion that humanity is the image of the triune God significantly contributes to Bavinck's understanding of the image of God, in comparison with that of Calvin. By providing insight into the distinctiveness of Bavinck's thought with the application of the doctrine of the Trinity to human beings, this study presents the way how one can understand his view of humanity, emphasizing its significance for the Christian life. This directly leads one to distinguish the theological relationship in terms of the similarity and difference between Calvin and Bavinck, and it is to be hoped that this study can serve as a stepping stone for those who decide which position of Calvin and Bavinck to fit their own preferences.

The central question is that of theological analysis: *what are the similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God?* While Bavinck concurs with Calvin's theology in line with the Reformed tradition, the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God shed light on the similarity and dissimilarity between Bavinck and Calvin. The clarification of the content of their doctrines is indispensable for the course of the comparative study of Bavinck and Calvin.

Ultimately, this study will show that the emphasis upon the trinitarian being of God *ad intra* provides a much deeper starting point for Bavinck than Calvin in terms of the knowledge of God. Particularly, this study attempts to explain how Bavinck applies the doctrine of the Trinity to the doctrine of the image of God, with the emphasis being on humanity as the image of the triune God. Bavinck's articulation of the relationship between God's being *ad intra* and God's work *ad extra* provides an underlying theological rationale for the Christian life. The elaboration on humanity as the image of the triune God presents for Bavinck the origin, essence, and destiny of humanity in far greater detail than Calvin. Bavinck's understanding of the Trinity and humanity as the image of the triune God show the distinctiveness of Bavinck's theology, compared to that of Calvin, and make a distinct scholarly contribution to the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God.

In recent years Bavinck scholarship has progressed considerably in South Korea, yet a case could be made that a proper understanding of Bavinck's theological identity with respect to the two Bavincks hypothesis and the recent criticism of this hypothesis is still in its infancy. Bavinck scholars in South Korea rarely paused in their studies to consider Bavinck's theological identity. Bavinck's theological identity in relation to the two Bavincks hypothesis has not, so far, been noticed, nor have scholars in South Korea been studied in detail. No mention of the two Bavincks hypothesis is made in the account of Bavinck in South Korea. For the most part, over the years, a single doctrine or aspect of Bavinck's theology has received attention in Bavinck scholarship in South Korea. In embryonic scholarship, it is important to grasp one's theological identity since one's basic identity and concerns are primarily tied to the thoroughgoing one's theology. In this light, an overview of the discussion of Bavinck's theological identity in relation to the two Bavincks hypothesis and

the criticisms of this hypothesis would be a distinct contribution to Bavinck scholarship in South Korea.

Since Jan Veenhof has introduced the two Bavincks hypothesis in his dissertation on *Revelatie en Inspiratie* in 1968, needless to say, this bipolar interpretation of Bavinck between Reformed orthodoxy and modernism has a considerable effect on the understanding of Bavinck's theological identity in Bavinck scholarship for many decades.[51] Recently, however, as will be subsequently explained in chapter two, the attempts to defend and maintain the unity of Bavinck's theological identity against the two Bavincks hypothesis have emerged with the aid of recent scholarly explorations and have followed an established academic tendency; George Harinck,[52] Barend Kamphuis,[53] Nelson Kloosterman,[54] John Bolt,[55] Dirk van Keulen,[56] Brian G. Mattson,[57] Nathaniel Gray Sutanto,[58] Cory C. Brock,[59] Bruce R. Pass[60] and James P. Eglinton.[61] Notably, as is seen in the following discussion,

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[51] Jan Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1968). Cf. Henk Vroom, "Scripture Read and Interpreted: The Development of the Doctrine of Scripture and Hermeneutics in Gereformeerde Theology in the Netherlands," *Calvin Theological Journal* 28, no. 2 (1993): 352-372; Malcolm B. Yarnell, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine* (B & H Publishing Group: Nashville, 2007); David VanDrunen, "The Kingship of Christ is Twofold: Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms in the Thought of Herman Bavinck," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45, no. 1 (April 2010): 147-164. John Bolt, "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam: Herman Bavinck's Reception and Influence in North America," *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, no. 2 (2003): 263-280; G. C. Berkouwer, *Zoeken en Vinden: Herinneringm en Ervanngm* (Kampen: Kok, 1989), 5.

[52] George Harinck, "'Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us': The Reformed Spirituality of Herman Bavinck," *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, no. 2 (2003): 248-262; Id., "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 60-77; Id., "Why Was Bavinck in Need of a Philosophy of Revelation?" *The Kuyper Center Review,* ed. John Bowlin, vol. 2, Revelation and Common Grace (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 27-40; Id., "Universality and Dualism: Herman Bavinck and the Debate on Whether to Civilize the Dutch East Indies through Missions or Education," *Calvin Theological Journal* 48 (2013): 217-233.

[53] Barend Kamphuis, "Herman Bavinck on Catholicity," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 24 (2013): 97-104; "Herman Bavinck on the Catholicity of Christianity and Church," *Beiheft zur Okumenischen Rundschau: Christliche Traditionen zwischen Katholizitat und Partikularitat*, no. 85, ed. Leo J. Koffeman (Frankfurt: Lembeck, 2009): 149-155.

[54] Nelson D. Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold': Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms in the Thought of Herman Bavinck by David VanDrunen," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45, no. 1 (April 2010): 165-176.

[55] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*; Id., "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam: Herman Bavinck's Reception and Influence in North America," *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, (2003): 263-280; Id., "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms: Some Further Reflections," *The Bavinck Review* 4 (2013): 64-93; Id., *Bavinck on the Christian Life*.

[56] Dirk van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen," *The Bavinck Review* 1 (2010): 25-56.

[57] Brian G. Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology & the Image of God in Herman Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics* (Leiden, Brill, 2012).

[58] Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, *God and Knowledge: Herman Bavinck's Theological Epistemology* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020).

[59] Cory C. Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern: Herman Bavinck's Use of Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Lexham Press, 2020).

[60] Bruce R. Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics: Christology and Christocentrism in Herman Bavinck* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 112-29.

James Eglinton stands out as the most formidable advocate of this tendency against the two Bavincks hypothesis. Eglinton calls for a paradigm shift in Bavinck studies by proposing a new general reading of Bavinck's theology against the two Bavincks hypothesis. Scholars accept the necessity of a new interpretation of Bavinck. However, none formally explicitly claim that there is only one Herman Bavinck as a Reformed theologian by providing enough rationale and evidence of the criticism for the two Bavincks hypothesis. He offers an ambitious challenge prevailing view of two Bavincks hypothesis of Jan Veenhof by proposing some trenchant guideline for a new general reading of Bavinck's theology, mainly focusing much attention on Bavinck's usage of the organic motif. From this standpoint of view, Eglinton states that the Triune God should hold the limelight as the foundation for Bavinck's theology. For example, by revising his 1982 doctoral dissertation in 2013, Bolt adds this comment: "there is a general scholarly consensus on the fundamental unity of Bavinck's thought."[62] That is, as will be seen, Bolt pointedly observes that this notion of unity is rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity, which is fundamental to Bavinck's theology. Brain Mattson does object to the two Bavincks hypothesis. Noting that "Bavinck saw no such dichotomy; and in that respect, there is only one Bavinck: the one who sought to articulate a scriptural theology in the context of, and with recourse to the categories of, Reformed orthodoxy. There is no "other" Bavinck to be found."[63] In a similar vein to Eglinton, George Harinck maintains that "In relation to our current reflections on the relationship between belief and modernity, Bavinck's spirituality is of great importance. His starting point was the unity of God, which implies a catholic Christian faith – a faith of all times and of all places."[64] Since it is the thesis of this study that Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity based on his organic motif, with respect to the relation between the immanent and economic Trinity, exemplified in his doctrine of the image of God, manifests the distinctiveness of his theology in comparison with that of Calvin, it is worth taking note of the basis for conceptual unity in Bavinck's thought against the two Bavincks interpretation of Bavinck's theology and his life.

In this light, before delving into the comparative characters of Bavinck and Calvin, Bavinck's theological identity with reference to a recent discussion of a two Bavincks hypothesis must first be explored. This study will verify the assumption and rationales of the two Bavincks hypothesis and examine the decisive rationales behind the recent significant criticisms of this hypothesis. Does this hypothesis have legitimacy as the proper hermeneutical lens of Bavinck? Against this two Bavincks model, how and on what grounds do theologians recently argue that there is only 'one Bavinck' rather than 'two Bavincks'? If when confirming Bavinck's theological identity as 'one Bavinck,' how can we describe him adequately in the light of his own thought and his engagement with modern culture?

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[61] James Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020); Id., *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 2012); Id., "How Many Herman Bavincks? *De Gemeene Genade* and the 'Two Bavincks' Hypothesis," *The Kuyper Center Review, ed. John Bowlin, vol. 2, Revelation and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 279-301; Id., "Bavinck's Organic Motif: Questions Seeking Answers," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45, no. 1 (2010): 51-71.

[62] Bolt, A *Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 35.

[63] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 18.

[64] Harinck, "Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us," 261.

It is thought that expounding Bavinck's theology, without accounting for the two Bavincks hypothesis and examining the recent criticisms of this hypothesis might produce a distorted picture of Bavinck. In this regard, this study elucidates a new explanation of how and why Bavinck's bipolar portrayal needs to be revised by taking account of recent studies. On the basis of the results of current Bavinck research, Bavinck's theological identity as an orthodox Calvinist and a modern European man is brought to the fore. This broader scope of Bavinck's theological identity may help assess Bavinck's theology, compared to that of Calvin. By exploring the criticisms of the two Bavincks hypothesis and the recent studies on reinterpretation of Bavinck's theology, it is hoped that this study contributes to the clarification of the idea that Bavinck's theological identity as a modern orthodox theologian throughout his whole life.

Furthermore, Bavinck's theological contexts has never been a favorite of Bavinck scholar. The importance of the historical-theological contexts of neo-Calvinism has risen dramatically over the past few years. Considering that Bavinck's vision of the Christian life is closely related to his desire to address issues of his times, it should be noted that Bavinck had the privilege of accepting the challenge of new theological tendencies, by formulating his own theology on the basis of the doctrine of the Trinity in the midst of modernism. In this light, it can be argued that Bavinck's own historical-theological context is one of the ideal places to study the development of Reformed doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God and to examine the uniqueness of Bavinck's doctrines in particular. In his time, anti-trinitarianism of German Idealism, ontological dualism of Roman Catholicism, and atheism based on a lopsided leap of natural science had made a devastating impact on Reformed theology in Netherlands. Thus, this situation to Reformed theology in Netherlands caused Bavinck to seek and defend it and, consequently, led him to establish exquisite and refined Reformed theology. Particularly against these theological tendencies, this study argues that the doctrine of the Trinity is not only the starting point but also the centre of the whole theology of Bavinck.

In light of this, this study points out that Calvin's four-hundredth birthday in 1909 was celebrated by many theologians from all across Europe and North America at Geneva. However, it is a little-known fact that the Dutch Reformed Protestants were surprisingly not keen on participating in this commemoration.[65] By turning down the Swiss invitation, neo-Calvinists generally responded skeptically and even expressed their fears about the commemoration. Furthermore, neo-Calvinists not only answered requests for financial contributions to the Wall of the Reformers negatively but also their alternative commemoration was "remarkably sober."[66] Then, why didn't Dutch neo-Calvinists respond to the four hundredth birthday commemoration of Calvin positively, unlike other Protestants

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[65] The pastor Emile Bourlier and the professor Hermanus IJ. Groenewegen were the only delegates from the Netherlands to attend the four-hundredth birthday commemoration of Calvin. *Jubilé de Calvin à Genève: Juillet 1909. Allocutions, addresses, lettres et documents* (Geneva, [1910]), 15, 64-67, 91, 93. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 68n5. Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 68n5. Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 68n5.

[66] G. Doekes, "Nalezing," *Gereformeerd Tijdschrift* 10 (1909), 164-166; G. K[eizer?], review of *Calvijn en Nederland*, by H. H. Kuyper, Ibid., 373. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 68.

in nineteenth-century Europe who celebrated? Whereas a fair number of neo-Calvinists were ignorant about these 1909 celebrations, or at least paid little attention to it, it is noteworthy that Bavinck gave a public lecture in commemoration of Calvin's four-hundredth birthday. Considering neo-Calvinist Calvin representations in the decades around 1909 and passive celebration of Calvin's birthday, what position does Bavinck take on Calvin's theology and life? In so doing, this study singles out the four-hundredth birthday commemoration of John Calvin in 1909 as the signal to indicate the tension between the first and second-generation neo-Calvinists. In what ways and for what contents does Bavinck commemorate Calvin in this public lecture and his writings?

In light of this, the changes in the repertoires of Calvin representations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within neo-Calvinist scholarship will be discussed. That is, this study explores Calvin's representations in the decades around 1900 and inquiry about how Calvin's theology and his life played a role within the neo-Calvinism circles. As will be demonstrated, there definitely existed tension about Calvin's role between the iconic Calvin and a saint-like Calvin in this period. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to postulate that Kuyper's idea of Calvin was credited with greatly influencing the neo-Calvinists in the 1880s and 1890s. Namely, under the influence of Kuyper, Calvin was mainly considered a man of principles with an emphasis on his theology in this period. However, from the 1890s onward, neo-Calvinists gradually began to pay attention to Calvin's personal life, regarding it as an exemplary form of the Christian life. The survey of the interpretations of Calvin's image and its role among Dutch neo-Calvinism eventually leads to a consideration of Bavinck and Kuyper's attitude towards Calvin. Concerning the relationship between Bavinck and Kuyper, what is Kuyper's position on Calvin's theology and his personal life? Does Bavinck fully agree with Kuyper's thoughts on Calvin? If not, what is Bavinck's own interpretation of Calvin?

The answer to these questions, which is presented and illustrated in this study, contributes to a better understanding of neo-Calvinism scholarship in terms of the shift of the repertoires of Calvin representations in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This study supports Bavinck's distinctive position among Dutch neo-Calvinists and highlights a more nuanced understanding of Bavinck's interpretation of Calvin's theology and life. Specifically, in order to examine Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin, this study pays closer attention to Bavinck's assessment of Calvin's theology and his portrayal of Calvin's life.[67]

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[67] Herman Bavinck, "John Calvin: A Lecture on the Occasion of his 400th Birthday, July 10, 1509-1909," trans. John Bolt, *The Bavinck Review* 1 (2010): 57-85. Originally published in Kampen, Id., *Johannes Calvijn: Eene lezing ter gelegenheid van den vierhonderdsten gedenkdag zijner geboorte, 10 Juli 1509–1909* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1909); Id., "Recent Dogmatic *Thought* in the Netherlands," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* (1892): 209-228; Id., "The Future of Calvinism," trans. Geerhardus Vos, *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1894): 1-24; Id., "The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands," *The Princeton Theological Review* (1910): 433-460; Id., "Common Grace," trans. Ray Van Leeuwen, *Calvin Theological Journal* 24 (1989): 35-65; Id., "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," trans. John Bolt, *Calvin Theological Journal* 27 (1992): 220-51; Id., "Calvin and Common Grace," trans. Geerhardus Vos, *Princeton Theological Review* 7 (1909): 437-65; Id., "Philosophy of Religion (Faith)," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*, ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008): 25-31; Id., "Theology and Religious Studies," in

In light of this, before taking up a fundamental comparison between the thoughts of Bavinck and Calvin in part II, part I, which includes chapters two and three, is an exploration of Bavinck's theological identity and an examination of his theological context. In attempting to understand what the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God of Bavinck and Calvin exactly mean, we shall examine the doctrines in chapters four and five, exploring its arguments and tracing out its implications for their theological system. Then, chapter six considers the comparison between Bavinck and Calvin, which is examined in the previous chapters, in order to answer the central question 'w*hat are similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God?*' In chapter seven, we shall offer some reflections on how this study offers a viable way to have the best of Bavinck's and Calvin's theology.

Specifically, chapter two will examine the new direction of Bavinck studies concerning the collapse of the previously dominant two Bavincks hypothesis of Jan Veenhof. Before moving to the central part of this study, it is necessary to consider the two Bavincks hypothesis in Veenhof's thought and the recent criticism of this hypothesis. Given that this present study aims to compare the theology between Bavinck and Calvin, the clarification of Bavinck's theological identity is necessarily preliminary. There must be a criterion for explaining Bavinck's theological position *per se*, also comparing his theology with that of other theologians. Without establishing Bavinck's theological identity, it might produce a distorted picture of Bavinck, and it becomes difficult to grasp Bavinck's theology properly and compare his theology with that of Calvin.

In chapter three, the two theological contexts of Bavinck's time are examined. The focus of this study does not intend to be a work of historical research strictly, but rather its aim is to place Bavinck in his context so that this can serve as a window into the distinctiveness of Bavinck's theology and Bavinck's assessment of Calvin's theology and life. What is Bavinck's theological context? Before going on with the question of Bavinck's position on Calvin's theology and his life, a double theological context needs to be considered: the theological landscape of the Netherlands of his time and Calvin's role in neo-Calvinism.

First, the characteristics of the Dutch theological landscape of Bavinck's days are examined. Mainly from the standpoint of Bavinck, it investigates how these theological factors affected Dutch theology. In doing so, this chapter shows his awareness of the necessity and urgency of a proper answering of the challenges in the theological contexts as an antidote for the storm of modernism and offers Bavinck's own assessment of Calvin's theology and life directly. This chapter leads into the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God of the following chapters four and five.

Second, the representations of Calvin around 1900 among Dutch neo-Calvinists are discussed. The research on the various interpretations of Calvin's image and the role of Calvin within Dutch neo-Calvinism leads to an examination of Bavinck's position towards Calvin. Specifically, to grasp Bavinck's assessment of Calvin's theology and life, Bavinck's public lecture on the commemoration of Calvin's four-hundredth birthday and his other

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Essays on Religion, Science and Society: 49-60; Id., "Christianity and Natural Science," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*: 81-104; Ib., "On Inequality," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*:145-63.

writings on Calvin are explicitly explored. In examining Bavinck's distinctive interpretation of Calvin and Calvin's role within Bavinck's theology, it is worth taking a closer look at his theological context. It is hoped that this study demonstrates Bavinck's position on Calvin's theology and life. In Bavinck's view, Calvin's theology retains a far-reaching significance for Christian principles, containing a comprehensive view of the world and life, and Calvin's life serves as an example of the Christian life.

In so doing, the investigation of part one contributes to the understanding of Bavinck's theological identity as well as his historical-theological contexts, including his assessment of Calvin's theology and life in particular. Methodologically, chapter two prioritizes ways in which Bavinck comments on the characteristics of the Dutch theological context and Calvin's theology and life by his own assessment, instead of reading Bavinck's theological context in light of the secondary sources.

Turning to part two, in chapters four and five, this study deals with Bavinck and Calvin's doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God in terms of theological arguments and their emphases thoroughly. Quite specifically, chapter four demonstrates that the doctrine of the Trinity was of the utmost importance to both Bavinck and Calvin. Chapter four explores the significant characteristics of Bavinck and Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity. The first part of this chapter first explores the preliminary analysis of anti-trinitarianism and anti-Christianity of Bavinck's day with its significance in the doctrine of the Trinity in Bavinck's theology. These theological tendencies are: (1) atheism and evolutionism, (2) a monistic understanding of God and mechanical determinism, (3) a rationalistic view of deism, pantheistic confusion between God and the world, (4) an anti-revelation tendency and the rise of the historical-critical approach to the text of Scripture. Then, this part further explicates the distinguishing characteristics of Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity more precisely. In his doctrine of the Trinity, Bavinck draws on the two characteristic emphases as the theological foundation for a proper understanding of both the ontology of God and the world and theological epistemology. The former is the absolute unity and diversity of the divine Persons in the immanent Trinity. The latter is the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. The second part of this chapter examines four characteristic foci in Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity: (1) the clarification of the exegetical foundation, (2) the moderate use of trinitarian terminology, (3) the emphasis on the Deity of the Son and the Spirit, (4) the emphasis on the economic Trinity. In that light, this chapter will cast light upon the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity of Bavinck and Calvin in terms of each of their theologies for comparative analysis and assessment between them in chapter six.

Chapter five is devoted to the doctrine of the image of God of both Bavinck and Calvin. It is not the discourse as a whole to present a complete picture of humanity, but the discussion of humanity as the image of God concerning the origin, essence, and destiny. The first section treats Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God, based on the following five considerations: (1) the divine origin of humanity in regard to the immanent Trinity, (2) the ontological emphasis on the image of God, (3) the image of the triune God, centered on the whole person, (4) the trinitarian view on unity and diversity of humanity as a whole, (5) the image of God as a prophet, king, and priest. This section also analyses Bavinck's concept of the corruption and restoration of the image of God. The second section examines the four characteristics of

Calvin's doctrine of the image of God: (1) the divine origin of humanity in regard to the all-surpassing excellency of God (2) the relational emphasis upon the Image of God, (3) the soul as the centre of God's image, (4) a Christocentric understanding of gender unity and diversity. Then, the corruption and restoration of the image of God are explored in both ontological and relational senses. This chapter mainly focuses on how Calvin and Bavinck understand humanity created the image of God in terms of origin, essence, and destiny precisely. These chapters four and five conclude with a short summary based on previous research.

Chapter six summarizes a comparison of the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God between the thought of Bavinck and Calvin. To fully analyze the similarities and differences between Calvin and Bavinck, a comprehensive comparison of their theological thoughts on the image of God will be undertaken in chapter six. This present study closes with the concluding chapter seven.

Chapter 2. Bavinck's Theological Identity

A recent discussion of Bavinck's theology has centered around whether one ought to read Bavinck as a figure standing between orthodoxy and modernism. This chapter handles the so-called two Bavincks hypothesis and the recent criticism voiced by Bavinck scholars. Then, regarding Bavinck's theological identity, this chapter examines how one can read Bavinck to be theologically orthodox in the modern intellectual spirit of the late nineteenth century. Considering the influence of the two Bavincks hypothesis on readings of Bavinck's theology, an investigation of Bavinck's theological identity is indispensable for further advance in a detailed analytic examination of Bavinck's thoughts. Before offering a comparative investigation of Bavinck and Calvin, this chapter contributes to undergirding Bavinck's theological identity as an orthodox Calvinist yet modern theologian.

Since 1968, Jan Veenhof has introduced the so-called two Bavincks hypothesis in his dissertation on *Revelatie en Inspiratie*. Veenhof's portrayal has had significant effects on Bavinck studies in the second half of the twentieth century. Central to Veenhof's two Bavincks hypothesis is that there are two Bavincks and tensions between two poles in Bavinck's thought that he never reconciled throughout his career. Following Veenhof's portrayal of Bavinck, several Bavinck scholars have labeled Bavinck's theological characteristic as the two Bavincks, namely, advocating his theological identity as a son of the secession and regarding him as a modernist with affinity to the liberal and ethical theologies.[1] The advocates for the two Bavincks hypothesis offered an interpretation of Bavinck's theological career, on the one hand, that Bavinck devoted himself to writing his *magnum opus Reformed Dogmatics* as dogmatics professor at Kampen (1883-1902) in an early stage of his life. On the other hand, they pay attention to the shift of Bavinck's emphasis towards philosophy, psychology, pedagogy and education, the role of women in society and church, economics, ethics, and politics during the period of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (1902-21). In light of the two Bavincks hypothesis, Bavinck thus must be regarded as a figure who has unresolved duality between orthodoxy and modernity in his thought.

Recently, however, numerous studies have attempted to amend and redress this two Bavincks hypothesis by scholars who only argue for one Bavinck.[2] Hence, before entering

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[1] Bolt, "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam," 263-280; Berkouwer, *Zoeken en Vinden*, 5; Vroom, "Scripture Read and Interpreted," 352-372; Yarnell, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine*, 49-59; VanDrunen, "The Kingship of Christ is Twofold," 147-164.

[2] George Harinck, "'Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us': The Reformed Spirituality of Herman Bavinck," 248-262; Id., "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion: A Case Study of Herman Bavinck's Engagement with Modern Culture," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, 29 (Spring 2011): 60-77; Id., "Universality and Dualism: Herman Bavinck and the Debate on Whether to Civilize the Dutch East Indies through Missions or Education," 217-233; Barend Kamphuis, "Herman Bavinck on Catholicity," 97-104; Id., "Herman Bavinck on the Catholicity of Christianity and Church," 149-155; Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold': Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms in the Thought of Herman Bavinck by David VanDrunen," 165-176; Bolt, "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam," 263-280; Id., "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms: Some Further Reflections," 64-93; Id., *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*; Id., *Bavinck on the Christian Life*; Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*: Some Remarks about

into the main analysis of Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, it is necessary to take a quick look at the underlying assumption of the two Bavincks hypothesis in Veenhof's thought and what is contained in his hypothesis. It is thought that expounding Bavinck's theology without accounting for the two Bavincks hypothesis and examining the recent criticism of this hypothesis will produce a distorted picture of Bavinck's theology and his life. If so, in order to read Bavinck as one Bavinck, the question arises how Bavinck is carefully interpreted and what is a proper interpretation of Bavinck, without the two Bavincks hypothesis considering Reformed orthodoxy and modernism in his thoughts and life.

Substantial work on the theological identity of Bavinck has been done recently with fascinating suggestions.[3] Given Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, James P. Eglington attempted to advance the reading of Bavinck as one Bavinck in his *Trinity and Organism*, published in 2012. Furthermore, through his most recently released critical biography of Bavinck, entitled *Bavinck: A Critical Biography*, Eglinton further provided a new reading of Bavinck's works as an orthodox Calvinist participant in the modern world.[4] Eglinton maintained that both sides of orthodoxy and modernity within Bavinck's thoughts ought to be understood at the same time, namely, by exploring orthodoxy, not denying modernity and modernity, not excluding orthodoxy. In a similar vein, Cory C. Brock suggested a more nuanced understanding of Bavinck that how one can interpret the orthodox Bavinck and read his engagement with modernism by exploring his use of Schleiermacher.[5] Brock's suggestion is that "Bavinck is orthodox yet modern insofar as he subsumes the philosophical-theological questions and concepts of theological modernity under the conditions of his orthodox, confessional tradition."[6] Besides, Bruce R. Pass explored Bavinck's Christology as the heart of his dogmatics, suggesting his Christology as a good example of Bavinck's ideal of a so-called modern orthodoxy.[7] According to Pass, Bavinck's account of the doctrine of the two natures concerning the deity and humanity of Christ provides some reflections for understanding the relationship between orthodoxy and modernity in Bavinck's thought. By emphasizing Bavinck's Christology, Pass proposed a new reading of Bavinck as an orthodox yet modern theologian. In a similar vein, Sutanto made an argument that Bavinck's epistemology ought to be understood as both orthodox and modern, with the emphasis on the organic motif of Bavinck. The main thesis of his argument is that Bavinck's organicism leads

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Unpublished Manuscripts in the Libraries of Amsterdam and Kampen," 25-56; Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*; James P. Eglinton, "Bavinck's Organic Motif," 51-71; Id., "How Many Herman Bavincks? *De Gemeene Genade* and the 'Two Bavincks' Hypothesis," 279-301.

[3] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 44. Cited from Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 207.

[4] James P. Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020). Cf. Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 33.

[5] Cory C. Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern: Herman Bavinck's Use of Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Lexham Press, 2020), 26-33,

[6] Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern*, 27.

[7] In the Netherlands, there were two representative secessions of 1834 and 1886; the former is usually called 'Afscheiding,' and the latter is called 'Doleantie.' 'The Secession' refers to the 1834 secession here. For a more detailed Afscheiding's influence on the Bavinck family in Bentheim, see James Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020), 3-16.

to a reinterpreted synthesis of orthodoxy and modernism within Bavinck's epistemology and sheds light on the character of Bavinck's neo-Calvinism.[8] By dealing with the result of the recently published studies on Bavinck's theological identity, this study will present Bavinck's theological identity.

In the following sections, the two Bavincks hypothesis in Jan Veenhof's thought will be examined respectively (2.1). This chapter proceeds with the recent criticisms for his hypothesis (2.2). The conclusions of this chapter are incorporated in the concluding section 2.3.

2.1 The Two Bavincks Hypothesis

In his *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, Veenhof presents a superb overview of Bavinck's life characteristics and his theology in terms of its origin and course of life, his personality, and the specific nature of his dogmatics.[9] Veenhof's overall thoughts are rooted in the assumption that Bavinck's life and theology are linked inextricably. To put it concretely, the basic premise of Veenhof is that Dutch Reformed pietism and modernism in the nineteenth century may have affected Bavinck. When Veenhof speaks of Bavinck's life and his theology, he applies this premise to the hypothesis of two Bavincks. The core of Veenhof's two Bavincks hypothesis is that the fundamental duality of orthodox and modern elements remains unsolved in Bavinck's life and continues to cause a perpetual crisis of his theological identity. Veenhof repeatedly maintains his view that these two elements dominate Bavinck's personality and theology throughout his lifetime. On this basis, Veenhof further argues that there are not only tensions in Bavinck's life and thoughts but also inconsistency or incoherency to some extent. If so, the question arises in Veenhof's thinking, what is the particular hermeneutical key for interpreting Bavinck's identity as the two Bavincks?

First, Veenhof suggests the description of A. Anema on Bavinck's thought and his personal life as the possible source of his two Bavincks hypothesis. Anema, one of Bavinck's colleagues in the Free University, had Bavinck marked down as a Secession preacher and a representative of modernism. To provide a rationale for his argument, Veenhof cites Anema's description of Bavinck directly: "That was a striking characteristic. In that duality is found Bavinck's significance. That duality is also a reflection of the tension - at times the crisis - in Bavinck's life. In many respects it is a simple matter to be a preacher in the Secession Church, and, in a certain sense, it is also not that difficult to be a modern person. But in no way is it a simple matter to be the one as well as the other."[10] This passage shows how Anema describes Bavinck's life from a dualistic perspective, but it further presents his assessment of the unresolved theological identity in his life.

Second, and more importantly, Veenhof singles out the source and notion of the term 'organic' in Bavinck's theology as a decisive rationale for his two Bavincks hypothesis. In his

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[8] Sutanto, *God and Knowledge*, 9.

[9] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 93-140.

[10] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 108. The translation is taken from Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 31, 32.

1968 dissertation, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, Veenhof explains the meaning of the organic metaphors that Bavinck used, tracing the historical and philosophical background and the origin of the 'organic' in Bavinck's theology. According to Veenhof's analysis, an organic motif has an ancient origin fundamentally. Veenhof admits that the organic motif has deep roots in Christian reflection on God's *ad extra* works.[11] However, Veenhof pays attention to how the organicism was developed from ancient times to modern times as a single historical event. Notably in line with a generic historical definition of organicism, Veenhof notes that Bavinck drew his organic idea from Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, and Schelling. In light of this, for Veenhof, it is highly probable that Bavinck deployed this notion of organism and organic in the universal sense of the time.

Veenhof maintains that Bavinck's organic terms must have been primarily affected by the theological and social movements of the nineteenth century. Specifically, Veenhof considers Schelling's Idealist philosophy, the German history of religions school, and the Dutch Ethical theology as possible sources for Bavinck's use of the organic metaphor.[12] Moreover, Veenhof aligns Bavinck with his former professor Johannes Scholten of the Leiden school, who tried to formulate a new system of Reformed theology in the Netherlands according to his own philosophical speculation. In Veenhof's judgment, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Bavinck's organic notion in his theology was influenced by Scholten. Veenhof maintains that Scholten replaced a mechanical worldview with an organic worldview, and he believes that Bavinck stands with Scholton's objection to this mechanism.[13] In this way, Veenhof is convinced that it seems beyond doubt that Bavinck's organic motif must have been reflected in his own era's penchant for organic imagery at some level.

It should be noted here that Veenhof's interpretation of the notion of organic in Bavinck's theology presupposes that Bavinck's thought can be divided into two poles between Reformed orthodoxy and modernism. Hence, Veenhof asserts that Bavinck's organic motif belongs to the modernist Bavinck. For Veenhof, it is no less dubious connecting Bavinck's employment of the organic concept in his theology under the influence of a favorite emphasis and its use as children of their time. In sum, Veenhof establishes the foundation of his hypothesis of the two Bavincks, giving an interpretation of Bavinck's life as having some identity crisis between Reformed theologian and modernist with his conviction that since the Idealist philosophy, the German history of religions school, and the Dutch Ethical theology often used this concept of the organic, it seems reasonable to conclude that a noticeable influence can be found in Bavinck's thoughts.

Until relatively recently, indeed, Veenhof's hypothesis of the two Bavincks has catalyzed the understanding of Bavinck's theological thought and his personal life in Bavinck Scholarship. Based on this framework Veenhof established that there is an unrelenting tension between two poles in Bavinck's thought and life, several scholarly studies have been fostered. For instance, the influence that this two Bavincks hypothesis has on Bavinck

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[11] Mattson, *Restored To Our Destiny*, 47.

[12] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 267, 268.

[13] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 260.

scholarship can be found in recent debates on the doctrine of Scripture. Henk Vroom explains the characteristic of Bavinck's view of Scripture, by distinguishing the two lines of his thinking between his deep and profound reverence for Scripture as an absolute, divine authority and his openness to searching for the true meaning of texts by scientific research.[14] Vroom adds his voice to the explanation that these two opposing lines in Bavinck's thought give his followers a choice of which line they prefer to follow. In light of this perspective, Vroom observes that "Among Bavinck's students some followed one line of thinking, and others followed another."[15] Vroom's description lies in the notion of the two Bavincks hypothesis, that there exists an inner tension between two poles in Bavinck's thought.

In a similar vein, Malcolm Yarnell's opinion on Bavinck's approach to Scripture and philosophy shows an underlying assumption of the irreconcilable dualism in Bavinck. According to Yarnell, there can be little about that Scripture and philosophy are the main aspects of Bavinck's theological foundation. The two Bavincks hypothesis serves Yarnell's assessment on Bavinck's treatment of Scripture that "Bavinck's enigmatic, shifting, and often contradictory treatment" of Scripture and philosophy has legitimized the inconsistency and ambiguity in Bavinck's thoughts.[16] Yarnell further considers Bavinck as a "schizophrenic," in singling "the contradictions in Bavinck about the priority of Scripture and reason" out as evidence.[17]

Additionally, the two Bavincks hypothesis indirectly affected various comments on the central theme of Bavinck's theology. Eugene Heideman attempts to determine which Bavinck wrote various sections of *Reformed Dogmatics*: the "biblical" Bavinck or the "scholastic" and "idealist" Bavinck.[18] Syd Hielema claims that "a tension between a more relationally-oriented doctrine of God and a more abstract, philosophical one" can be found in Bavinck's thought.[19] Namely, Hielema regards that the prolegomena of Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* is a more scholastic section than the rest of the others, and thus maintains that it belongs to the scholastic Bavinck rather than the biblical Bavinck.[20]

By way of another example, David VanDrunen sets forth his view that it seems true that there exist two inconsistent and incoherent Bavincks beyond a just tension between the two poles within the thought of Bavinck. VanDrunen raises a question of whether one can find in Bavinck's theology an entirely coherent blueprint for the proper relationship between Christianity and the world.[21] Admittedly, VanDrunen stands along with the two Bavincks hypothesis that Bavinck failed to resolve dual identity between Reformed theologian and modernist. From this standpoint of the two Bavincks, indeed, he divides Bavinck's life and his theology into two distinct categories. He describes this division by portraying him as the

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[14] Vroom, "Scripture Read and Interpreted," 358, 363.

[15] Vroom, "Scripture Read and Interpreted," 363.

[16] Yarnell, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine*, 50.

[17] Yarnell, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine*, 51.

[18] Cf. Mattson, *Restored To Our Destiny*, 12.

[19] Hielema, *Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption*, 108. Cf. Mattson, *Restored To Our Destiny*, 11.

[20] Hielema, *Herman Bavinck's Eschatological Understanding of Redemption*, 109.

[21] VanDrunen, "The Kingship of Christ is Twofold," 162.

pious Bavinck, "a child of the *Afscheiding*, seminary professor at Kampen, and stout defender of historic Reformed orthodoxy." on the one hand, at the same time, as the modern Bavinck, who received theological training at the liberal University of Leiden, his tenure as a professor at the Free University in Amsterdam, and became highly involved in modern culture on the other hand.[22] In this way, through this two Bavincks lens, VanDrunen posits a rigid separation between the orthodox Bavinck and the modern Bavinck. He further maintains that Bavinck's defense of the natural law and two kingdoms belongs to the orthodox Bavinck and his arguments of the restoring nature by grace and the kingdom as leaven belongs to the modern Bavinck.

In what follows, in order to clarify the rationale behind the two Bavincks hypothesis, it is within the framework of Veenhof's hypothesis that the orthodox Bavinck and modernist Bavinck will now be explored in subsequent sections. What are the characteristics of Bavinck's upbringing, his pastorate in Franeker, and his theological career at Kampen in his early years? What is the meaning of Bavinck's studying at Leiden, his various activities and teaching at Amsterdam concerning his theological identity in his later years? According to a distinction between the orthodox and modern Bavinck that the two Bavincks hypothesis proposed, the orthodox and modern aspects of Bavinck are explored with a legitimate question of how these aspects should be understood with the theological identity of Bavinck. The verification of Veenhof's two Bavincks hypothesis will indirectly take place by examining the contents and premises of this model.

Three aspects of the orthodox Bavinck as Reformed theologian and churchman are discussed in this section (2. 1. 1). First, the Bavinck family of the Christian Separatist Reformed Church is explored (2. 1. 1. 1). Second, Bavinck's pastorate in Franeker is examined (2. 1. 1. 2). Third, Bavinck's tenure as professor in Kampen (2. 1. 1. 3) is discussed in subsequent sections.

2.1.1 The 'Orthodox' Bavinck as Reformed Theologian and Churchman

Veenhof's reading of Bavinck has categorized Bavinck's overall thoughts and life into two Bavincks: a Reformed theologian and a progressive modernist. First, Veenhof notes that Bavinck stands in the Dutch Reformed theological tradition. In his *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, Veenhof advocates strongly that Bavinck always considered himself a son of the Christian Reformed Church.[23] Given that that is Bavinck's ecclesiastical and theological background, in Veenhof's view, it stands to reason that the influence of Dutch Reformed pietism on Bavinck can be found in his theology and life. Questioning the adequacy of the hypothesis in all its parts, let us take a closer look at the influence on Bavinck's life of Dutch Reformed pietism.

2.1.1.1 Bavinck's Upbringing

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[22] VanDrunen, "The Kingship of Christ is Twofold," 162n75.
[23] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 94, 95.

Veenhof asserts that there are two unresolved aspects of theological foundation that belong to both the orthodox and modern aspects in the nature of Bavinck's thought. Veenhof develops the two Bavincks hypothesis which rests on the assumption that Bavinck's life and thought are inseparable from each other. When it comes to the nature of Bavinck's thoughts, Veenhof's starting point is the parental influence on Bavinck's life. It seems reasonable that the Bavinck family is probably the best source for the understanding background of Bavinck's thought. The Reformed principles that permeated the life and worldview in the Bavinck household deeply influenced young Bavinck in his "thinking, behavior, relationships, and spiritual perspectives."[24]

As is well known, Bavinck was born the son of Jan Bavinck (1826-1909), a pastor of the Dutch Christian Reformed Church (*Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*) rooted in the 1834 secession (*Afscheiding*) from the national Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*).[25] Jan Bavinck strongly believed in the principles of Reformed theology and remained within the boundary of the Reformed faith all his life, and thus stayed as far away from the NHK as he could. Jan Bavinck was no other than 'the Secession' preacher characterized by healthy piety. Given that Jan Bavinck was both father and pastor of Herman Bavinck, Jan's career and outlook must have impacted Herman's childhood years.[26] In that light, it would not be an overstatement to say that Herman Bavinck's thoughts would have been affected by Jan Bavinck's conviction based on the Word of God and the teachings of the Reformed Church fathers and his manner of living out his ministry in the congregations of Bentheim, Uelsen and Wilsum, Hoogeveen, Bunschoten, Almkerk-Nieuwendijk, Kampen, by applying his biblical faith.

Regarding the character of Bavinck's parents' attitude to culture, there have been different views among Bavinck biographers. Valentijn Hepp and Henry Elias Dosker argue that a posture of hostility toward culture primarily characterized the Bavinck household. Hepp describes the fact that the Bavinck household contains an element of "hostility toward or animosity against cultural things."[27] In a similar vein, Bavinck's lifelong friend, Dosker sketches Bavinck's parents and their influences on Bavinck that "Many of the qualities of mind and heart and intellect, which later distinguished the great son, were therefore evidently inherited from his parents."[28]

Concerning the character of parental influence on Bavinck, on the other hand, Ron Gleason, J. H. Landwehr, R. H. Bremmer, and John Bolt emphasize that the Bavinck home had an apparent openness to learn from others and the good aspects of culture to some degree.

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[24] Ron Gleason, *Herman Bavinck: Pastor, Churchman, and Theologian* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: P & R Pub., 2010), 2.

[25] In the Netherlands, there were two representative secessions of 1834 and 1886; the former is usually called 'Afscheiding,' and the latter is called 'Doleantie.' 'The Secession' refers to the 1834 secession here. For a more detailed Afscheiding's influence on the Bavinck family in Bentheim, see Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 3-16.

[26] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 42.

[27] Valentine Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1921), 14, Cited from Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 26, 27.

[28] Henry Elias Dosker, "Herman Bavinck: A Eulogy by Henry Elias Dosker," in Herman Bavinck, *Essays on Religion, Science and Society,* ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 15. Originally published in the *Princeton Theological Review* 20 (1922), 450.

Gleason notes that Hepp's assessment of cultural hostility in the Bavinck home is somewhat exaggerated, explaining that "the Bavinck family understood that Christians can make good use of the culture, but at the same time there was a definite need for an antithetical posture over against culture."[29] Particularly by pointing out Jan and Gesina's unfailing support of Bavinck's decision to go to the University of Leiden rather than stay at the Theological School in Kampen, Gleason highlights Bavinck's parents' progressive openness and their faith.[30]

Another biographer, Landwehr, who was taught by Bavinck at the Theological School in Kampen, sketches out the Bavinck house, sharing this assessment in the following description of the home of Bavinck against the accusations of legalism and moralism: "A truly Christian spirit dominated in the house of the old pastor."[31] Bolt agrees with Landwehr that "Jan Bavinck was a man characterized by a healthy piety and openness to the best of human learning and culture."[32] Bolt disputes Hepp's assessment of *Kulturfeindlichkeit* in the Bavinck home, contending that while Hepp's judgment "seems very plausible at first sight," adds Bolt, "two important qualifications temper this impression - the first about the Bavinck home and the second about the character of the Secession itself."[33] From the discussion above, it is highly probable that the openness to the Bavinck home towards culture could serve to form the backdrop of his steadfast pursuit to harmonize Christianity with modern culture throughout his whole life.

Furthermore, the story of Bavinck's mother, Gesina Magdelena Bavinck (1827-1900), provides an essential window into the interpretation of Bavinck. It must not be overlooked that Bavinck learned valuable life lessons from his mother. Unlike Jan Bavinck's family, Gesina's family belonged to the congregation in Vriezenveen of the State Church before her marriage with Jan Bavinck. Gesina's family should be understood as a faithful remnant of Reformed believers in the State Church. On this basis, Gleason esteems the influence of Gesina on Bavinck's family highly, saying that "Gesina was a spiritual asset to the entire Bavinck family."[34] It seems reasonable that Bavinck's uncompromising attitude regarding Scripture was a spiritual heritage from Gesina's character and her faith, based on her Reformed persuasion. In all probability, it may be said with a fair amount of confidence that Bavinck drew a lesson from Gesina concerning decisiveness and determination based on her strong spirit and deep faith.

In this regard it is needless to say that Bavinck's parents made a profound influence upon his characteristics and worldview, despite the differences in terms of the backgrounds of Jan and Gesina Bavinck concerning theology, confession, church polity, and Christian lifestyle according to their church denominations.[35] Bavinck must have learned valuable

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[29] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 27.

[30] J. H. Landwehr, *In Memoriam: Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck. Herdacht door een zijner oudleerlingen* (Kampen: Kok, 1921), 9. Cf. Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 17.

[31] Landwehr, *In Memoriam*, 7, 8. Cited from Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 22.

[32] Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 25.

[33] Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 27.

[34] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 17.

[35] R. H. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten* (Kampen: Kok, 1966), 14.

lessons by understanding the differences between his parents and integrating different perspectives in family life from his parents.[36] In this sense, it is also highly probable that Bavinck's parents' manner of living out the ministry and applying their faith based on Scripture exercised influence on Bavinck's desire and decision to study at the University of Leiden instead of the Theological School in Kampen.

Given his family background, it comes as no surprise that Landwehr expresses his views on Bavinck's upbringing at home in this way: "In that real Christian and Reformed family, Bavinck enjoyed his first education. He has learned how to obey the majesty of God's word, which he has so wonderfully testified in his life."[37] Bolt describes the spiritual tradition in the Dutch Reformed Church by noting "purity of doctrine and holiness of life," "church discipline and biblically based polity," and "a marginalized position out of step with the mainstream of Dutch culture and society."[38] In his view, it must be admitted that Bavinck's church, his family, and his spirituality were apparently shaped by deep pietistic Reformed spirituality. Hence, apart from his upbringing in "the theologically conservative and culturally marginalized Christian Reformed Church community," Bavinck's life and theology cannot be fully grasped.[39]

Interestingly, it should be noted here that Bavinck published his work *The Christian Family* in 1912, supposedly looking back on his own upbringing. Bavinck declares that family is the departure point and foundational principle of all kinds of relationships in society. In Bavinck's words, indeed, "the home is and remains the educational institute par excellence" and "the home is the school of office."[40] These observations mentioned above leave no doubt as to what Bavinck's home was. For Bavinck, the home was probably such a place as he declared in his *The Christian Family*. All this considered, concurring with Veenhof, one can say that the Bavinck family and each of his parents contributed to his Reformed worldview, his faith, and the attitude toward the relationship of Christianity to culture.

However, at the same time, to understand the Bavinck family, it should be noted here that Bavinck and his parents were the children of their times. It is clear that they inhabited the modern world, as though Bavinck introduces himself as the child of the Secession.[41] In understanding Bavinck's identity as a son of the Secession, more nuanced reading of Bavinck is necessary to make an earnest foray into the study of Bavinck. Bavinck ought to be perceived as a modern cultural native under the influence of a late modern European culture.[42] Although it is clear that Bavinck's position should be understood in light of his firm stance against modern theology, he apparently struggled to be an orthodox Calvinist participant in modern European culture.

2.1.1.2 Pastorate in the CGK of Franeker

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[36] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 25.

[37] Landwehr, *In Memoriam*, 8.

[38] John Bolt, "Editor's Introduction," in *Reformed Dogmatics* 1:12.

[39] Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 25.

[40] Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, 146, 147.

[41] Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 52.

[42] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 55.

Veenhof points out Bavinck's lifelong commitment to the Secession community. In Veenhof's observation, Bavinck's self-awareness was a son of the nineteenth century movement of Secession in the Netherlands.[43]

Although Bavinck spent a short period serving in pastoral ministry, his time as the pastor in Franeker sheds substantial light on Bavinck's identity as a son of the CGK. Along with the tradition of the CGK, he indeed dedicated himself to serving his congregation as the local pastor from 1880 to 1882. Even though Bavinck served only one congregation at Franeker his whole life, the impression that this pastoral work made on his heart seems deep and permanent. Bavinck's pastoral work at Franeker was no less than a tireless devotion and serving of the CGK. Bavinck passionately served God and His Church throughout his life, without a doubt.

Although the CGK congregation in Franeker had a hard time with their prior pastors, pastor K. J. Pieters (1851-75) and pastor P. W H. Eskes (1876-80), it seems to be true that the congregation of Franeker experienced God's blessing under Bavinck's pastorate.[44] Pieters had served the congregation in Franeker for almost a quarter of a century as a senior pastor, but his ministry was no longer allowed, owing to the repeated problem of alcohol abuse. To make matters worse, after five years of serving the congregation in Franeker, his successor Eskes needed to resign, due to his too biased and repeated preaching on election, and his degenerating physical health. Seen in this perspective, the congregation in Franeker had gone through hardship with back-to-back problems of leadership.[45]

After the congregation of Franeker was troubled and divided because of various problems with their two previous ministers, it appears that the church was healed and flourished spiritually under Bavinck's pastoral care.[46] Even though Bavinck was worried about his lack of pastoral experience, he accepted the call to Franeker. By preaching on the text of 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Bavinck's pastorate in the church in Franeker was started in March, 1881. At long last, the congregation had a minister who was an eloquent preacher and powerful expositor of the Word, governing them with peace and harmony instead of controversy and confusion.[47] At the same time, during his time in Franeker, Bavinck was refined and shaped as a pastor of God's people for the Church of Christ.

Specifically for his pastorate, it is noteworthy that Bavinck prioritized the preaching of the Word, as the most crucial point in bringing up CGK members is to feed them with the truth from Scripture.[48] When preaching the Word, his primary concern was proclaiming the riches of Christ and the love of God.[49] Bavinck faithfully preached a sermon every Sunday morning and explained the Heidelberg Catechism to them in the afternoon. Under the

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[43] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 95. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 14-16.

[44] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 42.

[45] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 72-5.

[46] Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 34.

[47] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 69, 95.

[48] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 38.

[49] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 84, 85. Gleason notes some of the texts that Bavinck preached on, such as John 17:3, 2 Corinthians 13:5 and 1 Corinthians 3:9.

approval of the consistory, Bavinck evidently gave structured catechetical classes to the youth of the congregation concerning the history of the church, political movements, and an outline of the Bible following the tradition of the CGK. In this regard, admittedly, there is no question that Bavinck's pastorate has its roots in Dutch Reformed theological tradition.

Bavinck took care of his congregation, possessing a pastor's heart. He visited as many members of his congregation as he could in order to shepherd the flock entrusted to his care. Bavinck did not make light of those people who were ill and in need of a visit. Bavinck demanded not only of himself but also of the elders to visit each member in the congregation at least once a year. Bavinck paid particular attention to the sick and the mobility-impaired people. He personally invited an invalid husband and wife, according to Bavinck's request, and then special seats near the pulpit were reserved for those who needed specialized help in the worship service.[50] Along with the elders, Bavinck cared about an elderly mother with two daughters who were paralyzed.[51]

Meanwhile, during his time in Franeker, while Bavinck received a call from the large CGK in Amsterdam with double the salary as their pastor, his spiritual maturity led him to stay with the congregation in Franeker. Besides, he received a request to become a faculty member in Hermeneutics and Exegesis of the New Testament at the Free University of Amsterdam. However, he did decline the call from the Free University. Through Bavinck's letter to Pastor J. W. Felix, who was president-curator of the Free University, one can realize the heart of the reason why Bavinck declined the appointment to the Free University. Bavinck writes, "I love my Church. Preferably I want to work on building her up. The prosperity of her Theological School is the desire of my heart. There is a great deal that urgently needs improvement at that institution."[52] Bavinck's childhood friend, Henry Elias Dosker offers similar comment when he states the reason that Bavinck declined his appointment of a professor at the Free University. Writes Dosker, "he had decided to identify himself fully with the hated 'Seceders.'"[53] Suffice it to say that Bavinck was so devoted to the CGK and earnestly desired to improve the level of the Theological School within the boundary of his Church.

Seen from this point of view, it would not be unreasonable to say that Veenhof rightly argues that Bavinck always regards himself as a son of the nineteenth-century movement of secession in the Netherlands. This pastoral background helps to answer a question of Bavinck's theological identity. Bavinck's only pastorate, in Franeker, must be understood as evidence for his theological identity as a Reformed theologian. However, while Bavinck had accepted the call to Franeker, it seems that he was called to the professorate rather than the pastorate. As soon as Bavinck had chosen to serve a congregation of Franeker, he met with the leading Seceder publisher, Dirk Donner (1858-94), and decided to publish a new edition of the *Synopsis*. Besides, at the same time, Bavinck was appointed by Donner as an editor of a representative theological journal *De Vrije Kerk* in his own theological tradition. *De Vrije*

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[50] Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 99.

[51] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 38. Cf. Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life*, 34.

[52] This letter was later published in a Free University publication entitled *Maandelijkse Mededelingen: V.U*, in May 1949. Cited from Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 92.

[53] Dosker, "Herman Bavinck," 16.

Kerk had played a significant role in reminding Bavinck as a prospective scientific theologian in their Seeder circles.[54]

2.1.1.3 Professorate in Kampen

Veenhof's portrayal of Bavinck as a Reformed theologian rests on his labors to retain Reformed theology in the early stages of his professorial duties at the theological seminary in Kampen. After the General Synod of the CGK appointed Bavinck as a professor of dogmatics, he began to work as a professor at its seminary in Kampen on January 9, 1883, with an inauguration address on "The Science of Holy Theology" (*De wetenschap der H. Godgeleerdheid*) the following day.[55] Bavinck's inaugural oration discussed a sound scientific, theological methodology, the content of scientific theology, and the goal of scientific theology. This first of many of Bavinck's addresses sheds light on the thought that penetrated his whole life; Dogmatics should always serve the Church of Christ. In the newspaper *De Heraut*, Abraham Kuyper commented that Bavinck's inauguration oration is a clear example of a real Reformed, scientific theology, even though Bavinck refers to Friedrich Schleiermacher, esteeming him highly. Bavinck included Schleiermacher as a conversation partner, defining the concept of theology.[56] In the CGK publication *De Bazuin* on December 15, 1882, Willem Gispen encouraged that Bavinck has more than enough ability to work as a Reformed theologian.[57] Most importantly, it is worth remembering Bavinck's claim that theology must be theologized against the claim of the Leiden professor Lodewijk Rauwenhoff that theology must be secularized in his inauguration address.[58] Even more interestingly, when Bavinck sent a copy of his oration to Abraham Kuenen, the response by Kuenen was that "Not with agreement, as you understand. But my dissent does not hinder me in reading from remarking that you have set out and defended your view clearly, consistently, and worthly."[59] In this regard, Bavinck's inaugural speech was, without a doubt, warmly received throughout the Reformed camp.

Veenhof highlights that the years of Bavinck's professorate at Kampen were closely linked to the reconstruction of a Reformed dogmatics. According to Veenhof, Bavinck's experience in Franeker may have an immediate influence on his striving for the significance of reshaping systematic theology. As the pastor of a congregation, Bavinck criticized the lack

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[54] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 112, 113, 123.

[55] Hermand Bavinck, *De wetenschap der H. Godgeleerdheid: Rede ter aanvaarding van het Leeraarsambt aan de Theologische School te Kampen, uitgesproken den 10 Jan.1883* (Kampen: G.P h. Zalsman,1883).

[56] Bavinck, *De wetenschap der H. Godgeleerdheid*, 14, 15, 42.

[57] *De Heraut*, No. 265, January 24, 1883; W. H. Gispen, *De Bazuin*, No.4, 1883. Cited from Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 99, 100. Also, for a Seeder reaction to Bavinck's argument, see H. Beuker, "Dr Bavincks inaugurele rede," *De Vrije Kerk* 9 (1883): 178-83. Cited from Eglinton, Bavinck, 140n30.

[58] Bavinck, *De wetenschap der H. Godgeleerdheid*, 5. Cf. L. W. E. Rauwnhoff in Theologische Tijdschrift (1878), 206. Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 137.

[59] Kuenen to Bavinck, Leiden, January 19, 1883, Herman Bavinck Archive at the Historisch Documentatiecentrum voor het Nedelands Protestantisme (1800-heden), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 138.

of serious reflection on the theological issues from the Reformed standpoint in CGK circles.[60] Although a motley multitude of subjects was assigned to him, Veenhof rightly notes that Bavinck undoubtedly spent a great deal of his time for his works, especially on dogmatics. Indeed, dogmatics became to be in the background from the front lines in Bavinck's interests in this period. Given this background, it can be said that Bavinck's four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics* is the fruit of his admirable zeal for the resurrection of a Dogmatics in response to the context of his time.[61] On this basis, Veenhof maintains an indisputable shift in his interests from dogmatics *per se* to a broader range of themes in Bavinck's theology when comparing the Kampen period with the Amsterdam period.[62] In his view, Bavinck's interests remarkably transferred from theology to general science, from theory to practice, especially those disciplines which deal with humans after Bavinck's rectoral address on modern theology delivered at the Rector's induction at the Free University on October 20, 1911. In Veenhof's words, Bavinck's disappointments about the role of the Church and his desire to propose the direction of modernism were no other than the motivation for its change.

As for the shift of Bavinck's interests and involvements, it seems reasonable to argue that Bavinck's theological identity was changed between Kampen and Amsterdam, according to Veenhof. However, it should be noted here that dogmatics was not the only interest of Bavinck in the Kampen period. Bavinck paid attention to both dogmatics and ethics at the same time as a significant and important fact. For Bavinck, both dogmatics and ethics are intimately related to each other, constituting a single system. Even though Bavinck did not publish a book about Reformed ethics, indeed, he also engaged heavily in ethical issues in this period. Bavinck believed that orthodox Calvinism needed a new articulation of both dogmatics and ethics, and he began to establish his own ethics and dogmatics in this period.[63] In a letter to Snouck Hurgronje in February 1884, one can observe that Bavinck was focused on preparing courses in dogmatics and ethics and gathering sources to write those lecture notes.[64] Bavinck strived to make considerable progress toward Reformed ethics between 1883 and 1887, while at the same time, he began to prepare the first volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics*.[65] As will be subsequently explained in the following section, indeed, Dirk van Keulen discovered the manuscript of Bavinck's lectures on Reformed ethics in 2008, and it was published in 2019 as the first volume of a projected three-volume set.[66] One prominent feature of Bavinck's writing during the period from 1880 to 1892/3 is a concern for the ethical dimension of the Christian faith and the ethical implications of theology.[67] In 1884 and 1888, Bavinck expounded on the weaknesses of ethical theology, exemplified by

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[60] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 98. Cf. Herman Bavinck, *De wetenschappelijke roeping onzer kerk* in *De Vrije Kerk,* VIII, 1882 (88-93, 97-106), 89v., 97v.

[61] The first edition of Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* was published in 1895, 1897, 1898, and 1901.

[62] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 101.

[63] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 147.

[64] Bavinck to Snouck Hurgronje, Kampen, February 11, 1884, in Jan de Bruijn and George Harinck, eds., *Een Leidse Vriendschap* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1999). Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 143.

[65] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 174, 177.

[66] Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Ethiek*, ed. Dirk van Keulen (Utrecht: KokBoekencentrum, 2019). English version: *Reformed Ethics*, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2019).

[67] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 98.

Albrecht Ritschl and Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye.[68] Bavinck was critical of the Ethical theology, particularly offering comments on Chantepie de la Saussaye and his school. While Chantepie de la Saussaye attempted to provide a future prospect for Christianity, for Bavinck, there is no future at all. Besides, Bavinck offered a critical evaluation of Gunning Jr.'s views on "the principle, the source, and the method of theology."[69]

During his theological career at Kampen, it was clear that Bavinck attempted to defend Reformed theology and maintain the particular Christian worldview against the challenges of his day. When one considers Bavinck's professorate at Kampen, rather than assessing Bavinck's theological identity that changed from Reformed theologian to modernist following the two Bavincks hypothesis, it stands to reason that Bavinck also spent considerable time in this Kampen period to apply his Reformed theology to the life of Christians as with the years of his professorate at Amsterdam.

2.1.2 The 'Modern' Bavinck as Progressive Modernist

Veenhof describes Bavinck not only as a Reformed theologian but also as a modernist. Then, what grounds does Veenhof suggest an interpretation of such a Bavinck?

First, the examination of Bavinck's time in Leiden is necessary because Veenhof singles out his theological education in Leiden based on the premise that Bavinck's theological education at Leiden influenced him to be a modernist through a struggle with faith. For Veenhof, Bavinck's writings are valuable mirrors of the time, which reflect his time in a lively time.[70] In Veenhof's judgment, Leiden's education is important for the shape and content of Bavinck's theology.

Second, for Veenhof, Bavinck seriously engaged in various issues of the modernity of his time. Bavinck made a highly important contribution to the theology of modern culture as well as ethics with numerous writings on not only the general cultural area but also specific issues. In a certain sense, at first glance, it seems that there exists a duality of Bavinck's thoughts between the so-called Kampen and Amsterdam period. From the perspective that duality of Bavinck's life is nothing less than a reflection of the tension in Bavinck's thought, Veenhof furthers his thought with the two Bavinck hypothesis concerning Bavinck's thought as well as his life. Three aspects of the modern Bavinck are discussed in this section. First, the professors at Leiden University is examined (2. 1. 2. 1). Second, criticism of Bavinck's studying at Leiden University from the CGK is discussed (2. 1. 2. 2). Third, Bavinck's struggle of faith at Leiden is explored (2. 1. 2. 3).

2.1.2.1 Criticism of Bavinck's Studying at Leiden from the CGK

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[68] Herman Bavinck, *De theologie van Prof. Dr. Daniël Chantepie de la Saussaye: Bijdrage tot de kennis der ethische theologie* (Leiden: Donner, 1884); Id., "De theologie van Albrecht Ritschl," *Theologische Studiën* 6 (1888): 369-403. Cf. Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 547-623; Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 147-50.

[69] Herman Bavinck, "Antwoord aan Prof. Dr. J. H. Gunning Jr.," *De Vrije Kerk* 10, no.6(1884), 292. Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 149n79.

[70] F. H. Von Meyenfeldt, "Prof. Dr. Herman Bavinck: 1854-1954 'Christus en cultuur,'" *Polemios.* X, 21, 15 october 1954. Cited from Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 107, 108.

Bavinck was educated at the Zwolle Gymnasium for two years. Rather than the new higher burgher schools (*hogere burgerscholen*), which offer a broad, modern curriculum, Jan and Geziena pursued a classical education for his son.[71] Bavinck was not the only student to besent to a gymnasium as a son of Seceder. Bavinck's closest friends, Henry Dosker and Geerhardus Vos, were also taught the same kind of education, emphasizing knowledge of Greek and Latin rather than modern languages. Eglinton portrays this education at a gymnasium in the late nineteenth century as a prerequisite to ministerial training for Dutch Reformed ministers, who want their sons would follow the same path.[72] In that light, Bavinck completed his education at the Gymnasium in Zwolle and formally participated in the Christian Reformed Church as a member by professing his faith by confirmation of Rev. Nikolaas Dosker on March 30, 1873.[73] However, it should be noted that the choice to enroll in the Theological School was indeed an unusual one for gymnasium graduates, who directly go to study at university.

After completing the gymnasium, Bavinck enrolled in the Theological School in Kampen. However, a year later, he decided to be enrolled again as a theological student at the University of Leiden. In his own words, studying for a year in the Theological School was because of the wish of Bavinck's parents.[74] Evidently, the reason why Bavinck moved from Kampen to Leiden in one year is that he pursued more rigorous scientific training in theology at Leiden than the education at Kampen.[75]

Nonetheless, given Bavinck's own theological background, it was no wonder that the conservative CGK folk stopped to stare with anxiety when Bavinck and his parents as a pastor's family in the Separatist churches decided to allow Bavinck to enroll at Leiden. The Bavinck family faced strong opposition from the CGK since it is generally admitted that the University of Leiden is the cradle for the secular theological liberalism in the CGK circles. His lifelong friend Henry Elias Dosker expressed his concerns about the University of Leiden in the letter to Bavinck, "Why was Bavinck studying at Leiden? Would his orthodox faith remain strong in that stronghold of modernism?"[76] When he began studying theology at Leiden around September 1874, there were the only two students from the CGK, studying at Leiden, including Bavinck.[77] This may explain what it means to become a theological student at Leiden coming from the CGK.

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[71] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 48,49.

[72] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 49,50.

[73] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 52,53. Cf. Ibid., 83.

[74] Herman Bavinck, "Inleidend word van Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck," in *Adriaan Steketee (1846-1913): Beschouwingen van een Christen-denker*, by A. Goslinga (Kampen: Kok, 1914), v. Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 67.

[75] Herman Bavinck, "Autobiographishe schets van Dr. H. Bavinck," *De Grondwet*, no.9, October 6, 1908, 3. Bavinck found himself faced with the lack of enthusiasm at the Kampen Theological School. "Maar het onderwijs aldaar bevredigde mij niet. Zoo ging ik in 1874 naar Leiden, om daar Theologie te studeeren onder de beroemde professoren Scholten en Kuenen." Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 66.

[76] H. E. Dosker to H. Bavinck, 23 December 1876. H. Bavinck Archives, HDC. Cited from Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 135.

[77] Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 32.

Bavinck's decision did indeed cost his family a lot personally in terms of the accusations of the members of the CGK. Bavinck's decision to study theology in Leiden caused a considerable stir within CGK circles.[78] Professor Anthony Brummelkamp, who was considered one of the most respected figures in the CGK, especially offered severe criticism concerning Bavinck's decision to attend Leiden.[79] Opposing the parents of the CGK sending their children to study universities, Brummelkamp was critical of considering Jan Bavinck's parenting as "inappropriate and outrageous."[80]

His opposition against Leiden University is about modern theology, and he was worried that Bavinck might lose his faith.[81] Brummelkamp regarded parental permission to enter Leiden as throwing Bavinck into the lion's mouth.[82] Two years after Bavinck went to Leiden to study theology under the Modern theologians, Bavinck returned to Kampen to take the Theological School's literary exam in 1876. It seems that Brummelkamp was disappointed when Bavinck still decided to resume his studies in Leiden despite having passed the literary exam. These stringent oppositions to Bavinck's education at the University of Leiden are good evidence to show the fact that Bavinck and his household indisputably stood along with Dutch Reformed theological tradition up to that point.

Moreover, it should be noted here that Bavinck's move to Leiden does not mean cut all of his relationship with the Theological School in Kampen or break away from the Reformed faith.[83] That Bavinck had ongoing connections to the Kampen student body and continued interaction with the Theological School in Kampen can be seen in his dagboek.[84] After his second year in Leiden, Bavinck took the literary exam of the Theological School.[85] According to the research of Eglinton, Bavinck enrolled on September 17, 1873, and finally and successfully competed for his studies at the Theological School in Kampen in July 1880.[86] Besides, as will be noted in the following section, Bavinck should have been examined by the school's trustees as a ministerial candidate in the Christian Reformed Church.

2.1.2.2 The Liberal Professors at Leiden University

Veenhof singles out for consideration that Bavinck's time in Leiden is one of the essential elements of the duality of orthodoxy and modernity in Bavinck's thought, proving an

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[78] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 20.

[79] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 47, 48. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 68.

[80] G. M. den Hartogh, "Varia," in *Sola Gratia: Schets van de geschiedenis en de werkzaamheid van de Theologische Hogeschool der Gereformeerde Kerken in Netherland*, ed. J. D. Boerkoel, Th. Delleman, and G. M. den Hartogh (Kampen: Kok, 1954), 69. Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 88.

[81] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 64.

[82] Landwehr, *In Memoriam*, 9; Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 83, 84.

[83] Willem J. de Wit, *On the Way to the Living God: A Cathartic Reading of Herman Bavinck and an Invitation to Overcome the Plausibility Crisis of Christianity* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2011), 21.

[84] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 84.

[85] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 70, 86, 87.

[86] J. van Gelderen and F. Rozemond, *Gegevens betreffende de Theologische Universiteit Kampen*, 1854-1994 (Kampen: Kok, 1994), 107. Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 71.

impossible task as they are two irreconcilable strands of thought within Bavinck's theology. By his own account, Bavinck wanted to study at Leiden to learn about modern liberal theology firsthand and to receive a more scholarly training than that which the Theological School in Kampen could offer. His parents, Jan and Gesina Bavinck, certainly supported Bavinck's decision to enroll at Leiden.[87]

At the time when Bavinck decided to proceed to the University of Leiden, the University of Leiden was not only for the mainstream of Dutch theology in the nineteenth century but as the representative name of modernist theology of nineteenth-century Netherlands, along with Groningen.[88] The representatives of the faculties of Leiden were Johannes Hendricus Scholten (1811-85) in dogmatic theology, Abraham Kuenen (1828-91) in Old Testament, Cornelis Petrus Tiele (1830-1902) in the history of religions and Rhetoric or eloquence in speaking, Lodewijk Willem Ernst Rauwenhoff (1830-1902) in church history, history of dogma, and philosophy of religion, and Jan Pieter Nicolaas Land (1834-97) in philosophy. These professors of Leiden were internationally known theologians for their modern philosophy, liberal theology and historical, critical methods, and scholarship.

Among other faculty members at Leiden, J. H. Scholten and A. Kuenen brought the University of Leiden great fame in all of Western Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century.[89] Especially Scholten occupied a unique position in nineteenth-century Dutch theology, attempting to present a new theological system of Reformed theology by creating a synthesis between theology and modern science. Scholten made considerable efforts to demonstrate a Reformed confession of faith, but his understanding of the notion 'Reformed' was different from the Reformed tradition in terms of revelation and predestination.[90] Veenhof comments that Scholten's theology played a decisive role in the development of modern theology and forced the entirety of Dutch orthodoxy to prioritize ethical theology.[91] Under the rapid development of modern sciences, Scholten accepted the empiricism from idealism and stood in agreement with anti-supernaturalism.[92]

The notable thing about Scholten's theology is that the debate with the philosopher Opzoomer at the University of Utrecht influenced Scholten's theology profoundly, from the early stages of his theological development. For theological developments of Scholten's theology, it is generally acknowledged that there were four stages.[93] In the first stage of his

[87] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 20.
[88] A detailed study of Dutch theological context can be found in James Hutton Mackay's *Religious Thought in Holland during the Nineteenth Century* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911) and Eldred C. Vanderlaan's *Protestant Modernism in Holland* (London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1924); Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 5-19; Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 59-80.
[89] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 23. Cf. K. H. Roessingh, *Het Modernisme in Nederland* (Haarlem, Holland: De Erven F. Bohri, 1922), 179.
[90] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 17.
[91] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 11.
[92] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 41. Cf. J. H. Scholten, *Supranaturalisme in verband met Bijbel, Christendom en Protestantisme* (Leiden, 1867), 3.
[93] For a detailed analysis of Scholten's theological development, see G. Brillenburg Wurth, *J. H. Scholten als systematisch theoloog* (Drukkerij Van Haeringen's-Gravenhage, 1927), 31,32; P. J. Van Leeuwen, *De betekenis*

theological development (1843-47), Scholten occupied himself with an in-depth study on the Reformed faith principles and the relationship between theology and philosophy through a discussion with Opzoomer.[94] After Scholten met with Opzoomer, the philosophical speculation became the focal point for Scholten's theological method, mainly focusing on monism. In this regard, Veenhof regards both Opzoomer and Scholten as the fathers of modern theology.[95]

With the acceptance of Opzoomer's monism, Scholten gradually recognized that the Bible and dogmatic tradition had to be abandoned. Citing Hubbeling's judgment, Veenhof notes three sources for Scholten's monism: Reformed Protestantism, German speculative idealism, and naturalism.[96] Scholten's speculative intellectualism and monistic determinism, in conjunction with a historical-critical methodology, became the main pillars of his own Reformed system. For Scholten, the Reformed faith was transformed by speculative reason into absolute knowledge. Scholten argued that the Reformed Church's faith and the Reformed tradition's principles of revelation and predestination need to be revised. Along Hegelian lines, Scholten further separated the fundamental principles from the doctrines of Reformed theology to purify and deepen the concepts. As Hegel believed that philosophy was able to strip them of their historic symbolic forms and tracked down the idea underlying them, Scholten was convinced that the philosophical treatment of orthodox dogmatics could be the way to get closer to the reality of the deity.[97] Scholten initially proceeded from God's absolute sovereignty by the Christian faith, however, finally, his theological principles and methodology were built on a monistic deterministic system that utilized empirical rationalism.[98] According to his dagboek, Bavinck had a good relationship with Scholten, having dinner with him.[99] While Bavinck wrote his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Scholten, it seems that Scholten's supervision was not impressive to Bavinck, according to Bavinck's comment to Snouck Hurgronje.[100] There are no discoverable comments that Bavinck saw himself to be influenced by Scholten. Rather, Bavinck directly assesses that Scholten followed Hegelian lines.[101] As will be seen, Bavinck undoubtedly established his doctrine of God, focusing on the triune God, in response to Scholten's mechanical determinism and monistic understanding of God.

Kuenen was another leading theologian of Leiden alongside Scholten. He published his most important works during the years 1861-74, when Bavinck enrolled at Leiden. Kuenen

van Fr. E. D. Schleiermacher voor de theologie in Nederland (Haarlem: Bohn, 1948), 57.

[94] Wurth, *J. H. Scholten als systematisch theoloog*, 32-49.

[95] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 37, 38.

[96] H. G. Hubbeling, *Synthetisch modernisme: J. H. Scholten als wijsgeer en theoloog* in NTT. XVI, december 1961, 127. Cited from Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 39.

[97] Herman Bavinck, John Bolt, and John Vriend, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, vol. 2. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 43.

[98] Herman Bavinck, John Bolt, and John Vriend, *Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena*, vol. 1. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 518.

[99] Bavinck, "Ex animo et corpore. H. Bavinck, Theol Stud." Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 91.

[100] Bavinck to Snouck Hurgronje, Kampen, May 12, 1880, in Jan de Bruijn and George Harinck, eds., *Een Leidse Vriendschap* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1999). Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 97.

[101] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 43.

was at the crest of his career as a theologian during Bavinck's years of study at Leiden.[102] Specifically, Kuenen was well-known in the Netherlands for his three-volume exposition on the historical-critical method (*Historisch-kritisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling der boeken des Ouden Verbonds* [1861-65]). Through this work, he was widely regarded as one of the most influential leading professors of the nineteenth century and the most forceful advocate of the historical-critical method.[103] Kuenen no longer wanted to do with an external authority and thus abandon the supernatural elements like prophecy and inspiration of Scripture, based on his view regarding the historical criticism of Scripture. In his *De profeten en de profetie onder Israël*, Kuenen conclusively contended that the words of the Old Testament prophets were only the product of natural human development, not the result of supernatural divine intervention.[104]

In that light, there can be little doubt that Bavinck learned from modernist theologians among the growing liberalism at Leiden. Indeed, Leiden University was the best place to learn about modernist theology with liberalism firsthand. In that regard, it can be said that Leiden afforded Bavinck the opportunity to interact with the modernist theology of his day and thus it was a kind of place of confrontation with the opponent (modern theology and its worldview).[105] On this basis, the two Bavincks hypothesis assumes that a modernist line of thought was formed in Bavinck's thought under the influence of studying at Leiden. Judging from the fact that Bavinck chose to study theology under the tutelage of the Liberal professors at Leiden, does this prove sufficiently to verify his identity as a modernist? To undertake the analysis of whether Bavinck became a modernist because of the influence during his years as a student at Leiden, let us proceed to take a closer look at the essentials of his struggle with faith.

2.1.2.3 Bavinck's Struggle with Faith at Leiden

Veenhof contends that Bavinck went through an identity crisis of faith as he studied at the liberal University of Leiden from 1874 to 1880. According to Veenhof, Bavinck faced many challenges to his personal faith concerning the heritage of theology and confession, during his study from the professors at Leiden. Veenhof considers Bavinck's education at the modern, liberal Leiden as one of the decisive grounds for Bavinck's identity as a modernist. At first glance, it seems that there is some truth in his emphasis on the Leiden professors' theological influence on Bavinck.[106] In the letter to his lifelong friend Snouck Hurgronje, Bavinck poured out his heart of the influences from Scholten and Kuenen.[107] Indeed, by his own account, Bavinck expressly voiced that he struggled to keep his Reformed theology and lost a naive and childlike faith.[108] However, at the same time, he pointed out that the influence of

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[102] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 23.

[103] Dosker, "Herman Bavinck," 15.

[104] A. Kuenen, *De profeten en de profetie onder Israël* (Leiden: p. Engels, 1875).

[105] Wit, *On the Way to the Living God*, 26.

[106] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 23.

[107] De Bruijn and Harinck, eds., *Een Leidse Vriendschap*, 81. Cited from Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 48.

[108] Wit, *On the Way to the Living God*, 27-29.

Scholten and Kuenen was not about the contemplations on Scripture itself, but about how he embraces those truths of Scripture.

In this regard, considering Bavinck's struggle of faith at Leiden, one should not overlook the fact that Bavinck clearly knew the difference between his Reformed upbringing and the theology at the University of Leiden, before he decided to go to Leiden. In his diary on September 23, 1874, the day Bavinck arrived at Leiden, he expressed his state of mind, "Shall I remain standing? May God grant it!"[109] According to Bavinck's both Kampen-era and Leiden-era dagboek, he decided not to become a member of the Leiden student society because of conscience as a Christian.[110] Regarding the three-hundredth anniversary of the Leiden's liberation from Spanish held on October 3, 1874, Bavinck expressed his feelings about a secular atmosphere of Leiden that "I was not in a festive mood and thus didn't enjoy it much: I saw the teeming crowd, that only uses this day as a reason for excess and debauchery, and then I thought, how little God is recognized for what He gives us."[111] When Bavinck returned from Kampen to Leiden after the summer holidays, he wrote in a Leiden-era dagboek about his prayer that "O God, protect me in Leiden."[112] In Bavinck's dagboek on 26 September, 1876, fairly soon after lectures begin at university, he wrote that "Theol. Lectures opened, in my ongoing attendance [these lectures] strengthen me in my faith…O God, Let me fight for your honor!"[113]

More precisely, even though Bavinck fundamentally disagreed with Leiden's dominant modernist theology, he wanted to study at Leiden with a strong desire to become acquainted with modern theology first hand, outside Reformed circles. Viewed in this light, Bavinck was aware of the theological distance between the CGK and the State Church during the Leiden years. Bavinck was not a blind follower of the professors at Leiden. It seems reasonable to argue that Bavinck distanced himself from his teachers at Leiden. When Bavinck came to Leiden, Scholten was in his fourth period in which he concentrated mainly on the issues of historical criticism.[114] By this point, it seems that Bavinck was not impressed with Scholten intellectually, like other university theological students.[115] Bavinck often characterized Scholten's speech as "trivial" or "insignificant."[116] While Bavinck learned theology from Scholten, no less significant is the fact that he became an independent theologian, resting on his conviction of Reformed theology.

Specifically, during the years Bavinck was a student at the University of Leiden, what he was affected by is about the matters of method and approach to theology, namely, the historical-empirical approach of Scholten and the scientific method of Kuenen. Comparing

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[109] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 22.

[110] Herman Bavinck, "Notes, H. Bavinck, 1874.," "Ex animo et corpore. H. Bavinck, Theolol Stud." Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 75,76.

[111] Bavinck, "Ex animo et corpore. H. Bavinck, Theolol Stud."

[112] Bavinck, "Ex animo et corpore. H. Bavinck, Theolol Stud." "27 Sept 1875 Weer naar Leiden na een genoeglijke vakantie. O God: bewaar me in Leiden!" Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 75.

[113] Bavinck, "Ex animo et corpore. H. Bavinck, Theolol Stud."

[114] Wurth, *J. H. Scholten als systematisch theoloog*, 114. For a detailed explanation of Scholten's theology during Bavinck's study in Leiden, see Ibid., 112-135.

[115] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 97.

[116] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 57.

the methodology between Kuenen and Scholten, Kuenen had a methodology that began with axiomatic principles and then brought all the results of his studies, while Scholten conducted a study through the process of speculative thinking. Among professors in Leiden, Kuenen's "capacious and generous" scholarship had the most potent and lasting influence on Bavinck's methodology.[117] It should be noted that nowhere else in Bavinck's writings is the subconscious influence of Kuenen but in the method of approach and the treatment of the subject.[118] As already noted above, although Scholten was Bavinck's supervisor, it seems that Kuenen's academic influence on Bavinck's doctoral work was considerable in terms of both style and rigor.[119]

More importantly, although Bavinck generally tolerated the teachings from his professors, at the same time, it seems that he developed his theology in response to his modernist teachers at Leiden. Based on the historical-critical methodology, Scholten was committed to speculative intellectualism and monistic determinism. As will be seen in chapter four, it seems, over against Scholten's monistic understanding of God and mechanical determinism, Bavinck defended the doctrine of the Trinity.[120] He promoted a robust understanding of the relationship between the ontological and economic Trinity in giving an account of the organic relationship between God and the world. Notably, Bavinck's organic motif development could be understood as a reaction contra Scholten.[121] Although Bavinck studied under liberal professors, it can be argued that he distanced from their presuppositions and theological perspectives.

Particularly, Bavinck's letters to Snouck Hurgronje provides a better understanding of a tension of faith. Bavinck writes, "Now I have left Leiden and look upon modern theology and the modern world view somewhat differently than when I was still so strongly influenced by Kuenen and Scholten, now things seem so different than they appeared then," adding, "I learned much in Leiden, but also forgot much. The latter could in part have been detrimental to me, but I am increasingly aware of its detriment. The age in which our long-held principles were flung into the melting-pot of criticism, is over. Now is the time to be faithful to the principles we now hold and to defend them with the weapons we have at our disposal."[122] Bavinck survived from the world of liberal, historical-critical theology and modern philosophy and contributed theology as Reformed theologian.[123] In his 1921 eulogy of Bavinck, William Brede Kristensen comments that Bavinck, who arrived in Leiden, had already had the direction for his life, and he, it seems, never changed the line of thought.[124]

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[117] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 99.

[118] Dosker, "Herman Bavinck," 16.

[119] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 99.

[120] James Eglinton, "To Be or to Become - That Is the Question: Locating the Actualistic in Bavinck's Ontology," *The Kuyper Center Review,* ed. John Bowlin, vol. 2, Revelation and Common Grace (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 113.

[121] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 144.

[122] Bavinck to Snouck, 24 November 1880, in De Bruijn and Harinck, eds., *Een Leidse vriendschap*, 75-76. Cited from Harinck, "Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us," 253.

[123] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 26.

[124] W. B. Kristensen, "On Herman Bavinck's Scientific Work," trans. Laurence O'Donell, *Reformed Faith & Practice 3*, no.1 (Spring 2018): 41.

Rather, the engagement with Modern theology at Leiden led Bavinck to be caught up with enthusiasm that he promoted his theological identity. Confronted with the atheist voice of Eduard Douwes Dekker, better known by his nom de plume, Multatuli, concerning the dechristianization of Dutch culture, Bavinck was zealous to maintain renewal of Dutch culture through a revival of Calvinism alongside Abraham Kuyper. Bavinck bought Kuyper's portrait and hung it on his bedroom wall.[125]

In the edition of the Seceder newspaper, De Bazuin reported the news of Bavinck's completed doctoral degree on June 25, 1880. However, in light of the conformity of the Leiden theological faculty to the 1876 Higher Education Act, De Bazuin greeted Bavinck's publication of his dissertation on the ethics of Ulrich Zwingli, at the same time, but expressed a Christian Reformed perspective alongside Bavinck's participation in the final exam at the Theological School in Kampen.[126] Besides, owing to Bavinck's study at Leiden, the Kampen Theological School required him to present himself to the candidate exam board to investigate whether he had lost his faith.[127] Interestingly, it seems this examination was more carefully conducted than in ordinary cases, but eventually, he successfully completed his exam.[128] Throughout his life, Bavinck consistently maintained Reformed theology together with his faith, with which he was brought up. Bavinck sought to stand firm at the Reformed orthodox side and finally remained standing.[129] Bavinck's understanding and practice of prayer was for him means to keep the faith.[130] Further, Bavinck seems to become more and more Reformed, armed with his own weapons of Reformed theology.[131] As will be seen in the following chapters, this study maintains that the doctrine of the Trinity is the one central dogma of the whole system of Bavinck's dogmatics. Given these factors, the attempts to provide Bavinck's studying at Leiden for its rationale of the two Bavincks hypothesis seems hasty and improper.

2.2 Recent Critique of the Two Bavincks Hypothesis

In recent years, much research has been undertaken in an attempt to amend the two Bavincks hypothesis. Research into Bavinck's theological identity has made perceptive strides toward reaching a consensus in Bavinck scholarship. In treating these researches on Bavinck, this study provides a rationale for a more reliable picture of Bavinck's theology with recent and noteworthy interpretations of Bavinck's theology and theological career. Let me substantiate the conceptual unity and coherence in Bavinck through seven points as follows: (1) the inherent problems of the hypothesis, (2) the synthetic nature of Bavinck's theology, (3) Bavinck's vision of catholicity, (4) Bavinck's coherent and balanced thought, (5) Bavinck's devotion to ethics at the Kampen theological school, (6) Bavinck's use of the organic motif,

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[125] "Ex animo et corpore. H. Bavinck, Theol Stud." No date. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 65, 78-80.

[126] *De Bazuin*, June 25, 1880. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 103.

[127] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 84.

[128] Dosker, "Herman Bavinck," 16.

[129] Wit, *On the Way to the Living God*, 19.

[130] Wit, *On the Way to the Living God*, 34.

[131] Wit, *On the Way to the Living God*, 39-43.

(7) Bavinck's trinitarian theology.

2.2.1 The Inherent Problems of the Two Bavincks Hypothesis

Veenhof's interpretation of Bavinck in regard to Bavinck's theological identity is inherently wrong. First, the two Bavincks hypothesis leans too much on particular accounts of personal narrative. For example, according to Veenhof, Bavinck's colleague at the Free University, A. Anema's description of Bavinck as "a Secession preacher and a representative of modern culture," is an adequate rationale for his claim that Bavinck should be considered as the two Bavincks.[132] Additionally, Valentine Hepp's interpretation concerning the sale of Bavinck's theological books, adding Bavinck's own voice of "I have no further need of them," for Veenhof, could be a piece of evidence for his two Bavincks hypothesis.[133] As Eglinton notes, Veenhof's portrayal of Bavinck has tended to regard Bavinck as "a Jekyll and Hyde theologian who vacillates between moments of 'orthodoxy' and 'modernity' without ever resolving his own basic crisis of theological identity."[134] In this way, if one looks at Bavinck from the angle of a kind of internal division, it is easy to speak of two Bavincks. Consequently, it has been generally accepted that this hypothesis not only reflects Bavinck's personal history with particular reference to his conservative upbringing and liberal university education but further mirrors a duality of Bavinck's theology between orthodoxy and modernity. On this basis, Veenhof's interpretation of Bavinck as a Janus figure has prompted a conviction that there was no conceptual unity but a ceaseless tension in Bavinck's thought. Thus, Malcolm Yarnell proceeds from the two Bavincks hypothesis to regard Bavinck as almost "schizophrenia."[135] As a result, Veenhof's hypothesis leads to the consideration that those who understand Bavinck's theology have to choose which of Bavinck's thoughts between Reformed orthodoxy and modernism.

However, the interpretation of Bavinck's personal history, which undergirds the two Bavincks approach to his theology, is by no means a settled one. Valentijn Hepp's description of Bavinck's despair in the last decade of his life is exaggerated.[136] John Bolt warns against the characterization of Bavinck along with the two Bavincks. Bolt points out that the concept of the modern Bavinck was invented by Valentijn Hepp. In his view, Hepp's portrayal of Bavinck's despair in his later years was somewhat exaggerated. Indeed, when Hepp's depiction of Bavinck's old age is compared with that of Bremmer, it appears slightly out of proportion.[137] Rather than making a distinction between orthodoxy and modernism according to the two Bavincks model, Bolt presents a new distinction between the academic theologian

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[132] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 108.

[133] Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 317, 318.

[134] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 28.

[135] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 30-32. C.f. John Bolt, "Bavinck's Use of Wisdom Literature in Systematic Theology," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (Spring 2011), 5-8; Yarnell, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine*, 51.

[136] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 31, 32, 46.

[137] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn Tijdgenoten*, 263-6.

and the churchly dogmatician.[138] Bavinck undoubtedly engaged in a lot of social and cultural life in the modern world as a political activist and educational theorist in his old age. However, Bavinck did not give up on theology's relevance. In his view, there can be little doubt that Bavinck devoted his life to teaching theology and serving the church until his death, precisely as a Reformed theologian and churchman.

Second, considering the two speeches given by Bavinck in 1883 and 1894, these speeches are decisive evidence that Bavinck clearly presented a real alternative to a dualistic worldview. Bavinck's inaugural address on "The Science of Holy Theology" at the theological seminary in Kampen in 1883 presupposes that orthodoxy and the modern world belong together.[139] This speech provides the foundation for Bavinck's defense of theology in modern times by addressing theology's ever-relevant sacred characteristics. At this lecture, Bavinck argued that a theologian can be historically orthodox and an intellectual in the modern context, but that theology should be regarded as holy theology rather than modernistic theology. In this sense, Bavinck's opening address is intrinsically at odds with the two Bavincks hypothesis and his fundamental insistence on "the Science of Holy Theology" undermines the two Bavincks hypothesis.

Additionally, Bavinck's final rectoral address on "Common Grace" at Kampen in 1894 can be a reason for criticism of the two Bavincks hypothesis, because of his emphasis on common grace as a neo-Calvinist. Bavinck's stance on Christianity's engagement with culture is out of step with the two Bavincks hypothesis. The book of Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, greatly influenced the renaissance of Thomism within the Roman Catholic Church. Over against modernism, Pope Leo suggested a way to respond to modernity by returning to Medieval Scholasticism and Neo-Thomism. Bavinck criticized a Neo-Thomistic revival espoused by Pope Leo, noting Leo's dualism between natural and supernatural should be replaced with the antithesis between sin and grace.[140] For Bavinck, Reformed theology can offer an alternative through the doctrine of common grace in opposition to the non-antithetical dualism of Neo-Thomism. On this basis, Bavinck opposed any attempt of not only the isolationism of his CGK circles but also the world-conforming movements. This stands against the claims of the two Bavincks hypothesis about Bavinck's failure to choose between the path of "intellectual world-flight or of intellectual world-conformity."[141]

2.2.2 The Synthetic Nature of Bavinck's Theology

The two Bavincks hypothesis claims that there was a duality between Reformed orthodoxy and modernism in Bavinck's thought. Relying on this two Bavincks lens, Bavinck's theological duality was highlighted in explaining the sense in which there existed two irreconcilable thoughts within his theology. At first, the two Bavincks hypothesis may seem plausible. However, when examining the nature of Bavinck's theology, memorably expressed

[138] Bolt, "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam," 266, 267.
[139] Herman Bavinck, *De wetenschap der H. Godgeleerdheid* (Kampen: G.Ph. Zalsman,1883).
[140] Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris* (Inst. Surdo-mutorum, 1879). Cited from Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 39-44.
[141] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 42.

in the description for the character of Bavinck's theology is most famous: the concept of synthesis. [142] Unlike Kuyper's antithetical stance of modernism against the Christian worldview, Bavinck provided a wealth of synthetic and balanced insights, applying them to the challenges of his time. [143] Viewing Bavinck's theological approach in terms of a synthetic manner rather than an antithetic, it seems that the nature of Bavinck's theology is a new expression of Christian belief in modernism. Portraying Bavinck's engagement with modern culture, it is remarkable that he sought to harmonize Christianity with modern culture, instead of maintaining the dichotomy between them. From a synthetic perspective, the desire for unity in Bavinck's mind indeed is opposed to the dualism between nature and grace, the natural and supernatural, and orthodoxy and modernity. In light of this, as George Harinck notes, it can be said that the longing for unity was "the *Leitmotiv* of Bavinck's life." [144]

Specifically, emphasizing the power of the gospel in restoring nature by grace, Bavinck believed nature's restoration and perfection in Christ with his resurrection and further insisted on the possibility of the fundamental restoration of all cultures. [145] Considering Roman Catholicism as an absolute, structural dualism, Bavinck criticized the fact that a complete and genuine reconciliation of nature and grace is impossible in Roman Catholic theology. [146] Contrary to Rome's dualism, Bavinck convincingly argued for the restoration of nature by God's grace. Namely, grounding his conviction in the antithetical relation of sin and grace of Reformed theology, what Bavinck emphasized consistently as a synthetic relationship between Christianity and modern culture. [147] In his reference to Jesus' parables on the pearl and leaven in Matthew 13, Bavinck repeatedly pointed to the significance of the gospel in itself as a treasure and pearl of great value, at the same time its influence on culture as a mustard seed and a leaven. [148] For Bavinck, the power of Christ as a sovereign power, and whose grace can restore the individual and humanity as a whole, including the family, the state, art, and science, even extending to the whole cosmos.

From a synthetic point of view, Bavinck resolutely emphasized the intrinsic nature of the Christian worldview intertwined with culture. Christianity cannot be an enemy of culture in Bavinck's thought, and accordingly, both relate to one another as content and form. For Bavinck, the argument that the gospel must be at enmity with culture is simply wrong. For culture, Bavinck suggested that history proves that at the outset, culture is intimately bound up with religion, and thus it cannot take an independent place in terms of its origin and

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[142] Harinck, "Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us," 250. Cf. G. C. Berkouwer, *Zoeken en Vinden*, 40-70.

[143] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 63. Concerning the difference between the antithetical attitude of Abraham Kuyper and synthetical way of looking to the relation between Christianity and modernism, see also Bolt's revised dissertation, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, particularly chapter 3: "The Intervening Years: Herman Bavinck as neo-Calvinist Thinker." 119-154. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 191.

[144] Harinck, "Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us," 254.

[145] Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, 267.

[146] Bavinck, "Common Grace," 57.

[147] Harinck, "Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us," 262.

[148] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 224. Cf. Ibid., 236; Id., *The Philosophy of Revelation*, 268.

growth. The higher elements of culture, such as science, art, and morality, are especially deeply indebted to religion for its beginning and growth.[149] Given Bavinck's emphatic engagement with modern culture, Bavinck contributed to the character and direction of modernism as one of the participants of modern culture rather than as the well-balanced leader of the opposition camp.[150]

In distinction to Kuyper's antithetical attitude, Bavinck was more open to modern culture, having a high expectation of a renewed relationship of Christianity and culture.[151] Over against a lack of unity and balance and presenting a balanced way of thinking and living, Bavinck attempted to provide a rationale for spiritual direction in modern culture, pointing out dualism and inconsistency as distinguishing features of modernism of his day, and presenting a modern Christian worldview, from a synthetic perspective between Christianity and modernism. Bavinck's synthetic characteristics are closely prompted by his desire to revitalize Reformed orthodoxy.[152]

Particularly, what Bavinck refused in modern theology is the way in which modern theologians sought to reconcile Christianity with modern culture rather than reconciliation itself. In this light, as a neo-Calvinist, Bavinck sought to reconcile Christianity with modern culture, according to the Christian worldview. For Bavinck, the modern image itself need not be refused, but rather the modern interpretation of the phenomena should be rejected.[153] Namely, as Bruce Pass notes, Bavinck's acceptance of the modern image and his rejection of the modern interpretation is nothing less than "the embodiment of the true spirit of Reformed Orthodoxy."[154] Synthetically, Bavinck sought a reconciliation of Christianity with modern culture and sought a catholic element. It should be noted, however, that Bavinck's synthetic character was aimed at embracing modernity within the historically Reformed framework. Such an argument raises suspicions against the two Bavincks hypothesis, which operates on the premise that there exist two poles in Bavinck's thought and his life as a form of dualism.

2.2.3 Bavinck's Vision of Catholicity

Considering that in the address of "the catholicity of Christianity and the Church" Bavinck made a great effort to maintain the inextricable relationship between the catholicity of Christianity and the Church, it is noteworthy that the catholic nature of Bavinck's theology is opposed to the claim of the two Bavincks hypothesis that there exists a dualism between orthodoxy and modernism in Bavinck's theology.[155] In Bavinck's view, dualism led to

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[149] Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, 259.

[150] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 62.

[151] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 61. Cf. Id., "Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Concept of the French Revolution," 26.

[152] Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 250, 251.

[153] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 117.

[154] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 121.

[155] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 248. Cf. Harinck, "Universality and Dualism," 224. Most recently, Harinck also places Bavinck's emphasis on the church's catholicity and his thought on the synthesis between Christianity and modernism at the foundation of his theology. Harinck sheds light on

sectarianism, and further, both sectarianism and dualism had severely damaged the catholicity of Christianity.[156] Both dualism and sectarianism have one thing in common in terms of a lack of awareness of genuine catholicity. In this regard, Bavinck emphatically warned against the separatism, sectarianism, and dualism of his day. Undoubtedly, Bavinck refuted that all kinds of false separations derived from unimportant reasons, particularly Roman Catholicism's dualism between nature and grace. For Bavinck, a certain separatism or asceticism of the Church was also an abandonment of the Church's catholicity.

Against sectarianism and dualism that separated the life between Christians and non-Christians, Bavinck maintained that "Christianity is a world religion that should govern all people and sanctify all creatures irrespective of geography, nationality, place, and time."[157] Bavinck emphasized that there exists an exclusive and absolute foundation of Christianity and the Church more than sectarianism and separatism rested on. The history of the Church did not proceed towards asceticism and separatism but towards a world religion. Bavinck's opposition to sectarianism and separatism was different from the approach of many people of his own circles. The conviction on the connection between the catholicity of Christianity and the Church made Bavinck fight courageously against sectarianism and separatism. Given the fact that Bavinck strove passionately to stress the catholicity of Christianity and the Church, it is regrettable that the two Bavincks speaks of duality in Bavinck's thought. Throughout his years as a Reformed theologian, Bavinck sought to promote a worldview centered on the catholicity of Christianity and the Church within his own theological context. Then, where does Bavinck's vision of catholicity stem from?

In Harinck's analysis, particularly in his later years, Bavinck concentrated on how all Christians can be united, while in his early years, he endeavored to fight against modernism.[158] In the early phase, Bavinck recognized the aspects of the advent of modernism both on the negative and positive sides. On the one hand, Bavinck pointed out the anti-supernatural character of modernism and its attempt to exclude Christianity from the culture. On the other hand, from a positive perspective on the modernism of his day, Bavinck noted that Christians had an opportunity to ensure internal stability, carefully reviewing Christianity and strengthening its position in modern times. Specifically, for Bavinck, the new threats of modernism were to drive Christianity out of the public sphere when it comes to Christianity and the Christian life. In Bavinck's analysis, modernism attempted to eliminate Christianity from the public sphere to relegate it to the private sphere as something sectarian.[159] Over against these challenges of modernism to expel Christianity from the public sphere, science, politics, and public life; from the opposite direction, Bavinck made unceasing efforts to defend and broaden the scope of Christianity, presenting a worldview

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Bavinck's participation as a senator, focusing on his view on missions. Based on the notion of the universality of Christianity, Bavinck views that missions should be understood as an integral activity of the Church. It aims at not only the conversion of individuals but also the change of all domains of life.

[156] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 246. Cf. Kamphuis, "Herman Bavinck on Catholicity," 97, 98, 100.

[157] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 221, 228.

[158] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 74-76.

[159] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 244, 248.

underlining its all-encompassing unity. Bavinck never gave up his thought of Christianity being intertwined with culture, based on the notion of the organic in response to the mechanical view of modernism. Bavinck tried to defend and promote the public sphere for the meaning of a more methodical and organic reformation of the whole. Thus, this early phase contributed to preserving the independence of Christianity, giving a warning about modernism as an anti-religious program, and at the same time promoting the believer's freedom for Christianity in all domains of life.

However, in the later phase, Bavinck paid more attention to the common ground for all kinds of Christians, resting in the doctrine of God, who reveals Himself to humanity personally. It can be understood that Bavinck's vision of the catholicity of Christianity, as will be seen in the following section of this study, has its foundation in the doctrine of the Trinity.[160] By grounding his concept of the unity and diversity in the trinitarian being of God, Bavinck devoted himself assiduously and faithfully to the universality of Christianity rather than challenged the claims of modern culture itself in this period. Namely, he concentrated on the way in which Christians can be united rather than on the endeavor to defend room for Christianity in culture against the challenge of modernism.[161] Bavinck tried to present a balanced way of thinking and living against modernism, notably in terms of an organic reformation of church and state, family and society, and further dedicated to establishing the new ground for the broadness of Christianity, based on his understanding of a personal God. Harinck maintains that "In relation to our current reflections on the relationship between belief and modernity, Bavinck's spirituality is of great importance. His starting point was the unity of God, which implies a catholic Christian faith - a faith of all times and of all places."[162]

According to Barend Kamphuis, the doctrine of Christology is the key to Bavinck's understanding of Christianity's catholicity.[163] Kamphuis considers catholicity to be the most important theme in Bavinck's theology and he is convinced that it is one of the most significant contributions to Reformed theology that "Bavinck's Christology is a broad Christology, at the start, but also in its elaboration: all elements of creation are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. In Bavinck's Christology, the catholicity of Christianity is primary."[164] That is, the catholicity of Christianity and the church, in Bavinck's thought, rests on reconciliation through the cross of Jesus Christ. For Bavinck, only in and through Christ can one get a true knowledge of God and the salvation of humanity. The Cross of Christ enables humanity to purify from every sin, and thus those who have faith cannot be restricted to any space and time, people, or nation. On this basis, Christianity knows no boundaries of race, age, class, status, nationality, or language. All things are reconciled to God only in

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[160] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 155-266; Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 81-130.

[161] For a detailed description of the time, see James D. Bratt, "The Context of Herman Bavinck's Stone Lectures: Culture and Politics in 1908," *The Bavinck Review* 1 (2010): 4-24.

[162] Harinck, "Something that must remain, if the truth is to be sweet and precious to us," 261.

[163] Kamphuis, "Herman Bavinck on Catholicity," 97-104; Id., "Herman Bavinck on the Catholicity of Christianity and Church," 149-155.

[164] Kamphuis, "Herman Bavinck on Catholicity," 102.

Christ and brought together in unity under him. The blood of the cross reconciles the relationship between God and humanity, heaven and earth, Jew and Gentiles, man and woman.[165] Bavinck regarded Christianity the religion of the cross and also emphasized its mystery of the suffering on the cross as the center of Christianity. By the same token, Nelson Kloosterman also locates the underlying unity in Bavinck's thought in his Christology. Kloosterman maintains Bavinck's emphasis on Christological unity, namely, that Jesus Christ revealed himself progressively in the unfolding of salvation history "through his unitary and unitive mediatorial activity."[166] In the person and work of Christ Jesus, this Christological unity could be applied to the relationship between the church and the world coherently in Bavinck's thought. Seen in this perspective, one cannot subscribe to Veenhof's hypothesis of the two Bavincks.

Additionally, the catholicity of Bavinck's thought can be found in recent years with the fascinating study. Cory Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto called attention to Bavinck's catholicity, emphasizing the synthetic character of Bavinck's thought and his eclectic use of classical and modern thinkers.[167] They praise Bavinck for his catholicity, for example, proposing that Bavinck uses both Augustine and Schleiermacher in establishing his conviction of the reality of the self-God-world relations and for Bavinck Thomas Aquinas and idealism shield his theology from the subject-object dichotomy between representations and external reality.[168]

Besides, given Bavinck's emphasis on the catholicity of Christianity and the church as well as the synthetic nature of his theology, one can take a firm stand on the proposal presented by those who advocate the one Bavinck model that deserves serious attention. Bavinck's endeavor for the union of the theological school in Kampen and the Free University in Amsterdam should be noted here as his "aversion to dualism and its effects on theology."[169] Although the division of the theological school in Kampen and the Free University in Amsterdam remained, admittedly, Bavinck made an impassioned effort to unite the two institutions as "an organic union."[170] Bavinck's aversion to dualism and sectarianism and his vision of the catholicity can be understood as an illuminating piece of evidence against the claim of the two Bavincks hypothesis, while it is not a direct critique of that hypothesis.

2.2.4 Bavinck's Coherent and Balanced Thought

When criticizing the two Bavincks hypothesis, one can highlight Bavinck's coherent and balanced thought.[171] Kloosterman strongly believes that while one can recognize various

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[165] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 224.

[166] Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold,'" 170.

[167] Cory Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism: On Catholicity, consciousness and theological epistemology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70 (2017): 310-32.

[168] Brock and Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism," 313.

[169] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 43, 44.

[170] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 44.

[171] Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold,'" 165-176.

tensions in Bavinck's thought, it is not adequate to agree with the claim that two incompatible worldviews run through Bavinck's theology. In Kloosterman's view, the two Bavincks hypothesis is nothing more than an overemphasis on the tensions in Bavinck's thought. In a similar vein, Brian Mattson emphasizes that one should not follow the two Bavincks hypothesis, noting an apparent life-long struggle concerning the relationship between Christianity and culture in Bavinck's life.[172] Even though some people may point out inner contradictions in Bavinck's thought, sharing the claim of the two Bavincks hypothesis concerning "the tension he personally felt between his confessional commitments and his worldly fascination was, at the end of the day, an unresolved tension," Mattson convincingly declares that this two Bavincks interpretation is simply wrong.[173] In Mattson's observation, notably, Bavinck passionately craved the worldview of unity and harmony with creational diversity with his distinct emphasis that grace restores and perfects nature. Given his antipathy to any dualism and lifelong endeavors toward a unified worldview throughout his years, it is absurd to accept the fundamental assumption of the two Bavincks hypothesis based on the incoherence in Bavinck's theology.

John Bolt seems to accept the characterization of the two Bavincks from the viewpoint of inconsistency in Bavinck's thought to some extent. Considering Bolt's sketch of Bavinck in his 1982 dissertation and various articles, he somewhat accepted Veenhof's view of duality in Bavinck's thought. In his *The Imitation of Christ in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck*, Bolt depicts Bavinck as a man who seeks to strike a balance between pietism and modernism in the nineteenth century.[174] In Bolt's judgment, the Dutch Reformed pietism and nineteenth-century Dutch modernist theology were reflected in Bavinck's life and thought. In his 2003 article "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam," Bolt mentions a tension between two poles in Bavinck's life and his thoughts as a conventional portrait, describing this as "the annoying acknowledgment that there is not just one but rather *two* Bavincks."[175] Indeed, Bolt assumes that the evidence for duality in Bavinck is not hard to find. Furthermore, a significant element in Bolt's interpretation is G. C. Berkouwer's appraisal of Bavinck's theological work. Bolt translates the sentence of Berkouwer's appraisal of Bavinck's theological work as follows: "Bavinck's theology contains so many irreconcilable (*onweersprekelijke*) themes in tension."[176] Bolt highlights that Bavinck's theology cannot be understood to its full extent, apart from the abundance of these irreconcilable themes in the tension of Bavinck's thought. This caricature of duality seems adequate for Bolt when one considers Bavinck's life and thought.

However, Kloosterman suggests some corrections on Bolt's interpretation of Berkouwer's perspective on Bavinck. Kloosterman restrains Bolt's explanation of Bavinck's duality, grounded on his rendering of Berkouwer's remarks on Bavinck's theology. According to Kloosterman, Berkouwer's comments should be understood as follows: "The

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[172] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 2.

[173] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 18.

[174] John Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck," (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 1982), 39-79.

[175] Bolt, "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam," 264, 265.

[176] Bolt, "Grand Rapids between Kampen and Amsterdam," 265.

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danger present in describing and evaluating Bavinck's life-work is that one might annex him for one's own insights. It is, however, not impossible to escape that annexation-danger, since various undeniable (*onweersprekelijk*) themes become manifest in Bavincks work."[177] For Berkouwer's comment, Kloosterman emphasizes that Berkouwer takes note of the danger that he faced himself, the danger of peoples with opposing perspectives appealing to Bavinck in this passage. From this point of view, Kloosterman argues for the necessity of an alternative translation, instead of Bolt's rendering the Dutch word "*onweersprekelijk*" in Berkouwer's passage as "irreconcilable," and suggesting that "*onweersprekelijk*" should be construed as meaning "undeniable."[178] "To buttress his claim that there were two Bavincks," Kloosterman pointedly emphasizes, "John Bolt cites the observation of Dutch theologian Berkouwer, and footnotes the Dutch original, as to how people with radically opposing agendas had annexed (appealed to) Bavinck's theology in defense of their own views."[179] In this way, Kloosterman is confident about the coherence of Bavinck's thought, saying that even though it is true that there exist tensions in Bavinck's thought and life, the disputes should not "be elevated to the level of incoherent inconsistencies or irreconcilable themes."[180]

In a similar vein, considering the discussion on the coherence of Bavinck's thought, Eglinton remarks that "the 'two Bavincks' model will only emerge if one does not first grasp the nature of the diverse central themes of his worldview and, one logically assumes, the nature of their overall unity."[181] Whether Bolt intended to or not, it is an undeniable fact that Bolt's mistranslation of Berkouwer's comment contributed to the two Bavincks hypothesis to some extent in Bavinck scholarship. Remarkably, in recent years, it is noteworthy that Bolt has clarified his position on Bavinck's theological identity, suggesting that there is a fundamental unity in Bavinck's thought. In his article of 2013, "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms," Bolt states that any discussion of supposed tensions in Bavinck's thought must be understood by, carefully considering his nuances and the subtlety of his thought.[182] In response to Kloosterman's proposal for correction of mistranslation, Bolt humbly admits his mistake in a translation that the Dutch word '*onweersprekelijke*' ought to be interpreted as 'irreconcilable' rather than 'undeniable.'[183] On this basis, Bolt indicates his stance on the matter of the two Bavincks hypothesis as follows: "I also agree with him [Kloosterman] that while there are tensions in Bavinck's thought, there is an underlying unity in his thought."[184] That Bolt is not sympathetic to the two Bavincks hypothesis is also evident from his remark that "there is a general scholarly consensus on the fundamental unity

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[177] Dutch Original: "Het gevaar van een beschrijving en beoordeling van Bavincks levenswerk is, dat men hem annexeert voor eigen inzichten. Het is echter niet onmogelijk boven dat annexatie-gevaar uit te komen, doordat in het werk van Bavinck allerlei *onweersprekelijke* motieven zichtbaar worden." Berkouwer, *Zoeken en Vinden*, 55.

[178] Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold,'" 175.

[179] Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold,'" 174.

[180] Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold,'" 166.

[181] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 35, 36.

[182] Bolt, "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms," 83.

[183] Bolt, "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms," 77.

[184] Bolt, "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms," 79.

of Bavinck's thought."[185]

By the same token, Harinck gives his attention to coherent and balanced thoughts on the relationship between Christianity and modernism in Bavinck.[186] Bavinck devoted much attention to how the believing community can harmonize Christianity and modernism, presenting his theology coherently. Indeed, considering Bavinck's desire for the unity, Bavinck's thoughts should be viewed in actually coherent rather than inconsistent sense. Moreover, rather than positing two conflicting strands within Bavinck's theology, Brock and Sutanto emphasize the unity of Bavinck's thought, calling attention to his self-consciously principled and eclectic manner.[187] Writing on Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism, they argue that if Bavinck's self-consciously eclectic method and his organic motif are neglected, one may misread Bavinck as a conflicted thinker or charge him with inconsistency.[188] The frequent theological retrieval of both ancient and modern sources for Reformed catholicity is precisely why Brock and Sutanto's praise for Bavinck.

Given the fact that Bavinck attempted to present a balanced way of thinking and living as a participant of modern culture throughout his years as well as his electic deployment of classical and modern sources, there is no room for Veenhof's hypothesis about irreconcilable dualism within Bavinck's thought.

2.2.5 Bavinck's Devotion to Ethics at Kampen Theological School

With regards to Bavinck's career and theological works, the two Bavincks hypothesis accentuates the fact that Bavinck devoted himself to teaching systematic theology and writing his *magnum opus*, *Reformed Dogmatics* as a systematic theologian at Kampen Theological Seminary (1883-1902) and that he turned his attention to ethical issues during his tenure at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (1902-21).

However, it is essential to note that Bavinck engaged heavily in studying ethical issues early in his career. On June 10, 1880, Bavinck obtained his doctorate with a dissertation on the ethics of the Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli.[189] As soon as Bavinck received his doctorate, he published two articles on the human conscience.[190] After this, he was ordained as pastor of the CGK in Franeker. During his time as pastor, Bavinck focused on ethics as well as dogmatics when he had time to study outside of sermon preparation, catechism classes, and consistory meetings.[191] From a letter Bavinck wrote to his lifelong friend, Snouck Hurgronje, we learn that the focus of Bavinck's studies increasingly narrowed to the study of ethics during this time.[192] According to his lifelong friend Henry Elias Dosker,

[185] Bolt, A *Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 35.
[186] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 60.
[187] Brock and Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism," 310-19.
[188] Brock and Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism," 311, 312.
[189] Herman Bavinck, *De Ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli* (Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 1880).
[190] Herman Bavinck, "Het geweten," *De vrije Kerk* 7 (1881): 27-37, 49-58.
[191] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 89.
[192] Bavinck to Snouck Hurgronje, 23 September 1881, in De Bruijn and Harinck, eds., *Een Leidse Vriendschap*, 93.

Bavinck lectured on a wide variety of subjects during his tenure at Kampen, including dogmatics, the history of philosophy, encyclopedia, psychology, rhetoric, logic, aesthetics, and in particular ethics. For the breadth of topics covered by Bavinck's writings, Dosker comments that "the undermanned condition of the seminary was responsible for this multiplicity of labors and variety of subjects."[193] From another angle, Gleason singles out Bavinck's lectures on *Reformed Ethics* as one of the reasons that Bavinck decided to decline a third appointment to the Free University, the other reasons being "his church setting," "his preparation for the writing of his Dogmatics," and "the love his students had for him."[194]

Most importantly, Bavinck was employed in Kampen to lecture on ethics, which is often overlooked, regardless of its importance to Bavinck's whole theology. Accordingly, it can be argued that without a careful account of his thoughts on ethics, Bavinck's theology as a whole cannot be adequately understood. Some might still argue that ethics is not one of the major themes in Bavinck's theology because his *Reformed Ethics* has never appeared in a separate volume. Although indeed, Bavinck did not publish his own *Reformed Ethics*, it is not the case that Bavinck lacked keenness for the subject. During the years of Bavinck's professorate at Kampen, surprisingly, Bavinck spent a great deal of his time on his work on ethics.

In this perspective, Dirk van Keulen's study supports a recent criticism of the two Bavincks hypothesis, by shedding light on Bavinck's career concerning ethical issues. At the International Herman Bavinck Conference at Calvin College on Sept. 17-20, 2008, Van Keulen's presentation of Bavinck's unpublished manuscript of *Reformed Ethics* provided a good starting point for the study of Bavinck's ethics. Van Keulen demonstrated that in the Bavinck archives there are several documents that Bavinck used for his lectures on ethics, such as "a small lecture notebook," "an extensive manuscript entitled *Gereformeerde Ethiek* (*Reformed Ethics*)," and several manuscripts made by his students.[195] This discovery provides supportive evidence that suggests that Bavinck worked on the manuscript of *Reformed Ethics* during the years his *Reformed Dogmatics* was published and released. Concerning this point, Van Keulen argues that Bavinck was interested in dogmatics and ethics during his early professorate at Kampen.[196] The fact must not be neglected that Bavinck devoted himself to preparing and giving lectures on ethics while at the same time writing his *Reformed Dogmatics*.

Furthermore, Bavinck's ethics must be in the spotlight with his dogmatics proper being central for understanding of his entire theology. There are several interesting points about the similarity between Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* and his *Reformed Ethics* in terms of their structure and methodology.[197] In his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck started with an introduction to theology and its method of organization, which is then followed by a chapter on the history and literature of dogmatics. Likewise, Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* begins similarly, but with the topics in reverse order: an outline of the history of Reformed ethics, its literature, terminology, organization, and methodology. Second, Bavinck's *Reformed*

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[193] Dosker, "Herman Bavinck," 17, 18.

[194] Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 134.

[195] Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*," 26.

[196] Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*," 53.

[197] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:25-204; Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*," 34, 42.

Ethics resembles his *Reformed Dogmatics* in terms of method. Bavinck's methodological steps were as follows: First, collecting and systematizing biblical data, and then describing how these data have been adopted in the church, and third, developing these data normatively with a view to the present. Likewise, Bavinck's three-fold method in the *Reformed Ethics* looks the same as in the *Reformed Dogmatics*. First, Bavinck dealt with the ethical framework of several other Protestant theologians. Then, he commented on the ethical formulations of these theologians and selected a similar, traditional structure for his formulation. Finally, he developed his ethical framework about his times. Besides, the form of composition gives the impression that his *Reformed Ethics* is entirely dogmatic in character.[198] Following his understanding of human destiny about ethics, Bavinck seems to have organized the structure of *Reformed Ethics* into three parts: the man before conversion, the man in conversion, and man after conversion. Then, Bavinck added a fourth part concerning the social spheres in which moral life has to reveal itself. Bavinck regarded ethics as a matter of enormous importance, and he offered a rich and nuanced understanding of the relationship between dogmatics and ethics. No sentence better summarizes Bavinck's thoughts on dogmatics and ethics than this: "Dogmatics is the system of the knowledge of God; ethics is that of the service of God."[199] For Bavinck, dogmatics preceded ethics, and ethics was utterly dependent on dogmatics. Bavinck argued that there is no fundamental difference between dogmatics and ethics, underscoring instead the inseparably close relationship between the two. Throughout his life, Bavinck had enough to occupy his mind and time as he dealt with the notion of ethics in conjunction with dogmatics. For Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics* was intended as a companion to *Reformed Dogmatics*, beyond a doubt.

All the above considered, it is hard to agree with the two Bavincks hypothesis, since it seems that throughout his whole theological career, Bavinck continued to deal with ethics as well as dogmatics, following his theological identity as a Reformed theologian. Van Keulen's discovery of Bavinck's manuscript on Reformed ethics provides a piece of decisive evidence on Bavinck's efforts to apply his theological principles to Christian life in his early years. Instead of believing that Bavinck's theological identity was changed after he left Kampen, it seems appropriate to assert that although it is definitely true that Bavinck had more interests in a broader range of topics in his later years, it is also an undeniable fact that Bavinck's attention was directed to not only a systematic theology but also ethics even in his early years. Throughout Bavinck's career, the balance of his teaching and writing at both Kampen and Amsterdam can be found as an interesting inverted shape.[200] That is, at the Theological School in Kampen, Bavinck taught ethics, including a broad range of subjects. At the Free University, Bavinck taught dogmatics simultaneously in a broad and thorough engagement in the fields of philosophy, politics, pedagogy, psychology, and education. The two Bavincks hypothesis should be reinterpreted in reality as having no remarkable division of Bavinck's theological works in his theological career.

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[198] Van Keulen, "Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*," 35.
[199] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:58.
[200] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 223.

2.2.6 Bavinck's Use of the Organic Motif

The two Bavincks hypothesis assumes late nineteenth-century theology and philosophy as primary sources for Bavinck's thinking. Notably, Veenhof regards the source and its notion of the term 'organic' in Bavinck's theology as a decisive rationale for his two Bavincks hypothesis. By explaining the meaning of Bavinck's organic metaphors, Veenhof traces the historical and philosophical background and the origin of the 'organic' in Bavinck's theology. In Veenhof's assumption, Schelling's Idealist philosophy, the German history of religions school, and the Dutch Ethical theologians are the possible sources for Bavinck's use of the organic motif.[201] Grounding his interpretation of Bavinck's notion of the organic in the presupposition that Bavinck's thought can be divided into two poles between Reformed orthodoxy and modernism, Veenhof deems that Bavinck's organic motif belongs to the modernist Bavinck.

However, concerning the possible sources for Bavinck's organic motif, Veenhof's account rests on a genetic fallacy. Veenhof claims that Bavinck was in part a nineteenth-century theologian who had inherited the spiritual mantel of mystical theosophy. He deems the relationship between Bavinck and the historical stream to be drawn from Cocceius, Bengel, Böhme, Oetinger, Beck, Hegel, and Schelling. However, there is a lack of reliable information about the linkage of the organic motif of the mystical theosophy to that of Bavinck. In Brian Mattson's research, with regard to Böhme, Oetinger, and Beck, Bavinck attributes a 'mystical theosophy' largely responsible for the resurgence of pantheism in the nineteenth-century, and further-reaching its culmination in Hegel and Schelling.[202] In this regard, Bavinck often points out the problem with German Idealism with respect to the subjective theological methods, taking the starting point in Hegel's morality, Schleiermacher's feeling of absolute dependence, and Hegel's unfolding of universal Spirit.[203] Considering Bavinck's consistent and relentless critique of Idealism, the history of religious school, and Ethical theology, Veenhof's claim is far removed from Bavinck's antagonism towards the late nineteenth-century philosophy and theology. Indeed, Bavinck regards Schelling and Hegel as the villains of the piece who elevated pantheism to nineteenth-century philosophy.

Furthermore, Mattson calls attention to the relationship between Bavinck's organic motif and the tradition of Reformed scholasticism. He argues that it would be more reasonable to assume that Bavinck found historic Reformed orthodoxy to seek unity for his thought in reaction to his liberal education at Leiden. Even though Bavinck had a crisis of faith during his Leiden education, Mattson provides several evidences from recent studies attesting to the possibility that the source of Bavinck's organic motif is primarily his own

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[201] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 267, 268.

[202] Mattson, *Restored To Our Destiny*, 50, 54. K. H. Roessingh argues that Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel made little impact in the Netherlands in the early nineteenth century. Cf. K. H. Roessingh, *De modern theologie in Netherland; hare voorbereiding en eerste period* (Dissertation, Groningen, 1914), 22-24. Cited Eglinon, *Trinity and Organism*, 6. Cf. Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern*, 93.

[203] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 66, 67.

historical-theological tradition. First, Reformed orthodoxy's interests in historical development and the gradual manifestation of God's salvation can be a more suitable candidate for the source of neo-Calvinism's use of the organic metaphor than the post-Kantian philosophy represented by Hegel and Schelling.[204] Second, concerning Bavinck's application of the organic motif, Mattson notes Bavinck's epistemology to be an innovative adaptation of the *principia* of Reformed scholasticism.[205] Third, that Bavinck took a keen interest in Reformed scholasticism and acknowledged his own tradition is evidenced by his numerous citations of Dutch Reformed theologians such as "Voetius, de Moor, Vitringa, van Mastricht, Witsius, and Walaeus as well as the important Leiden *Synopsis purioris theologiae*" in his *Reformed Dogmatics*.[206] Fourth, Mattson singles out the relationship between Geerhardus Vos and Bavinck as an important issue that cannot be ignored in terms of their emphasis on the term organic and its concepts.[207] On this basis, there is no need for Bavinck to enlist German Idealism to form the concept of the organic and apply it.

In a similar vein, Bruce Pass maintains that Bavinck's use of organic metaphors can be understood as a kind of qualitative and quantitative development that belongs to the Reformed tradition rather than German Idealist philosophy.[208] Bavinck's emphasis on the developmental feature of dogmatics, as Pass notes, can be attributed to principled progressivism of the Reformed tradition.[209] Bavinck has already been situated in the stream of the Reformed heritage. Over against nineteenth-century philosophical notions and theological insights, Bavinck primarily attempted to provide an answer and a foundational account of reality from Reformed theology and through the very rationale based on Scripture. The pantheistic and evolutionary thought of his day might challenge and stimulate Bavinck passionately. Bavinck also enthusiastically tried to answer the questions and challenges to a hierarchical dualism of higher and lower on the ontological level, emphasizing an organic relationship between nature and grace. While the two Bavincks hypothesis assumes Schelling's Idealist philosophy, the German history of religions school, and the Dutch Ethical theologians as primary sources for Bavinck's organic motif, it seems more reasonable that Bavinck's organic idea is intimately related to the tradition of Reformed scholasticism.

Rather, Bavinck's frequent use of the organic motif is not only decisive evidence against the two Bavincks hypothesis but also the crucial factor to understand Bavinck's trinitarian theology. In James Eglinton's view, Bavinck's organic motif must be accepted as "an agent of unity" within Bavinck's theology.[210] Namely, for Bavinck, the organic motif pays a central

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[204] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 49. Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 382-91; Id., "The Myth of 'Decretal' Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 30 (1995): 159-67; Id., "Calvin and the 'Calvinists:' Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities between the Reformation and Ordodoxy," *Calvin Theologial Journal* 30 (1995): 345-75; Id., "Calvin and the 'Calvinists:' Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities between the Reformation and Orthodoxy," *Calvin Theological Journal* 31 (1996): 125-60.

[205] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 50, 51. Cf. Henk van den Belt, *Autopistia: The Self-Convincing Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology* (Diss., University of Leiden, 2006), 257-71.

[206] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 51. Cf. Bolt, "Editor's Introduction," in *Reformed Dogmatics* 2: 12.

[207] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 52. Cf. Van den Belt, *Autopistia*, 304.

[208] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 114.

[209] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 120.

[210] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 51. Cf. Ibid., 205.

role in communicating his trinitarian worldview. Besides, Eglinton provides a critical evaluation of Veenhof's reading of Bavinck on the organic motif, noting that there is the inherently problematic nature of the two Bavincks hypothesis. Eglinton argues, "one of the great misfortunes of Bavinck studies is that the organic motif has been misunderstood for so long as a symptom of disunity, rather than the primary analogy and agent of unity in the creation."[211] One can raise questions about whether Bavinck was open to accepting the concept of the organic motif of his days, or he just co-opted the language and used the same word to mean something different.[212] Bavinck's organic thinking has its root in his trinitarian theology rather than nineteenth-century Romanticism's and Idealism's worldview. Gray Sutanto adds, building on the works of Mattson, Eglinton, and Pass, that in his deployment of the organic motif, Bavinck eclectically used both classical and modern sources for synthesis of Reformed orthodoxy and modern theology within the structure of his own thought. Namely, Bavinck's own organic motif in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity provides the very rationale for a unified reading of Bavinck's epistemology and his cosmology.[213]

As will be seen in the following section, Bavinck's organic notion provides a decisive and reliable methodology to examine his understanding of the triune God *per se* and the relationship between the ontological and economic Trinity in particular. Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity in light of his organic motif leads to the confirmation that there was definitely one Bavinck rather than two Bavincks.

2.2.7 Bavinck's Trinitarian Theology

Bavinck's recourse to the doctrine of the triune God is evidence of the unity of thought in his theology. Bavinck underscores the task of the theologian to be thinking about God's thoughts and tracing the unity of God.[214] For Bavinck, the unity of thought is a command given to theologians for reproducing the unity of God's thoughts.[215] Notably, the unity of thought in Bavinck's theology is founded on his understanding of the triune God. This study, as will be seen in the following chapters, maintains the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity in Bavinck's entire theology. For Bavinck, the Trinity is the heart and center of Christianity, and the theme 'grace restores nature' is subordinate to it.[216] On this basis, the unity of Bavinck's thought is rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity, which is fundamental to Bavinck's theology.

First, the triune God provides the epistemological foundation for the knowledge of God. Considering the task of theology, Bavinck sheds new light on the unity of thought in theology: "One system is the highest goal of all science . . . Even theology cannot rest until it uncovers the unity hidden in revelation . . . The highest goal of theology is the unity of truth, the

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[211] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 29.

[212] Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 47.

[213] Sutanto, *God and Knowledge*, 17-73.

[214] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 44. Cited from Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 207.

[215] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 207.

[216] Bolt, "Editor's Introduction," in *Reformed Dogmtics* 2: 18; Id., "The Trinity as a unifying theme in Reformed thought," 101. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 112; 2: 330.

system of the knowledge of God." [217] Bavinck formulates his own trinitarian *Principia* doctrine in order to achieve a *formal* epistemological unity of conception.[218] Bavinck pays attention to the archetypal aspects of human knowledge. The triune God is the first principle of being the archetype, and all things are grounded in God's thought and created by His word and good pleasure. In this regard, Bavinck declares that the world is nothing less than an embodiment of God's thought, and thus all human knowledge can be considered an ectypal knowledge that manifests the archetypal knowledge in God's mind.[219] Bavinck insists on the possibility of human knowledge through organic thinking, deploying a distinction between archetypal and ectypal knowledge.

Second, Bavinck attempted to seek the unity of thought in theology, presenting his metaphysical foundations that support the underlying unity of his thought. In this regard, concerning Bavinck's metaphysical grounds, John Bolt declares that "Final unity for Bavinck is something profoundly metaphysical. It is found in the very *trinitarian* being of God himself."[220] According to Bolt, the ultimate conceptual unity of Bavinck's thought always rests on his doctrine of the Trinity, particularly on the eternal unity of God himself. From this perspective, Bolt presents an illuminating clarification of his position over against the two Bavincks hypothesis: "To be clear, Bavinck was committed to and strove to achieve unity of thought. Whatever tensions we might (or not) discover in his theology, they must not be used to invalidate his own commitment to unity of thought."[221]

As has been previously noted, Bavinck's organic thinking has its root in his trinitarian theology rather than the nineteenth-century Romanticism and Idealist worldview. Bavinck's theology is indeed oriented towards the trinitarian being of God and the work of the Trinity. Bolt revised his 1982 doctoral dissertation in 2013, including an update on Bavinck scholarship since 1982.[222] Among the most recent scholarship on Bavinck, Bolt pays attention to Eglinton's emphasis on a close connection between the doctrine of the Trinity and his use of the organic motif.[223] Important to note here in his revision is that Bolt adds the new contents from Bavinck's words, underlining the discussion of the unity of thought in his theology. Here Bolt explicitly highlights Bavinck's understanding of the organic nature of divine thought, cosmic reality, and human thought.[224] Based on his organic thinking, Bavinck understands the possibility and reality of the knowledge of the triune God. In order to deny the possibility of the unity of thought in theology, including such a unified system of thought, for Bavinck, is related to a defiance of the divine unity. Hence, for Bavinck, all

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[217] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 44.

[218] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 205-11.

[219] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 233. Cf. Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 206.

[220] Bolt, "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms," 80.

[221] Bolt, "Herman Bavinck on Natural Law and Two Kingdoms," 81.

[222] Bolt's dissertation for Ph.D. was submitted in 1982 at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto. It is quite interesting to note that his revised dissertation, thirty years after its completion of the original dissertation, was published again in 2013.

[223] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 158.

[224] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 231. Cf. Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 207.

notions of dualism have no place. Bavinck's attempts to seek the unity of thought in theology and his strong commitment to the unity of thought have its foundation in the triune God. In this regard, Bavinck's organic motif is a decisive for grasping his doctrine of the Trinity, and it ensures the unity of Bavinck's thought.

2.3 Conclusion

Considering that the primary purpose of this study is to explore Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin, research of disputes on Bavinck's theological identity is a foundational prerequisite for the right understanding of Bavinck's theology *per se* and further advanced research on the characteristics and relationship between him and other theologians. That the two Bavincks hypothesis has affected the debate on Bavinck's theological identity is beyond doubt. Thus, examining the legitimacy of that hypothesis as the framework for how Bavinck should be understood leads to twofold benefits: First, it provides a proper hermeneutical lens for Bavinck, and lays the foundation for awareness as to where Bavinck's theology stemmed. Second, delving into the criticism of the two Bavincks hypothesis can broaden the insights into aspects of Bavinck's theology and its essential character.

In research on Bavinck's theological identity, as has been observed in this chapter, the main question is debated whether there are two irreconcilable themes and the reality of two Bavincks in his thought. The two Bavincks hypothesis of Jan Veenhof rests on the assumption that Bavinck's life and theology are intimately related. Veenhof regards both the Dutch Reformed pietism and the modernism of his day as background to an assessment of Bavinck's theological identity. On this basis, Veenhof's interpretation of Bavinck has categorized Bavinck's thought and life into two Bavincks, namely, a Reformed theologian and a progressive modernist.

When the two Bavincks hypothesis is explored, Veenhof rightly observes the characteristic features of Reformed orthodoxy from Bavinck's upbringing, his pastorate experience in the CGK at Franeker, and his professorate in Kampen in general. Given the Bavinck family discussed above, it seems reasonable to say that Bavinck inherited his faith, and the Reformed worldview, and his attitude towards the relationship of Christianity to culture from parental influence and experience at his household. Veenhof is also correct when he points out Bavinck's lifelong commitment to the CGK as remarkable evidence for his self-awareness as a Reformed churchman.

Properly speaking, at first glance, it seems not an overstatement that the crisis of Bavinck's theological identity was brought by his struggle for his faith at Leiden. Indeed, Bavinck's decision to learn theology under the tutelage of the professors at Leiden prompted severe criticism from the church folk, and professor Brummelkamp of the CGK. Besides, it is an undeniable fact that Leiden University was a solid base to build a modern liberal theology, studying with world-renowned modern theologians such as Johannes Scholten and Abraham Kuenen. On this basis, Veenhof assesses that Bavinck changed theologically from a Reformed theologian to a prolific modernist, engaging with the various political, ethical, and psychological questions of his time. Veenhof deems Bavinck's pervasive organic motif as the theological rationale for Bavinck as the modernist.

However, against the two Bavincks hypothesis, without hesitation, this present study adds its voice to the consensus that there is only one Bavinck. This chapter argues for Bavinck's ongoing theological identity as a Reformed theologian against a double portrayal by presenting several arguments. The pastoral ministry in Franeker sheds light on the fact that Bavinck stands as an inheritor of Reformed theology within the CGK, even after his liberal education at Leiden. While it seems fairly evident that Bavinck experienced a struggle for faith, it stands to reason that he kept the Reformed faith. While it is also true that Leiden's liberal professors impacted Bavinck, the influence is mainly about the matters of method and approach to theology. It is highly probable that Bavinck survived the liberal, historical-critical theology and modern philosophy by distancing himself from their presuppositions and theological perspectives. Notably, many theologians provide some new building blocks for understanding Bavinck's theology, applying its theological insights to the particular criticism of the two Bavincks hypothesis. Concurring with the general consensus of recent Bavinck scholars who propose an interpretation of Bavinck's theological identity as one Bavinck, this chapter opposes Veenhof's description of Bavinck as a modernist.

Let me sum up the main points of the respective sections concerning the criticisms of the two Bavincks hypothesis. (1) There is the problematic nature of the two Bavincks hypothesis since Veenhof uses particular views of Bavinck to lay the foundation for his description of Bavinck, and thus the interpretation of duality within Bavinck's thought is at odds with Bavinck's addresses such as his 1883 inaugural speech at the Theological School in Kampen and his final rectoral address at Kampen in 1894. (2) Given the fact that Bavinck's approach to theology not only is synthetic in nature but further provides the rationale for his emphasis on the restoration of nature by grace, it can be suggested that Bavinck's passionate plea for unity, along with diversity, demonstrates his consistency in opposition to any dualism. One can rest one's polemical case against the two Bavincks hypothesis on Bavinck's well-known synthetic nature of his theological manner. (3) Bavinck evidently refutes not merely separation, sectarianism, and dualism of his day but ultimately promotes the catholicity of Christianity and the Church. Concerning the foundation of Bavinck's vision of catholicity, this study concurs with a point that Bavinck was striving to crave the unity and harmony of Christianity and the Church, notably based on his trinitarian understanding of the unity of God. (4) When considering the two Bavincks in regard to duality within Bavinck's thought, Bavinck's coherent and balanced thought is to be esteemed as an illuminating piece of counter-evidence against the claim that there is an unsolved tension in Bavinck's thought. (5) In attempting to redress the two Bavincks hypothesis, it is supremely important to emphasize the fact that Bavinck's dedicated focus in his early career was not only to teaching systematic theology and writing his *Reformed Dogmatics* but also to preparing and giving a lecture on Reformed ethics. The discovery of Bavinck's manuscripts of Reformed ethics and the recent publication of his *Reformed Ethics* shed new light on the relationship between theological and ethical issues throughout his career. (6) While the two Bavincks hypothesis assumes that Bavinck's organic motif belongs to the modernist Bavinck, it should be noted that the organic motif in Bavinck's thought is grounded in the Reformed tradition. Bavinck's usage of the organic motif cannot be a theological rationale for the two Bavincks hypothesis. Rather, the organic motif shows a united interpretation of Bavinck and explains his trinitarian thought. (7)

The doctrine of the Trinity is the clearest evidence to warrant proving the unity of Bavinck's thought. As will be demonstrated in greater detail in chapter four, Bavinck uses the organic motif when explaining the relationship between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. Bavinck's emphasis on the unity and diversity within the Godhead provides the foundation on which one speaks of unified thought and the theological identity of Bavinck.

Up until this point, the two Bavinck hypothesis and its criticism from recent Bavinck scholarship are examined for the confirmation of Bavinck's theological identity, whether the two Bavincks lens is adequate recognition of Bavinck. When the seven points just mentioned are taken into account, this chapter leads to the conclusion that it would be a misconception to read Bavinck through the lens of the two Bavincks hypothesis.

More significantly, in an attempt to elucidate Bavinck's theological identity, this study calls attention to the more recent and fascinating works on Bavinck's social and cultural engagement. Among the scholars in recent years, George Harinck has made a considerable effort to offer a detailed analysis of the neo-Calvinist concept of the relationship between Christianity and modernism.[225] Harinck endeavors to highlight similarities and differences between Bavinck and Kuyper, providing a discerning analysis with a sophisticated observation of their engagement with modernism. Namely, Harinck notes that Kuyper armed Christianity with the principle of Calvinism in order to fight and win against the threat of modernism based on the French Revolution's principle. By doing so, it seems that the Kuyperian principle-based discourse had influenced the 1880s and 1890s Netherlands. However, while Bavinck did not disagree with Kuyper's notion of Calvinism as a life-system, but he developed his own thought in an ongoing exercise of a renewed relationship between Christianity and modernism. Harinck pointedly observes the difference between Bavinck and Kuyper and declares that "More than Kuyper the idealist is Bavinck a realist." In commenting on the distinctive manner in which Bavinck sought to bridge the gap between Christianity and modernism, Harinck claims that "He [Bavinck] believed in the antithesis and in the relation between ideas and acts, but he did not take refuge in a system or equate a plea for the independent social organization of neo-Calvinism."[226]

In Harinck's view, Bavinck elaborated on his theological arguments focusing on the history of philosophy rather than reliance on Kuyper's notion of Calvinism. Bavinck should be regarded clearly as a modern European theologian as well as an orthodox theological participant, trying to find his feet in the modern world. Bavinck enthusiastically and actively participates in public life at large as a public apologist for Calvinism in the 1890s.[227] Besides, while Kuyper's antithetical manner to preserve and propagate Christianity was criticized from the Dutch Protestantism on account of the arrogance of neo-Calvinism as "presumed pedantry, heartlessness, and self-righteousness," as Harinck portrays it, Bavinck's position could balance the relationship between Kuyper and other Protestants. While Bavinck was loyal to Kuyper as the same leader in the neo-Calvinism camp, at the same time, it should be

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[225] Harinck, "Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Concept of the French Revolution," 20-30.

[226] Harinck, "Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Concept of the French Revolution," 27.

[227] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 62; Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 225.

remembered that Bavinck also kept in touch with broader Dutch Protestantism after the 1890s.[228] Keeping in mind the criticism from other Protestants, Bavinck attempted to propose a new approach to Christianity with high expectations of the repositioning of Christianity in modern culture, compared with Kuyper's ideas on Calvinism.

In response to a new kind of atheism of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and its new questions, challenges, and needs, as will be subsequently explained in chapter four, Bavinck first attempts to resolve the fundamental difference through conversations with Modern and Ethical theologians and later also makes a great effort to unite all Christians in a theistic coalition.[229] Indeed, Bavinck revises his *Reformed Dogmatics* until 1911 in response to the Ethical theologians and the development of modern European thoughts.[230] Bavinck seeks to refine his own neo-Calvinism primarily in revising his *Reformed Dogmatics* and attempts to redefine a broad coalition of Christianity in public life in his *Philosophy of Revelation*.[231] In that light, it requires one to interprets how Bavinck relates modern theologies to his own Reformed orthodox theology as a participant in modern culture.[232] According to Bavinck, modernity can and should be accepted under the conditions of his Reformed orthodox tradition. In facing the challenges of modernity, on the one hand, it is clear that Bavinck self-consciously and explicitly rejects modern theology as a Reformed theologian. However, it is important to remember that Bavinck was undeniably a modern theologian who lived under the influence of his nineteenth century.[233] As Harinck notes, Bavinck was a child of his time who "was part and parcel of modern culture and contributed to its character and direction."[234] In his 1911 address, *Modernism and Orthodoxy*, Bavinck not only refutes B. D. Eerdmans, C. B. Hylkema, Ernst Troeltsch, who criticize that the revival of Reformed theology of his days is "neither modern nor orthodox, neither naturalistic nor supernaturalistic," but also defends and promotes the Reformed theology.[235]

In this light, what Bavinck rejects in modern theology is how modern theologians attempt to reconcile Christianity and modern culture rather than modern culture itself. When it comes to Bavinck's use of modern philosophical grammar and theological method, the recent secondary literatures argue that Bavinck was influenced by modern theology. In his *Orthodox Yet Modern*, Brock suggests that when considering Bavinck's appropriation of Schleiermacher, Bavinck was orthodox yet modern insofar as he subsumes the philosophical-

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[228] Harinck, "Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Concept of the French Revolution," 28.

[229] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 68-77.

[230] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 241. Cf. Herman Bavinck, "The Essence of Christianity," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society,* ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 33-48.

[231] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 242, 243, 246.

[232] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 62.

[233] Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern*, 43. Cf. Brock and Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism," 318.

[234] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 62. Cf. Harinck points out that Bavinck's openness to cultural relativism explains him as a modern man. George Harinck, "Calvinism Isn't the Only Truth: Herman Bavinck's Impressions of the USA," in Wagenaar, Larry J. and Swierenga, Robert P. (eds), *The Sesquicentennial of Dutch Immigration: 150 Years of Ethnic Heritage* (Holland, MI: Joint Archives of Holland, 1998), 154.

[235] Bavinck, "Herman Bavinck's Modernisme en Orthodoxie," 63-114.

theological questions and concepts of theological modernity under the conditions of his orthodox, confessional tradition.[236] In Bruce Pass's observation, Bavinck's affirmation of the development of doctrine is one of the conspicuous characteristics of his modern orthodoxy.[237] Gray Sutanto additionally points out that Bavinck incorporates modern theological grammars in order to make an effort to resolve the challenge he faces.[238] In light of this, Sutanto reads that Bavinck's epistemology was (in some way) influenced by the epistemology of Eduard von Hartmann.[239] Namely, the rationale noted by Sutanto concerning the influence of von Hartmann on Bavinck is Bavinck's clear awareness of von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* and his use of it in his psychological study on the relationship between the unconscious and consciousness and his notes on von Hartmann in his handwritten notebook.[240] Bavinck critically adopts von Hartmann, noting that subjective idealism of Spinoza, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel wrongly identifies a representation with the thing it represents and wrongly regarding the intellect as the source of knowledge.[241] In Sutanto's judgment, Bavinck applies von Hartmann's criticism of idealism, although he is critical of von Hartmann's argument of the individual consciousness into the Absolute Unconscious at the same time.[242]

Amid the modern theologians, as Cory Brock notes, Schleiermacher is one of Bavinck's most significant modern theological interlocutors. Brock argues that Bavinck must have engaged with Schleiermacher's texts and the German mediation theology as primary sources, pointing out that he studied at Leiden under Scholten. According to Brock, Bavinck's emphasis on consciousness, feeling, conscience, and dependence were first introduced to Bavinck through Scholten and Chantepie de la Saussaye. [243] In Bavinck's eyes, Schleiermacher's impact on the theology of the nineteenth century is of considerable importance, particularly with the notions of "the immediate consciousness of the self as the source of religion, the community as the necessary form of its existence, and the person of Christ as the center of Christianity."[244] It is worth noting that Bavinck is keenly aware of the significance of Schleiermacher to other modern theologians and regards Schleiermacher as a primary modern interlocutor. [245] It seems apparent that Bavinck is familiar with

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[236] Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern*, 18.

[237] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 165, 166. For a more nuanced understanding of Bavinck's rejection of modern theology's anti-supernaturalism on the one hand and his affirmation of modernism on the other, see Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 113-29.

[238] Sutanto, *God and Knowledge*, 10.

[239] Cf. Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 268.

[240] Bavinck, "The Unconscious," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*: 175-97. Sutanto, *God and Knowledge*, 124, 134; Bavinck's notes on Von Hartmann are found as item 129 in the Bavinck archives at the Free University of Amsterdam. Ibid., 125n4. Cf. Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious: Speculative Results According to the Inductive Method of Physical Science*, trans., William Coupland (London: Routledge, 2000).

[241] Sutanto, *God and Knowledge*, 128. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 217.

[242] Sutanto, *God and Knowledge*, 132, 133. Cf. Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 51.

[243] Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern*, 100-12.

[244] Herman Bavinck, *De ethiek van Ulrich Zwingli* (Kampen: G. Ph. Zalsman, 1880), 1; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 166.

[245] Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern*, 68. Cf. Henk van den Belt, "An Alternative Approach to Apologetics," *The*

Schleiermacher and the German median theologians than does the members of his own church. After the publication of the first volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics* in 1895, Bavinck publishes a book on psychology entitled *The Principles of Psychology* in 1897 in advance of the second volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics*.[246] That Bavinck prioritizes the publication of a book on psychology in the midst of prolific theological writings can be said to be because of the influence of Schleiermacher that "Since Schleiermacher, the whole of theology has changed, among orthodox as well as modern theologians, into a theology of consciousness."[247] In this light, under the influence of Schleiermacher, Bavinck adopts Schleiermacher's conceptual framework in his 1908 Stone lectures and its 1909 publication as *The Philosophy of Revelation*. Throughout his theological writings, one can find that Schleiermacher is one of Bavinck's chief interlocutors.[248] Bavinck appreciates that in Schleiermacher's definition of religion as the absolute feeling of dependence, "there is a substantial element of truth."[249] In this regard, it is no exaggeration to suggest that Bavinck occasionally borrows theological method and terminology from modern theologies and wrestles with the modern context and its concepts throughout his career.

However, although Bavinck appropriates Schleiermacher's conceptual framework pertaining to God- and self-consciousness, feeling, and absolute dependence with the emphasis on the human subject and feeling, he undoubtedly criticizes Schleiermacher's subjectivism and rejects it.[250] Rather, Bavinck detects Rousseau's influence on Schleiermacher's theology of feeling.[251] While Bavinck is sympathetic to Schleiermacher's concepts, at the same time, there is an apparent difference between Bavinck and Schleiermacher in terms of the precise concepts of dogmatics, religion, and feeling. It is clear that Bavinck locates the foundation of faith in the human subject, but it does not mean that Bavinck seeks to stand alongside subjectivism. Indeed, as a Reformed orthodox theologian, Bavinck makes a great effort to criticize Schleiermacher's thoughts in his *Reformed Dogmatics*.[252]

To be specific, Bavinck is critical of Schleiermacher's influence on the definition of dogmatics as "the historic phenomenon."[253] Pointing out "Schleiermacher's subjective stance and attempt rationally to infer the objective dogmas from religious experience, from the faith of the church," Bavinck criticizes Schleiermacher for exactly his error in dogmatics that became an account of the religious experience of the subject.[254] Indicating Schleiermacher's

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Kuyper Center Review: Revelation and Common Grace, vol.2, ed. John Bowlin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 43-60.

[246] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 204.

[247] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 78. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 204.

[248] Brock and Sutanto, "Herman Bavinck's Reformed eclecticism," 323; Brock, Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern*, 245. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 165, 166, 242, 264-66.

[249] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 242.

[250] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 251, 260-66. Cf. Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 273; Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 123n47.

[251] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 154.

[252] Mattson, *Restored To Our Destiny*, 53n150; Cf. Gleason, *Herman Bavinck*, 70.

[253] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 36.

[254] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 41, 42.

subsumption of dogmatics under historical theology, Bavinck argues that Schleiermacher's philosophical view results in denigrating theology as a science concerning God, and instead, he made dogmatics as "a positive, historical science."[255] In Bavinck's words, "God," for Schleiermacher, "can be experienced only in the heart; religion, therefore, is not cognition or action but a certain emotional state," and "Scripture and confession could no longer carry authority."[256] Schleiermacher assigns to Christianity a place in ethics, notes Bavinck, as a result Christianity is no longer the foundation of morality.[257] Under the influence of Schleiermacher, Bavinck points out that religion became "a subjective piety" or "the mysticism of the heart," theology changed into "a theology of consciousness," and many theologians began to regard the church and its confession as "the source of dogmatic truth."[258] For Bavinck, Schleiermacher fails to offer a refined definition of religious feeling as the mind for intuiting the infinite.[259] For these reasons, while Bavinck appreciates Schleiermacher as the influential theologian of modernity, he strongly disapproves of Schleiermacher's theology of experience. For Bavinck, Schleiermacher's theology is one of the essential factors to bring out the decline of the Reformed church and Reformed theology in the nineteenth century.[260]

In this light, as Brain Mattson notes, while Bavinck recognizes the full implications of Schleiermacher's emphasis on the subjective feeling of absolute dependence, he writes relatively little dedicated material in his theological works by the use of Schleiermacher because of "its pantheistic character."[261] In a similar vein, as Van den Belt notes, regarding the ground of the Christian faith, although Bavinck preferred the religious-empirical method and the moral-psychological method rather than the historical-apologetic method and the speculative method, he clearly refuses to ground the content of faith on the human mind, the human experience, and morality of the believer.[262]

In describing the Trinity as the keynote of his theological epistemology, Bavinck not only kept his distance from subjectivism but also paid attention to both God's objective revelation in Christ through Scripture and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Viewed against subjectivism, indeed, Bavinck discussed the certainty of faith in his prolegomena, carefully defining God as the *principium essendi*, and Christ as the *principium cognoscendi externum*, and the Holy Spirit as the *principium cognoscendi internum*.

In conclusion, this study not only describes Bavinck as one Bavinck but further a Reformed orthodox yet modern theologian.[263] Bavinck critically appreciated modern theology and drew much conceptual grammar from them. However, Bavinck sought an

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[255] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 106. Cf. Ibid., 109.
[256] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 47.
[257] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 57. Cf. Ibid., 208, 209, 260.
[258] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 70, 78, 88, 171, 468.
[259] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 265, 267.
[260] Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, 1: 193, 194.
[261] Mattson, *Restored To Our Destiny*, 123n47.
[262] Henk van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology: Truth and Trust* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 270-73. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 514.
[263] For a helpful introduction to the distinction between Calvinistic and Reformed and Bavinck's understanding, see Wit, *On the Way to the Living God*, 43-46.

adequate answer under the conditions of his Reformed orthodox tradition, proceeding from the doctrine of the triune God, more specifically focused on the being of God *ad intra* and the works of God *ad extra*. Without the need for claims of the irreconcilable duality in Bavinck's theology and life, the discussion of Bavinck's theology and his engagement with modernism can be adequately understood. Bavinck sought to appropriate modernity critically, armed himself with Reformed orthodox theology, and sought to answer the modern worldview via the doctrine of the Trinity.

Chapter 3. Bavinck's Theological Context

Bavinck's theological context is one of the ideal places for examining Bavinck's distinctive interpretation of Calvin and Calvin's role within Bavinck's theology. This chapter deals mainly with two theological contexts of Bavinck's time: the neo-Calvinism's appreciation of Calvin's theology and Bavinck's understanding of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century theological tendencies in the Netherlands. First of all, there were significant changes in the position of Calvin's theology and his life among the neo-Calvinists circles in Bavinck's days. The question arises: what is Bavinck's position on Calvin's theology and his life?

The answer to this question leads directly to the central question of this present study concerning Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin. Moreover, Bavinck has the privilege of formulating his theology against the challenge of new theological tendencies of his day, by formulating his theology based on the doctrine of the Trinity amid modernism. In order to grasp Bavinck's manner in which he sought to appropriate Calvin's theology and to understand the distinctive mark of Bavinck's trinitarian theology, the explanation of the theological context of his day is more broadly helpful. In light of this, this chapter intends to demonstrate Bavinck's assessment of Calvin's theology and his life and to examine a theological exploration of Bavinck's encounter with dogmatic thoughts of his days.

In the first section, the representations of Calvin around 1900 among Dutch neo-Calvinism is discussed (3.1). It handles an inquiry about how Calvin's theology plays a role as an icon for establishing the Calvinist principle or how his life serves as an example of Christian life. Considering the observation that there were multiple views and interpretations of Calvin's image and role even within Dutch neo-Calvinism, first, Calvin's significance for Kuyper's theology can be traced (3.1.1). Second, after Kuyper, the so-called second-generation neo-Calvinist attitude towards Calvin is discussed (3.1.2). Third, Bavinck's public lecture on the occasion of his 400th birthday is explored (3.1.3). Fourth, Bavinck's position on Calvin's theology (3.1.4) and his assessment of Calvin's personality and character are examined and highlighted (3.1.5).

In the second section, the most significant and predominant characteristic of the Netherlands' theological landscape in the late nineteenth century is scrutinized (3.2). It investigates how these theological factors affected Dutch theology, particularly from the standpoint of Bavinck. Research into various thoughts such as supranaturalism (3.2.1), the Groningen school (3.2.2), Modern theology (3.2.3), the Utrecht school (3.2.4) and Ethical theology (3.2.5) lead to the significance of why Bavinck's trinitarian theology is, therefore, one of the essential desiderata for his days. The chapter closes with a concluding subsection (3.3).

Primarily, in order to illustrate his position concerning Calvin's theology and his life, Bavinck's public lecture on the commemoration of Calvin's four-hundredth birthday is examined. Also, Bavinck expresses his thoughts on Dutch dogmatics' features through several types of articles, pamphlets, and lectures.[1] In order to sharpen Bavinck's awareness

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[1] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic *Thought* in the Netherlands," 209-228; Id., "The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands," 433-460; Id., "Modernism and Orthodoxy," 68-114; Id., *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the*

of the contexts of the Dutch systematic theology of his day, this chapter focuses on a theological analysis primarily through Bavinck's own writings. While this present chapter provides a historical overview with a systematic account, the focus of the examination in the following section does not intend to be a work of historical research. Let us first take a closer look at Calvin's image and role in the context of the neo-Calvinism of Bavinck's day.

3.1 Calvin Representations in Late 19th and Early 20th-Century Netherlands

This section examines the theological background of Bavinck's times, especially concerning the representations of Calvin. The present section addresses the following questions about what the dominant images of Calvin were among Protestants in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Netherlands; what the role of Calvin in Dutch neo-Calvinist circles was; and what Bavinck's interpretation of Calvin's theology and his life were.

In answering these questions, the 1909 celebrations of John Calvin's four-hundredth birthday provide a significant clue for the image of Calvin in Reformed Churches in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Netherlands. When Protestants from all across Europe and North America celebrated John Calvin's four-hundredth birthday, contrary to expectations, Dutch neo-Calvinists were skeptical of participating in the commemoration in Geneva. Why did Reformed protestants in the Netherlands respond passively? If so, then what does this response mean?

Dutch neo-Calvinists' skeptical response to the Swiss invitation, as will be explored in the following section, not only shows the tension between the iconic Calvin and the saint Calvin as central to Calvin representations in the decades around 1909, but also provides a useful framework to explain Calvin's role and function among Dutch neo-Calvinists. So, the sketch of the change of Calvin's position within Dutch neo-Calvinist circles reflects how the repertoires of Calvin representations changed in Bavinck's time, and further, it sheds light on Bavinck's view on Calvin's theology and life.

3.1.1 Calvin's Theology and Kuyper

Herman Paul and Johan de Niet have recently questioned how Calvin was remembered or recognized by Dutch neo-Calvinism during the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. Paul and de Niet's study shows how the repertoires of Calvin representations were changed within the neo-Calvinist tradition, especially in the decades around 1900.[2] Employing the distinction proposed by Willem Frijhoff, as will be seen, Paul and de Niet point out that there existed the tension between the iconic Calvin and a saint-like Calvin in this period.[3] These observations give fresh impetus to the study regarding the

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Netherlands, *A General View of the Netherlands* 17 (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of agriculture, industry and commerce, 1915), 3-62.

[2] Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 69.

[3] Willem Frijhoff, *Heiligen, idolen, iconen* (Nijmegen, 1998), 52, 53. In his book, Frijhoff provides a picture of Calvin by employing threefold typology of saints, idols, and icons.

representations of Calvin and inquiry how Calvin himself served as an icon or saint among Dutch neo-Calvinists.[4] Then, what the role was of Calvin's theology among Dutch Reformed Protestants in an earlier stage of neo-Calvinism's development?

As it is well known, Abraham Kuyper's thoughts of Calvin exercised considerable influence over Dutch neo-Calvinism during the late nineteenth century. Indeed, Kuyper's unfolding of Calvinist principles greatly influenced the so-called first-generation neo-Calvinists in the 1880s and 1890s.[5] Specifically, Kuyper's own study of Calvin's theology is closely related to the doctrines of creation and regeneration.[6] First, Kuyper advocated the idea that God's sovereignty of God is the characteristic feature of Calvin's understanding of a divine law-order for the creation.[7] Kuyper noted a divine created order, namely that the sovereignty of the whole created reality belongs to God. Based on this Calvinistic doctrine of God's unlimited sovereignty, Kuyper underlined the cultural activity as a fruit of common grace. Thus, the idea of the creation ordinances obtained a significant expression in a late nineteenth-century neo-Calvinism.[8] Second, Kuyper maintained radical regeneration by means of a religious antithesis between Christianity and modernism. Kuyper introduced the concept of worldview as a life system. Based on his conviction that God's sovereignty is the heartbeat of Calvin's theological insights, not merely in soteriological but the broadest cosmological sense, Kuyper took this argument a step further by providing the framework of the antithetical relationship of Christianity and modernism. For Kuyper, Christianity was threatened by modernism armed with the ideas of the French Revolution.

From his antithetical perspective, Kuyper attempted to delineate the conflict in Europe and America of his time.In Kuyper's estimation, the French Revolution was nothing less than "upheaval not only of political conditions, but even more of convictions, ideas, and usages of life."[9] In his *Christianity and the Class Struggle*, Kuyper described the sinful characteristics of the French Revolution, namely, acts contrary to God's ordinances, the separation of nature from history, and the substitution of the will of the *individual* for the divine will.[10] Responding to an emerging modernist thought that had sprung from the French Revolution as "the vast energy of an all-embracing *life-system*," Kuyper underlined the necessity of the

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[4] Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 67.

[5] One can find a condensation of Kuyper's thought in his famous Stone *Lectures on Calvinism*. Kuyper emphasized the connection between Christianity and culture at the forefront through his article series on common grace in *The Herald* (*De Heraut*). Cf. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered in the Theological Seminary at Princeton* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1931). George Harinck and Lodewijk Winkeler, "The Nineteenth Century," in *Handbook of Dutch Church History*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 496.

[6] Cf. John Bolt, *Christian and Reformed Today* (Jordan Station, Ont.: Paideia Press, 1984), 142.

[7] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 79.

[8] Jacob Klapwijk, "Rationality in the Dutch neo-Calvinist Tradition," in *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition*, ed. Hendrik Hart, Johan van der Hoeven, and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 93, 94.

[9] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 176.

[10] Abraham Kuyper, *Christianity and the Class Struggle*, trans. Dirk Jellema (Grand Rapids, Piet Hein Publishers, 1950), 21, 22. Cf. For a detailed analysis of the contrasts between the French Revolution and Christianity, Ibid., 33, 34.

Christian principle that "we have to take our stand in a life-system of equally comprehensive and far-reaching power."[11] Kuyper strongly argued that "If the battle [between modernism and orthodoxy] is to be fought with honor and with a hope of victory, then *principle* must be arrayed against *principle*."[12] Kuyper attempted to provide a new framework between revelation and reason, between the Bible and the ideas of the French Revolution. Kuyper not only introduced a new antithesis instead of dividing class, education, and religion, but also invented new social and political entities to regenerate the society of his day.[13]

Emphasizing the necessity of a kind of the Christian principle as an all-embracing life system for every time and place, Kuyper singled Calvin out as a key figure who was an advocate of truly Christian life and worldview and further tried to draw distinctively Christian principles from Calvin's theology.[14] This was certainly Kuyper's conviction: "I found and confessed, and I still hold, that this manifestation of the Christian principle is given us in Calvinism. In Calvinism my heart has found rest. From Calvinism have I drawn the inspiration firmly and resolutely to take my stand in the thick of this great conflict of principles."[15] Kuyper pointed out that Calvinism provided the decisive, lawful, and consistent worldview for Protestant nations against modernism. For Kuyper, while Calvinism gradually manifested its inner strength for every age and every land that can continue its development, the French Revolution was directly imitating Calvinism against its principles.[16]

Considering history rather than philosophy as the source to support his view, Kuyper argued these principles had already existed in Israel's twelve patriarchs, its prophets, the Apostle, and Augustine, despite historical discontinuity.[17] For Kuyper, Calvinism was not invented by Calvin but was a system taken up and presented in sixteenth-century Geneva. Calvinism was the highest form of Christianity, possessing a well-defined principle and an all-embracing system, not as a partial nor a merely transitory phenomenon, but as a central phenomenon in the development of humanity.[18] In Kuyper's view, Christians can fight under Calvinism's banner, which was an inflexible principle for ensuring victory against the spirit of modernism and humanism. Calvinism ultimately aimed to glorify God in the whole sphere of created reality and human life.[19] For Kuyper, Calvinism was the driving force and the formative strength to provide a resolution for the relation of Christianity and modern culture. Here it is evident that Calvin played a role as an icon for establishing the Calvinist principle within Kuyper's thought. In this regard, Kuyper emphasized that Calvin was a key figure who

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[11] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 4.

[12] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 11. Cf. Harinck, "Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Concept of the French Revolution," 15.

[13] George Harinck, "Abraham Kuyper's Historical Understanding and Reformed Historiography," *Fides et Historia*, vol. XXXVII, no. 1 (Winter/Spring, 2005): 79.

[14] George Harinck and Lodewijk Winkeler, "The Nineteenth Century," 491.

[15] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 12.

[16] Abraham Kuyper, "Calvinism: The Origin and Safeguard of Our Constitutional Liberties," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 52 (1895), 398, 399; Id., *Lectures on Calvinism*, 176.

[17] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 33. Cf. Harinck, "Abraham Kuyper's Historical Understanding and Reformed Historiography," 80.

[18] Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 38.

[19] Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 72, 77. Cf. Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 11, 19-32.

followed Christian principles with sincerity, but he did not become interested in Calvin's personal life. For Kuyper, Calvin had to be remembered as only one of the faithful followers of these Christian principles rather than focusing on his biography.

3.1.2 'Calvin's Life' after Kuyper

During the late decades of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, as Selderhuis notes, Calvin's character and personality took the spotlight for Calvin research all across Europe, mainly focusing on a negative image of Calvin.[20] In a similar vein, in the Netherlands, there have been many disputes over Calvin's personality and its meaning within and outside neo-Calvinism.

On the one hand, a debate over Calvin's personal life and character was first perceived outside neo-Calvinism. Particularly in the decades around 1900, the attempts to reappraise the punishment of Michael Servetus began to emerge from modernist theologians and free thinkers all across Europe.[21] They generally suggested that Servetus should be venerated as a martyr in their treatment of his death. Accordingly, the negative assessment of Calvin concerning the death of Servetus became an integral part of the reappraisal of Servetus to provide a rational justification for their arguments. The reappraisal of Servetus has also been given considerable attention along with the criticism of Calvin in late nineteenth-century Netherlands. Namely, while Servetus was considered a tragic saint, at the same time, the image of Calvin was assessed negatively.[22] In his dissertation, Antonius van der Linde (1833-97) depicted Calvin as "inquisitor," "hothead without grace," "mouth-watering wolf," "Cerberus," "Beelzebub," and "Reformed Antichrist." Similarly, J. van den Ende describes Calvin as "the feigned CALVIN, that brood of vipers or whitewashed tomb that played the first fiddle in Geneva," "arch-hypocrite," "scoundrel," and "heresy hunter."[23] Moreover,

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[20] Selderhuis, "Calvin Images: Images and Self Image," 1-8. Cf. Lord Acton, *The History of Freedom and Other Essays*, ed. John Neville Figgis and Reginald Vere Laurence (London, Macmillian, 1907). Stefan Zweig, *The Right to Heresy: Castellio against Calvin, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul* (New York, Viking Press, 1936). Pierre Imbart de La Tour, *Calvin, der Mensch - die Kirche - die Zeit* (Munchen, G. D. W. Callwey, 1936).

[21] For a detailed discussion of the reappraisal of Michael Servetus, see Valentine Zuber, "Servetus vs. Calvin: A Battle of Monuments During the Secularization of the French Third Republic," in *Sober, Strict, and Scriptural: Collective Memories of John Calvin, 1800-2000*, ed. Johan de Niet, Herman Paul and Bart Wallet (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 167-94. Four monuments to Servetus have been newly erected for ten years from 1902 to 1911. Cf. Henri Tollin, *Michel Servet, portrait-caractère*, trans. Charles Dardier (Paris, 1879); Alphone Aulard, *Polémique et histoire* (Paris, 1904); Auguste Dide, *Michel Servet et Calvin* (Paris, 1907). A detailed discussion of the Protestants' view against the Freethinkers can be found, notably in Emile Doumergue, *Jean Calvijn, les hommes st les choses de son temps*, 7vols. (Lausanne, 1899-1917, Neuilly, 1926-7); Charles Dardier, "Le bûcher de Servet," in *Le Protestant, journal des chrétiens libéraux* (July 23, 1892). Dardier contends the innocence of Servetus and the guilt of Calvin, despite some mitigating circumstances. Cited from Valentine Zuber, "Servetus vs. Calvin," 183.

[22] W. F. K. Klinkenberg, *Kalvijn en het kalvinisme: rede gehouden voor de protestantsche vereenigingen te Leeuwarden op 1 vember 1886* (Leeuwarden, 1886), and I. M. J. Hoog, *Twee hervormers: Angelus Merula en Johannes Kalvijn* (Amsterdam, 1892). Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 251. These theologians were critical of Calvin, opposing his theological grounds such as predestination and his teachings on the Ten Commandments.

[23] Antonius van der Linde, *Michael Servet: een brandoffer der gereformeerde inquisitive* (Groningen, 1891),

paying particular attention to the tragedy in Calvin's personal life, several theologians took a critical stance on the Calvin image. For example, even though he had great respect for Calvin's work throughout his lifetime, Allard Pierson described Calvin's life as a tragedy. He carefully delineates his belief that there is no ray of sunshine in Calvin's life.[24]

On the other hand, over against the emphasis on Calvin's negative image, the debate over whether Calvin's life and character can be valuable for future generations arose within the camp of neo-Calvinists. The discussion turned on the need to reevaluate the meaning of Calvin's personal life about whether it can be an exemplary life for Christians of all ages. At the earlier stage of a study of Calvin, under the influence of Kuyper, the so-called first-generation neo-Calvinists generally slighted Calvin's devotion to God or his positive character of nobility. Kuyper devoted little scholarly attention to Calvin's life or character, but it is more important for Kuyper to deduce Christian principles from Calvin's lifetime. However, from the 1890s onward, the role of Calvin changed within Dutch neo-Calvinist circles. Kuyper's emphasis on Calvin's theology as an axiomatic principle had faced the challenge that came from a gradually emerging tendency focused on Calvin's religious personality. Namely, it can be said that the repertoire of Calvin research gradually changed from the focus on Calvinist principles to Calvin's personality and life. Of course, it should be remembered that reverence for Calvin as a saint never emerged within the Reformed tradition, since such an attempt seemed at odds with Calvin's theology *per se*, just as Calvin has never sought the notion of a movement, Calvinism, named after him.[25]

At this point, Paul and de Niet's careful research presents a good deal of cases underpinned by an emphasis on Calvin's personality in an early twentieth century Dutch context. Notably, the person of Calvin rose a step in the second-generation of Neo Calvinists. They underscored Calvin's nobility of character in terms of "demonstrating commitment to the formulation and implementation of Calvinist principles," without undermining "Kuyper's principle-based discourse."[26] For instance, according to Hendrik Kaajan, Calvin deserved esteem for his character of high majesty.[27] Herman Kuyper depicted Calvin as "the most Christian man in all of Christendom."[28] In the Netherlands, a relatively large number of schools and organizations named after Calvin can be found, compared to other associations named after such men as Groen van Prinsterer, Gisbertus Voetius, and Isaäc da Costa.[29] Centering around the neo-Calvinist youth organizations, Calvin's commitment and character

139, 160-2, 188, 195, 208, 214, 222, 318. 222, 318; J. van den Ende, *Michaël Servet: een der vele slashtoffers van den ketterjager Kalvijn* (Amsterdam, [1891]), 31, 33, 44. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 84.

[24] Allard Pierson, *Studiën over Johannes Kalvijn*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1881-1891), 1: 2. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 83.

[25] Herman J. Selderhuis, "Calvin Images: Images and Self Image," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Henry J. Baron, Judith J. Guder, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 3. Cf. Richard A. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academics, 2012), 51-69.

[26] Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 85, 86.

[27] Hendrik Kaajan, *Laster en legende omtrent Calvijn* (Zutphen, J. B. van den Brink, 1925), 22.

[28] Herman Kuyper, "Calvijn," in *Zuid-Afrika: reisindrukken* (Amsterdam, De Herout, 1925), 187.

[29] J. E. Vonkenberg, H. Hoekstra, and P. A. Diepenhorst, *De Utrechtsche Bondsdag 1910* (Amsterdam, Vereeniging "De Gereformeerde Jongelingsbond," (1910), 103-11.

were emphasized as "an example of extraordinary diligence and extraordinary faithfulness in using his gifts."[30] Even though Calvin was not an impeccable person, Calvin's dedication to Calvinist principles was highlighted. His personal character of nobility received attention in the examination of commitment to the application of Calvinist principles. The person of Calvin became more emphasized as an exemplary form of the Christian life.

In light of this, the second-generation neo-Calvinists directly opened up new perspectives on the positive character of Calvin as a counterbalance to Calvin's negative image. They responded to the case against Calvin, providing the premise that the negative images of Calvin rest on false underlying conceptions and stereotypes about Calvin's life and character.[31] Emile Doumergue attempted to break the stereotype about Calvin's theology.[32] Hendrik Kaajan highlighted Calvin's positive character, noting his love of music and the beautiful style of writing.[33] Besides, the emergence of tourism to Geneva in the early decades of the twentieth century reflects how Calvin's personal life gradually became attractive to Calvin scholarship.[34] The Protestants who visited Calvin's Geneva were called the pilgrimage.[35] Geneva was often regarded as "a new Zion in the Reformation era" by several biographers.[36] Dutch Protestants donated 21,000 francs to reconstruct Calvin's house among the around 100,000 francs of donations collected for that purpose between 1923 and 1929.[37]

To sum up, remarkably, Calvin's role in the Dutch neo-Calvinists shifted from the focus on Calvinists' principles towards Calvin's person. At the very least it is evident that its horizon has gradually widened from the first-generation neo-Calvinists to the second-generation neo-Calvinists. Research into the dominant image of God is helpful to grasp Bavinck's perspective on Calvin, for interpretations of Calvin's image enable the researcher to trace at what points Bavinck stood with Kuyper's attitude on Calvin, and at what points Bavinck broke fresh ground. As will be demonstrated in the following section, this present study demonstrates that Calvin's theology and life played an essential role in Bavinck's thoughts in terms of a key figure not only to unfold Christian principles but also to exemplify Christian life. Bavinck's public lecture on the anniversary of Calvin's four-hundredth birthday leads directly to his assessment of Calvin's theology and life.

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[30] "Johannes Calvijn," in *Timotheüs* 14 (1909), 355.

[31] A. A. van Schelven, "nleidend woord," in *Kracht en troost voor vrouwenlevens: brieven van Calvijn aan vrouwen* (Amsterdam, 1938), 7, 8.

[32] W. F. A. Winckel, "Een woord vooraf," in Emile Doumergue, *Kunst en gevoel in het werk van Calvijn: drie lezingen*, trans. W. F. A. Winckel (Wageningen, 1904), 5; W. de Zwart, "Woord vooraf," in *Calvijn in het licht zijner brieven: honderd brieven van den reformator*, trans. W. de Zwart (Kampen, 1938).

[33] Kaajan, *Laster en legende omtrent Calvijn*, 19, 36-44.

[34] Patrick Cabanel, "French Protestants and the Legacy of John Calvin: Reformer and Legislator," in *Sober, Strict, and Scriptural: Collective Memories of John Calvin, 1800-2000*, ed. Johan de Niet, Herman Paul and Bart Wallet, trans. Cynthia J. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 57-9. Cf. Ibid, 88-90.

[35] Cabanel, "French Protestants and the Legacy of John Calvin," 57.

[36] S. Datema, *Uit het leven en werken van Johannes Calvijn: een goed krijgsknecht van Jezus Christus* (Rotterdam, s. a.), 22, 23. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 90.

[37] *Bulletin de la Société l'Histoire du Protestantisme français* (1930), 350-6. Cited from Cabanel, "French Protestants and the Legacy of John Calvin," 58, 59.

3.1.3 The 1909 Commemoration of Calvin's Four Hundredth Birthday

In July 1909, Calvin's four-hundredth birthday was celebrated at Geneva by many theologians from all across Europe and North America.[38] How did Reformed Protestants in the Netherlands respond to this commemoration?

Contrary to general expectations, neo-Calvinists were not keen on participating in this commemoration. It is a little known fact that neo-Calvinists expressed criticism on this occasion and turned down the Swiss invitation. Indeed, the Walloon pastor Émile Bourlier and the Remonstrant professor Hermanus IJ. Groenewegen were the only Dutch delegates who accepted the Swiss invitation.[39] In the neo-Calvinist magazine, *De Spiegel*, the four hundredth anniversary of Calvin's birth was considered a great disappointment not only for the Calvinists but also for other Christians: "What follies have been delivered there. One speaker announced his sympathy for Servetus, another glorified Calvin as a predecessor of Jean Jacques Rousseau."[40] Alongside this, *De Heraut* made the following comment about this celebration: "Certainly, the religious element has not been missing, but this religious element had such a generally Protestant shade that even the Modernists could have approved of it," then continued to explain that this effect "could only have been achieved by dramatically fading the Calvinist colors."[41]

Then, unlike other Protestants in the nineteenth century, why did Dutch neo-Calvinists negatively respond to the four hundredth birthday commemoration of Calvin? Answering this question provides the key to the understanding of how Calvin was remembered or recognized by Dutch neo-Calvinism during the early decades of the twentieth century. From the observation in the previous sections, evidently, tension existed between the iconic Calvin and the saint Calvin. For the first-generation neo-Calvinists, it seems reasonable to assume that Calvin's four-hundredth anniversary was at odds with Calvinist principles because these commemorations can be interpreted as the sacralization of Calvin as well. In light of this, the refusal to participate in this celebration in 1909 might have been the expression of Kuyper's concept of Calvin in the first-generation of Dutch neo-Calvinist circles.

In this context, it should be noted that neo-Calvinists not only answered requests for financial contributions to the Wall of the Reformers negatively but also evidently their alternative commemoration of Calvin was much less than expected.[42] Given the paucity of

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[38] Marcus A. Brownson, "The Calvin Celebration in Geneva, and Calvin's City as It Is Today: Personal Impressions," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* (1901-1930) 5, no.4 (December 1909): 164-74. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 250, 251.

[39] *Jubilé de Calvin à Genéve, juillet 1909: allocutions, adresses, lettres et documents* (Geneva, 1910), 15, 64-67, 91-93. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 68n5.

[40] "Het Calvijn-feest te Genève," in *De Spiegel* 3 (1909), 339. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 67.

[41] "Leestafel," in *De Heraut* (September 19, 1909). Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 68.

[42] Antoine Baumgartner, *Nederland en het internationaal hervormingsmonument,* trans. Jan Reelfs (The Hague, 1910); G. Doekes, "Nalezing," in *Gereformeerd Tijdschrift* 10 (1909), 164-166; G. K[eizer?], review of *Calvijn en Nederland*, by H. H. Kuyper, *Ibid*., 373. Cited from Paul and de Niet, "Issue de Calvin," 68n6,9.

the commemoration of Calvin's birthday, it is noteworthy that Bavinck delivered a public lecture to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Calvin's birthday.[43] If so, whereas many neo-Calvinists were ignorant about this 1909 celebration, or at least, paid little attention to it, why did Bavinck then commemorate this anniversary through a public lecture? In what ways and for what works did Bavinck commemorate Calvin?

Considering the research on the transition of Calvin's role among neo-Calvinism, this investigation leads decisively to Bavinck's theological relationship to Calvin. A question immediately demands our attention; i.e., whether Bavinck belongs to the first-generation or second-generation of neo-Calvinist circles, whether Bavinck underlines Calvin as a man of principles or Calvin as a man who is an example of Christians, or both Calvin's theology and his life. Again, Bavinck's lecture on the occasion of Calvin's four-hundredth birthday commemoration is of decisive importance here. Two things are noteworthy in Bavinck's description of Calvin: The first is in his description of the future prospects of Calvin's theology. The latter is concerned with his assessment of Calvin's personal life.

Interestingly, Bavinck can be deemed one of the first-generation of neo-Calvinists who agree with Kuyper's existing neo-Calvinist principle discourse. And at the same time, like the second-generation of neo-Calvinists, he tried to reevaluate Calvin's personality and his character. Namely, Bavinck was seventeen years younger than Kuyper and stood on the borderline between the first and second-generation of neo-Calvinists with his position about Calvin's theology and his life. On the one hand, Bavinck stood in continuity with the principle-based discourse of Kuyper. Like Kuyper, Bavinck's theology emphasized creation and the law in the Reformed tradition, resting on the principle of God's sovereignty. Like Kuyper, Bavinck considered Calvinism as the most representative form of Christian principles and thus maintained that Calvinism has a promise and vitality for a positive future.[44] On the other hand, Bavinck enthusiastically argued that there is one additional emphasis that needs to be singled out: Calvin's personal life and noble character. In this regard, Bavinck was uniquely positioned to assess Calvin, compared with Kuyper's evaluation of Calvin. In doing so, Bavinck carefully presented his view of Calvin somewhere between the first and second-generation of neo-Calvinist circles. Then, let us proceed to see how Bavinck expresses his position concerning Calvin in detail.

3.1.4 Bavinck's Assessment of Calvin's Theology

Bavinck pays close attention to Calvin's theology in the face of the challenge of modernism. Bavinck made use of Calvin for the construction of his own theological arguments in various manners. In context, it seems evident that for Bavinck, the defense of Calvin's public image was of considerable importance. In that light, Bavinck pursued an investigation on both Calvin and Calvinism. In 1906, after publishing the first edition of his *Reformed Dogmatics*, the revised and expanded second version of the first volume of the *Reformed dogmatics* had already been released, with volumes two, three, and four seeing the light of day in 1908, 1910,

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[43] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 57-85.
[44] Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," 1-24. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 193-96.

and 1911.[45] In addition to these revisions, in 1909, his *Magnalia Dei* had been published for the Christian faith of the present and future generations in response to the demands of his time.[46] Given this background, by investigating Bavinck's use of Calvin and his assessment of Calvin and the latter's role in the former's theology, this study would make a little but contribution, particularly in terms of allowing the reader to grasp how Bavinck engages with and reappropriates Calvin's ideas in his theology. Specifically, Bavinck's lecture on Calvin's four-hundredth birthday sheds light on Bavinck's distinctive interpretation of Calvin's theology and life. He provides a fascinating and illuminating account of Calvin's personal life and its significance, with a brief biographical sketch of Calvin.[47] So, how does Bavinck defend and assess Calvin's theology in his works?

Certainly, first of all, Bavinck's writings show his interpretation that Calvin stands on the firm ground of the Reformed tradition. Emphasizing Calvin's theology occupying an important place in the Reformed tradition, Bavinck argues that Calvin could be called the savior of Protestantism, not merely defending the status quo by teaching Scripture from the threat but also promoting the Reformation widely and broadly.[48] Bavinck values the pros and cons of Calvin's theology that he set the cause for the persecution of Christians, but at the same time encouraged the imprisoned and those facing martyrdom to be faithful and stand firm. Bavinck comments on Calvin's influence upon the Reformation in considering him "the spiritual adviser and leader of the Reformation in practically all of Europe," and "the councilor of all the leaders of the great movement."[49] Bavinck points out Calvin's influence over numerous theologians who came to be disciplined in his thought and among the many refugees who sought protection and support from him and afterward returned to their places, inspired with courage.

When Bavinck explores the significance of Calvin's *Institutes*, he maintains that Calvin's labors are never a simple reproduction of his predecessors but reformation and a new type of Christian piety. Bavinck highly esteems Calvin's theological works as follows: "He [Calvin] rounded off the ideas of the Reformation, filled in the lacunae, moderated excesses, pruned hyperbolic statements, all with French sharpness and clarity, creating a synthesis in the confession of truth." [50] Like Kuyper, Bavinck draws Christian principles from Calvin's theological insights, stressing the overarching continuity with the Reformed tradition.[51] Bavinck considers Calvinism as a specific form of Church and theology among the Protestant confessions, at the same time, he further emphasized the powerful, consistent view of life and

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[45] Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 252.

[46] Herman Bavinck, *Magnalia Dei* (Kampen: Kok, 1909).

[47] Bavinck's 1909 article 'Calvin and Common Grace' provides a positive view of Calvin and his character, alongside his public lectures on Calvin in London and across the Netherlands. Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 437-65. For a more detailed account of Bavinck's lectures on Calvin in the Netherlands, see *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, April 9, 1909; *Gereformeerd Jongelingsblad*, May 21, 1909. Cited from Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 251n146.

[48] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 58.

[49] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 78; Id., "Calvin and Common Grace," 465.

[50] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 66.

[51] Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 186.

the world as a whole in the political, social, and civil spheres.[52]

Particularly, Bavinck views the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty as the foremost doctrine of Calvin's theology. In Bavinck's view, Calvin testified that there is no minute part of the world that does not reveal the glory of God, and he regarded God's sovereignty with His good-pleasure and omnipotent free will as the ultimate and deepest cause beyond all culture and nature.[53] Indeed, Calvin provided a solid foundation upon which to build his entire theology through the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty. For Calvin, not one particular attribute of God, but God himself provides the ground for theology and its application. Through this doctrine, the absolute dependence of the creature, such as "providence, foreordination, election, the inability of man" can be explained.[54] For Bavinck, it is this doctrine that leads to the recognition of the glory of God. All works of creation and salvation in nature and history are the gradual revelation of His sovereignty. Hence, Bavinck highlights Calvin's thoroughgoing and consistent use of this doctrine of God's sovereignty that plays a significant role not only as a fundamental principle for other doctrines but also as a theological method in distinguishing Reformed theology from other theologies.

Notably, by grounding Christian life in the confession of God's sovereignty and the absolute dependence of the creature, Bavinck notes that Calvin's theology and the application of Christian principles to real-life were powerfully operative particularly in the restoration of the Church and the establishment of statecraft.[55] Bavinck sheds light on Calvin's influence on the restoration of the Church's independence against the Roman priestly hierarchy. In Bavinck's estimation, Calvin fought for its terrain of the Church and its independent function with particular reference to the full administration of ecclesial discipline, the pure preaching of the Gospel, and the celebration of the Sacraments. Bavinck puts his finger on Calvin's emphasis that Christ has instituted the offices of pastor, elder, and deacon. In connection with the threefold office of Christ, Calvin underlined the significance of the exercise of the offices of pastor, elder, and deacon.[56] As Bavinck notes, Calvin's endeavor significantly contributed to the restoration of the offices of elder and deacon and the preaching office.[57] For Calvin, a communion of believers should become the focus of the Church as a community of God's people "who were all personally anointed of Christ to be prophets, priests and kings."[58] Concerning Calvin's understanding of Christ's threefold office as prophet, priest, and king, Bavinck gives credit for Calvin that he gave it prominence in Reformed theology.[59] Although Oecolampadius attempted to institute these three offices in Basel in 1530, Bavinck highlights the fact that Calvin first carried the presbyterial system of church government out.[60] Under the influence of Calvin, indeed, the laity of the Genevan Church not only could give an

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[52] Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," 3.
[53] Bavinck, "Christianity and Natural Science," 99; Id., "On Inequality," 156.
[54] Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," 4.
[55] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:176-183. Cf. Ibid., 4:244.
[56] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:330, 331, 418.
[57] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:387, 388.
[58] Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 539.
[59] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 81, 82.
[60] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 385.

account of their faith but also exercised their influence within and without the Church by exercising the three offices. In this regard, for Bavinck, Calvin has contributed to the reformation of Church's independence regarding the restoration of the three offices.

Particularly, Bavinck held Calvin's work of Reformation in Geneva in high esteem. When viewed against the dualism of Roman Catholicism between the natural and the supernatural, Bavinck maintains that it is worth noting that Calvin's accomplishment that overcame the dualism through the opposition between sin and grace. According to Bavinck, Rome holds to the relationship between nature and grace that grace does not come to re-create but only fills what nature lacks.[61] That is, grace is added to the natural but does not penetrate it and sanctify it.[62] Bavinck took his position alongside Calvin in contrasting sin and grace rather than nature and grace. In Bavinck's view, Calvin's thought on the antithesis of sin and grace is a significant contribution to the Reformation, overcoming the dualism of Roman Catholic thought.[63] In this regard, Bavinck expressed appreciation for the best of Calvin's work, especially his strong emphasis on sin and grace, rather than Luther and Zwingli. Hence, indicating his full agreement with Calvin's position, Bavinck criticized the dualism of Roman Catholicism between natural and supernatural should be replaced with the antithesis between sin and grace.

Bavinck found in the thought of Calvin a true catholicity that most evidently manifested "a joyful tiding of the renewal of all creatures."[64] When he looks closely at Calvin, Bavinck underscores this catholicity of Christianity and the church. According to Bavinck, Calvin established the dominion of the principle of the Christian religion in all of life, namely, not only in the church but also in the home, school, society, and state. Concerning Calvin's endeavors for society, Bavinck considers Calvin the man of action who consistently attempted to reform all of life.[65] As regards the activity of Calvin in Geneva, Bavinck notes that "Geneva was to Calvin merely the center, from which he surveyed the entire field of the Reformation in all lands."[66] In his lecture, Bavinck admires the impact of Calvin's efforts on social reformation both in Geneva and throughout the world, that "Domesticity, cleanliness, industriousness, diligence, fidelity, concern for order, reserve, simplicity, frugality - all of these came to characterize the nations influenced by Calvin. Where the power of his principles went forth, the welfare of the people improved."[67]

Specifically, under the influence of Calvin's theology, the political system and its life were developed, taking the form of a republican and a democratic government. For Calvin, all authority flows from the sovereignty of God. This thought promotes and leads to political and civil liberty, the separation between the Church and the State, and the religious freedom

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[61] Cf. Heideman, *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck*, 200.

[62] Herman Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," trans. John Bolt, *Calvin Theological Journal* 27 (1992): 229.

[63] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 237.

[64] Bavinck, "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 238. Cf. Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 106.

[65] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 435, 436.

[66] Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 464.

[67] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 85.

of the Protestant countries. Based on the doctrine of God's sovereignty, Calvin's theology can have its most significant influence in the light of all-encompassing concerns. Bavinck states that Calvin's theology provides a specific view of the world and the moral life regarding family, work, science, and art, under the discipline of God's law. By obeying the law of God, the sovereignty of God is revealed, and thus the name of God is ultimately glorified.

In a similar vein, Bavinck underlines a unique role of Calvin's theology in the Netherlands. In Bavinck's view, from the early days of the Reformation in the Netherlands, Calvin's theology simultaneously influenced both the Church and the State. Namely, remarkably, the Church and the State were born together in the Netherlands. Bavinck notes that the Netherlands has become and existed as a nation thanks to Calvinism. Even though the Reformed were only a tenth part of the whole Netherlands, they fought bravely, armed with a strong faith and powerful principle against Spain during the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648). In light of this, Calvin's theology has contributed much to various aspects of the creative and formative Dutch character of the Christian religion and the Christian nation. Bavinck declares that Calvin's theology has a noticeable influence on a people, establishes a nationality, and sets up a republic. Bavinck points out that Calvinists' organizing strength was relatively more powerful than the Evangelicals and Anabaptists, and it was consistently applied to its political movement. In his view, Calvin's theology has led the Netherlands to inherit the status of a foster-child of the Reformation. Concerning the considerable impact of Calvin's theology on the Netherlands, Bavinck underscores the belief that Calvin's theology has entered into the innermost fibers of the nation and has formulated the principle of their life, saying that Calvin's theology is "the nerve of our strength, the foundation of our prosperity."[68]

Indeed, as Bavinck notes, Calvin's theology serves to bind together the Church and the State from the very outset. This leads to another important point; that the Church, and the State, including the concrete spheres of life, stand and fall with Calvin's theology in the Netherlands. The middle of the seventeenth-century marked the culmination of the Church and the State, in Bavinck's judgment, owing to the Netherlands having first sought God's kingdom and His righteousness based on Calvin's theology. After this Golden Age, the Church and the State went down together, stemmed from the diminished influence of Calvinism until his time. Notably, since the nineteenth century, the influence on Dutch theology exerted by the various theological and philosophical thought was very considerable. As will be demonstrated in the next section, Bavinck notes and explains the Groningen school, the Utrecht school, modern theology, and ethical theology. In connection with this, it is evident that Bavinck was sufficiently aware of a great deal of doubt on the question concerning the viability of Calvin's theology raised by his contemporaries; whether there is a further and more abundant potential to be developed for the present and the following centuries; whether it is possible to occupy a prominent place modestly for accomplishing a particular calling of the Church in the future; whether God's intention is to bestow a blessing on God's people through Calvin's theology. How did Bavinck respond to these questions?

Bavinck presents an optimistic prospect for the future of Calvin's theology. For Bavinck,

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[68] Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," 9.

Calvin left his mark on the Reformed tradition as one of its formulative trajectories, and further Bavinck presents for bright prospect for Calvin's theology as the Christian worldview. For Bavinck, despite its relatively small numbers and weakened influence, Calvin's theology has still been operative and effective with vitality not only in the Netherlands but also in other countries. Furthermore, Bavinck maintains that there is a distinct strength in Calvin's theology in the past, the present, and the future.[69] Notably, in comparison with Luther, Bavinck does express admiration for Calvin's widespread influence by saying that "The Lutheran Reformation limited itself mainly to Germany and Denmark, Sweden and Norway. But the Reformation of Calvin found admittance in Italy and Spain, Hungary and Poland, Switzerland and France, Belgium and The Netherlands, England and Scotland, and in the United States and Canada."[70] This is because although Luther stood with one foot in the past and the other in the present while Calvin placed his foot in the present and the other in the future.[71]

And thus, surely, Bavinck declares that God has protected Calvin's theology up to his day, and at this point, he stresses that the very heartbeat of Calvin's theology depends on faith. If God grants a faith with enthusiasm and self-denial to people's minds, he believes that Calvin's theology can perform its task even more in the future. Bavinck is convinced that Calvin's theology has exerted an influence on the whole of Christianity and the Churches not only hitherto, but also further emphasizing the possibility and necessity of Calvin's theology for future generations. Bavinck offers three reasons for the significance of Calvin's theology: first, Calvin's theology preserves Christianity and protects the Church; second, Calvin's theology provides the grounds for the liberties of the people; third, Calvin's theology provides a promise for the future historically in terms of purifying the prevailing humanistic and rationalistic views in the light of God's Word. Following these reasons, indeed, Bavinck suggests that Calvin's theology can serve as the foundation for the Church and the State in the future. He regularly exhorts believers to remain steadfast in the fight against the prevailing forms of theories of his own time. He urges believers to take a decisive stand, in his view, since they have a great weapon bestowed by God upon His people: Calvinism as "a champion of the divine sovereignty."[72]

3.1.5 Bavinck's Assessment of Calvin's Life

Remarkably, in Bavinck's writing on Calvin, there is a consistent emphasis on Calvin's personal life. While Bavinck concurs with the first-generation neo-Calvinists' emphasis on Calvin as a man of Christian principles, at the same time, he also pays attention to the characteristics of Calvin's life and personality. Bavinck raises the question of whether it is possible to deal with Calvin's life in some sense as an example of the application of Calvinist principles. In his address on "Common grace," it appears that Bavinck endeavors to modify

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[69] Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," 13.
[70] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 126. Cf. Id., "The Future of Calvinism," 6.
[71] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 81.
[72] Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism," 16.

the negative image of Calvin. In Bavinck's observation, while Calvin was often described as "a somber and severe figure," Calvin should be depicted more respectfully in the proper direction. Bavinck maintains that Calvin's life and character deserved "respect and admiration" for Calvin's "total dedication to God," "his holy seriousness," "his indomitable will," and "his strict discipline."[73] It is noteworthy that Bavinck draws more attention to Calvin's personality than the first-generation neo-Calvinists, describing Calvin from a more positive perspective.

First of all, a great deal of Bavinck's assessment of Calvin's life is devoted to his conversion. For Bavinck, Calvin's conversion is of utmost importance for understanding Calvin's religious personality. Bavinck comments that Calvin's conversion is not only the crucial fundamental starting point for his devotion and self-denial as a Christian but also the distinguishing characteristic of the Reformer.[74] Conspicuously, comparing the conversion of the Reformers Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, Bavinck describes the distinct characteristics of their own religious experiences. When Bavinck speaks of conversion, he consistently emphasizes that there is unity in essence, yet diversity in the manner and the time. According to Bavinck, these three Reformers share common characteristics of their religious experience. On the one hand, Bavinck stresses that the most necessary and significant matter of conversion is not the form or the manner but the change of substance.[75] In this regard, sin and grace, guilt, and reconciliation were neither their resting place nor their destination, but the starting point.[76] On the other hand, there is also a significant difference in its character and nature. Bavinck's careful attention to the Reformer's conversion rests on the conviction that the diversity of conversion needs to be acknowledged and respected with modesty since there are varied hidden works of the Spirit behind the conversion of the individuals. The primary difference remains that while Luther experienced conversion particularly as a change from a great deal of inner guilt and pain to a joyful sense of the forgiveness of God's grace in Christ, for Zwingli, conversion was to be freed from legalistic bondage to the glorious joy of God's children. In Calvin's life, conversion consisted of moving from the experience of all sorts of error to the truth, from doubt to certainty.[77]

Moreover, in his comparison of Calvin with Luther and Zwingli, Bavinck highlights the various aspects and characteristics of the concept of faith. In Luther's estimation, faith was almost entirely absorbed in justification, whereas Zwingli defines faith as primarily regeneration. Calvin broadened the scope of the concept of faith concerning salvation, which restores the entire human being as well as all one's relationships and works. In this regard, Calvin's notion of faith means an exercise of sanctification in the entire realm of life, including the Church, State, school, society, even science, and art. Interestingly, not only do we encounter Bavinck's explicit description of the Reformer's personal conversions, but we can also contact his connotative expression to reflect the emphasis of its meaning with citations from Scripture. The German Reformer, Luther, to use Bavinck's words, was a firm

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[73] Bavinck, "Common Grace," 38.

[74] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 61.

[75] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 157, 158.

[76] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 125.

[77] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 62. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 157.

believer in the Scriptural word "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). For the Swiss Reformer, Zwingli, this verse was upon his heart: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). The French Reformer, Calvin believed and rejoiced at Paul's word: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).[78] Proceeding from what has been compared above, Bavinck calls attention to Calvin's personal experience of salvation when he speaks of Calvin's theology and life. Then, how does Bavinck present a distinctive characteristic of Calvin's conversion?

In the first place, Bavinck describes the certainty of faith as one of the prominent characteristics of Calvin's conversion. Bavinck highlights the fact that Calvin's conversion must have been involved in "such a clear, deep and harmonious insight into Christian truth as to render any subsequent modification unnecessary."[79] Bavinck assumes that Calvin must have been a man who "had previously entertained doubts" before he was converted, however after his conversion, Bavinck notes, Calvin became "absolutely certain and considers all doubting as the most serious sin that can beset a Christian."[80] What is notable here, considering Calvin's religious personality, is therefore a sudden and definite conversion that banished all doubt from his heart.

Bavinck stresses the certainty of faith in Calvin that "No one has articulated this certainty of faith more sharply and vigorously than Calvin." Citing Calvin's own words, Bavinck continues to emphasize that for Calvin, faith is considered to be "firm," "full and fixed" certainty more than merely "apprehension" or "heartfelt confidence and assurance."[81] In other words, faith is personal confidence in what God has bestowed upon us: mercy and grace. So, Bavinck notes that Calvin repeatedly described faith as firm confidence and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us and its very nature as faith as a complete certainty in opposition to doubt.[82] For Calvin, the certainty of faith is directly related to, not historical faith, but saving faith as the knowledge of God's grace in Christ that produces certainty.

Concerning the certainty of faith that Calvin presents in his *Institutes*, Bavinck says that "What stands out above everything else in this instruction in the Christian religion is a complete certainty, the rock-hard conviction that shines through on every page."[83] Emphasizing that the *Institutes* never changed, notwithstanding the obvious fact that it was expanded and increased from the first edition to the last edition, Bavinck nonetheless underscores how faith is unshaken conviction and firm assurance for Calvin.[84] With firm confidence about the reality of revelation and the certainty of salvation in Christ by faith, Calvin sought to take scattered truths and organize them in his *Institutes*. Nonetheless,

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[78] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:157.

[79] Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 448.

[80] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 65.

[81] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 574; 4: 111. Cf. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.7.5; 2.2.8; 3.2.14; 3.14.24.

[82] Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.7, 14; 2.4.7-8; 3.1.1, 2, 9, 12, 28, 29; 3. 2. 7; 3. 3. 10. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 111, 12-132, 201, 428.

[83] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 65.

[84] Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 449. Cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 101, 178; 3: 525.

Bavinck notes that Calvin's work should be regarded as of "a religious-moral sort" rather than "a scientific or scholarly kind."[85] Stressing Calvin's conversion once again, Bavinck sheds light on Calvin's theological works, i.e., that "He [Calvin] is not driven by logical reasoning or passion for systematic completion, but he is instructed by Scripture and led by his own soul's experience."[86] In light of this, Bavinck maintains that Calvin's *Institutes* should be considered as lovingly serving the persecuted brothers and a defense of the Christian faith, based on the grace of God in Christ that God bestowed on his mind. Throughout his life, Calvin passionately craved and promoted the grace of God in Christ and the assurance of salvation, in accordance with the Scripture.

Second, another mark in Calvin's life is the obedience to God's will through his devotion and self-denial. Bavinck notes that Calvin tried to obey the will of God faithfully along with other Reformers. In Bavinck's view, Calvin correctly and beautifully understood the inner call, and he was fully conscious of his calling.[87] Calvin's faith with certainty leads him to the obedience of Scripture throughout his life. Calvin always kept in mind that Christians have to take the will of God as their point of departure. Bavinck points out, for Calvin, indeed, the obedience to God's will is the highest virtue. Notably, in July 1536, Farel made a fairly firm request for Calvin to serve Geneva that "You may continue with your studies, but in the name of the Almighty God I declare to you: You will experience God's curse if in the work of the Lord you refuse to help us and seek yourself more than Christ!"[88] In response to Farel's adjuration in order for Geneva to complete the work of the Reformation, Calvin decided upon reflection to accept his offer after all. While it is true that Calvin hesitated in serving Geneva because of recognizing himself as being young, inexperienced, and bashful, and hoping to continue with his studies, as planned by himself, in the end, Calvin complied with Farel's earnest request, in voluntary obedience to His will for the glory of God. According to Bavinck, Calvin seems to have heard Farel's earnest request for the citizens of Geneva as the voice of God and he devoted his life to serving Geneva. In his lecture, Bavinck highly praises Calvin's sincere faith in Christ's grace and his expression of his gratitude in obedience. Concerning Calvin's obedience to the will of God throughout his years as a Reformer, Bavinck once again highlights that "He [Calvin] sacrificed his quiet study in Basel and later his pleasant and blessed labor in Strasbourg to answer the call of Geneva where misunderstanding, indignities, and libels would be his plentiful portion."[89] For Bavinck, Calvin's life was no other than "giving his body and soul completely a sacrifice to God expressed in obedience."[90] In his depiction of Calvin's devotional life, Bavinck underlines that Calvin endeavored to submit himself to God in accordance with God's will with a life of denial and cross-bearing.

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[85] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 66.
[86] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 67.
[87] Herman Bavinck, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 19 (2008), 129; Id., *Saved by Grace: the Holy Spirit's Work in Calling and Regeneration*, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, ed., J. Mark Beach (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 18.
[88] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 64.
[89] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 76.
[90] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 69.

Specifically, Bavinck states that Calvin sought attention for the passive virtues of submission, humility, patience, self-denial, and cross-bearing. Calvin warned against being prideful and haughty, especially in the presence of God. When Calvin speaks of the bondage of the human will and the inability of humanity, he refers to recovering from lethargy and keeping them away from self-glorying and self-reliance, neither self-doubt nor passiveness.[91] For Calvin, God's law is God's will. By obeying the law of God, Christians discern the will of God. Therefore, it is noteworthy that obedience to God's law is the highest good work for the Christian in Calvin's thoughts. The obedience to God's will, for Calvin, is the heart of Christian life as "the fruit of faith," "tokens of God's grace," and "signs of his election."[92]

In Bavinck's judgment, Calvin attempted to live in accord with God's will and asked others to become truly God's people to work at manifesting God's excellencies in their lives for the glory of His name. Calvin did not hesitate to say that Christians ought to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, and strength by obedience to God's will. In light of this, Bavinck underscores that Calvin encouraged and counseled his followers on how to obey God's will. In considering God's good pleasure and His all-powerful will and the hands of the Almighty, Calvin advised that Christians need to pursue the virtues of acceptance, submission, and contentment, even amid struggle and oppression.[93] Calvin was fully convinced that everything in the world among human life, including problems, injustices, and miseries, is grounded in God's will. In the midst of severe tribulations life the deaths of children and wife, his illness, and opposition from enemies, Bavinck emphasizes that Calvin himself dedicated his soul and body to God. Just as the sun shines on humanity as a whole without exception, Calvin held that an almighty God and faithful Father upholds and governs all creatures by His wise decree and ever-present power. In Bavinck's view, Calvin was devoured by a desire for God's glory and driven by the fear of God throughout his life.

As conversion can be explained in terms of a one-time experience, Calvin appears to have attached great importance to the obedience of God's will as a life-long process of inward renewal. Noting Calvin's emphasis on God's election, Bavinck describes the prominent characteristic of Calvin's conversion as the certainty of faith. For Bavinck, Calvin is the best theologian that articulated the certainty of faith sharply and vigorously.[94] At this point, Bavinck emphasizes that Calvin's personal experience of conversion is different from that of Luther. While Luther was brought to Christ by finding peace in the forgiveness of sins in Christ by faith alone, for Calvin, a sudden conversion removed all his doubt and hesitation and, most importantly, further makes him obedient to God's will throughout his life. For Calvin, this penitence, which proceeds from faith, is possible only by participation in Christ.[95] Calvin considered Christians to be grafted into Christ, and thus they need to do good works prepared in Christ and to obey God's law, living in communion with Christ. Calvin maintained the renewal of a single moment of conversion as mortification and the renewal of a life-long process of the Christian life as vivification. Calvin's emphasis on

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91 Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 457.
92 Bavinck, "John Calvin," 70; Id., "Calvin and Common Grace," 459.
93 Bavinck, "On Inequality," 156.
94 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 574. Cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 7. 5; 2. 2. 8; 3. 2. 14; 3. 14. 8, 24.
95 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 525.

God's eternal election leads Christians onward to the assurance of salvation and further makes them do good works in various spheres of life. In this regard, Bavinck highlights that in Calvin's theology, the Christian's life has its foundation in faith, and Christians glorify God's name through obedience to God's law throughout life.

When he discerned God's will, in Bavinck's thought, Calvin tried to obey God's Word and faithfully serve His Savior and King as much as he could. No money could be a stumbling block for Calvin's obedience to the will of God. Bavinck forthrightly declares that "one thing is certain: In all of this Calvin never sought his own advantage."[96] The religious persecution ordered by the king of France, Francis I, and carried out by the political authorities, also could not keep him quiet. Bavinck emphasizes that Calvin did not fear human beings: "Few people were as thoroughly driven by the fear of God and so completely dedicated with their entire life and thought and labor to his service as Calvin was."[97] In addition to this, Bavinck highly praises the fact that Calvin devoted much of his life to transforming Geneva into an examplary city of the Reformation, which was filled with piety and sound morality. Against the Roman Catholic Church's errors, Calvin became an imposing spokesman for the city of Geneva's Protestants and a courageous defender of truth. After Calvin's death, his labors were granted the greatest and richest blessings more than before. In this regard, Bavinck writes, "No one surpassed the Reformer of Geneva in breadth of his perspective and wideness of horizon."[98]

In Bavinck's day, as has been previously noted, there were some attempts to portray Calvin as a disreputable character. However, like the second-generation neo-Calvinists, Bavinck disagrees with these negative assessments of Calvin's image. When portraying Calvin, even though Bavinck speaks of Calvin's responsibility for the death of Servetus, to a certain extent, he expressly voices his opinion that Calvin only stands on a similar plane as the other Reformers, saying "none of whom had entirely outgrown all the errors of their age."[99] While Bavinck admits that Calvin gave his approval to Servetus's execution, it is just partially an aspect of Calvin's image. Bavinck is more emphatic about Calvin's balanced reputation, thus arguing that he should not be considered an icon of Protestant intolerance and unsympathetic in an extremely negative light. For Bavinck, there is another side to Calvin, presenting a different perspective. Hence, this kind of negative image is manifestly unfair to Calvin. At this point, Bavinck posits a somewhat different image of Calvin by giving a detailed account of another side to Calvin. In Bavinck's depiction of his character, Calvin retained a tender affection for his friends. Calvin's heart was marked with expressions of sympathy to all his suffering and struggling flocks in the faith. Calvin's endeavors to supply his brethren in the severest afflictions with comfort, courage, and cheer were portrayed. Moreover, Bavinck stresses that Calvin earnestly desired the union of the divided Protestants. Calvin acknowledged openly that his colleagues, such as Luther, Melanchthon, and Zwingli,

[96] Bavinck refers explicitly to Calvin's usage of his income and his final estate: "He gave a good portion of his income as preacher for the support of those in need and for the spread of the gospel. His estate, in total, amounted to little more than 4,000 guilders." Bavinck, "John Calvin," 76, 77.
[97] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 77.
[98] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 79.
[99] Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 451, 452.

had their own distinct insights and held them in the highest regard, considering them as God's servants, despite their differences of opinion.[100] For Bavinck, indeed, an excessively negative view of Calvin is no more than a too biased opinion.

Bavinck states that Calvin's theology and life were of a piece. He praises Calvin's life and theology as follows: "Life and doctrine with him were one. He gave his body a living, holy sacrifice, well-pleasing unto God through Jesus Christ. Therein lie his reasonable service. *Cor Deo mactatum offero*."[101] Bavinck notes the relation between Calvin's ideal offered in his *Institutes* and the reality in his context. Calvin was committed to realizing his ideal into being both in his own person and in every sphere into which his influence was felt. Thus, for Calvin, Christians willingly and consciously serve God in the presence of God for the glory of His name, and he himself lived in that way as much as he could in proclaiming God's word, teaching His people, and governing the Church of Christ.

On this basis, Bavinck considers Calvin's life as an example for the believers in placing a great deal of emphasis on his certainty of faith and sincere obedience to God's will. Despite imperfections of its nature of his personality and character as a human being, it is noteworthy that Bavinck esteems Calvin's personality and his deeds greatly. Bavinck writes, "From his childhood onward, Calvin possessed a pious demeanor and a strict conscience."[102] Especially, based on the clarity and power of Calvin's personality, Bavinck notes that Calvin's ideals turned into reality in Geneva. Bavinck describes Calvin as a man of power and action, a dominant spirit, and notes that he was faithful to the small things explains that "not only was he faithful to the small things so that nothing passed by his attention, but also he was incredibly many-sided."[103] Against the attempts to regard Calvin as closed-minded and intolerant man, Bavinck maintains that "Calvin's theological standpoint does not render him narrow in his sympathies, but rather gives to his mind the stamp of catholicity."[104]

Hence, one can find the consistency of Bavinck's emphasis on how Calvin's life can be regarded as an exemplary dedication for Christians. Bavinck is fully convinced that Calvin committed with heart and soul to the Reformation and served the church of Christ in Strasburg with sincere faith. Bavinck underlines that in order to figure out Calvin's reformation of Geneva, one should take a closer look at his personality, such as "a committed resolute will," as well as "a sharp, penetrating mind, a strong and reliable memory, a burning passion."[105] Bavinck emphasizes Calvin's tireless devotion that "Sleeping little and living a simple and sober life, he sought little for himself, had few wants, and brought his soul and body into complete service [of his Lord]. His life was dedicated to Christ and therefore bore rich fruit."[106] Bavinck expresses appreciation for Calvin's vehemence of devotion and tireless passion and has great admiration for Calvin's works throughout life that "it is almost

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[100] Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 452.
[101] Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 465.
[102] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 61.
[103] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 77. Cf. Ibid., 70.
[104] Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 456.
[105] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 70.
[106] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 78, 79.

impossible to imagine the extraordinary willpower and capacity for work of this man."[107]   In Bavinck's eyes, Calvin was blessed with an extraordinary eager understanding and force of will.[108] Indeed, Bavinck underlines Calvin's personal life as a model worthy of dedication and thus argues that Calvin was devoured by a passion for the house of God and devoted his life entirely to obedience to God.

3.2 Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands

The contextual examination of individual theologians may play a significant role in providing an index to direct contextual relationships of one's theological discourse. On the other hand, the approach to one's theology that ignores the context of the specific theology or philosophy, with paying no attention to the nature and character of their work, or the broader frame of reference of their work, may cause a failure since it separates the contents from the contexts from they are derived. A theological development sets out from a theological work of interpretation of contemporary theological thoughts. In light of this, Bavinck's take on the factors that influenced Dutch theology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are discussed in the present section.

Specifically, a glance at the sources, whether previous or contemporary, used by Bavinck in the composition of his theological works, shows a certain degree of reliance on the Reformed tradition of the previous era and a detailed acquaintance with the works of the theologians of his time.[109] If Bavinck's works cannot be understood apart from the broader theological context of Bavinck's theology, none of his thought can be grasped apart from the broad context of Dutch Reformed thought in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Considering that individual theologies are intimately related to a particular historical context, Bavinck's theology is best explained in more closely defined contexts, both in terms of the specific nuances of a theological stance and the changes of its form and content. So then, we have to deal with the stream of Dutch theology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in order to examine how Bavinck's theological works were worked out against the view popular among Dutch theologians of his day, both in matters of doctrine itself and of the practical application of theological locus for the life of Christians. And if so, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, what factors influenced Dutch theology?

This section mainly intends to clarify Bavinck's theological perception of his time. An examination of Bavinck's assessment on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Dutch theology preferentially needs to be brought to bear on the study of Bavinck's theology as well. Through several types of articles, pamphlets, and lectures, Bavinck expresses his thought on features of Dutch dogmatics.[110] In his article "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the

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[107] Bavinck, "John Calvin," 78.

[108] Bavinck, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 129.

[109] Sangung Lee, "An Analysis of the Literature Used in Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*," *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly* 82 (2015): 83-110; Id., "Herman Bavinck's Educational Courses and Preparations for His *Reformed Dogmatics*," *Korea Reformed Journal* 34 (2015): 113-151.

[110] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic *Thought* in the Netherlands," 209-228; Id., "The Reformed Churches in the

Netherlands," Bavinck states that "Dutch theology has a character of its own, and a history distinguished in many respects from that in other countries," because of its interacting with the new philosophical and theological movements of the era.[111] In Bavinck's estimation, not only anti-trinitarianism but also the rationalism of German idealism as well as Deism and Pantheism had made a devastating impact on Reformed theology in the Netherlands. This situation for Reformed theology in the Netherlands caused Bavinck to seek to defend it and, consequently, led him to establish exquisite and refined Reformed theology.

3.2.1 Supranaturalism

Bavinck states that one of the most significant tendencies in the nineteenth-century Netherlands was supranaturalism, which dominated church and theology in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. This supranaturalism was the predominant centerpoint of Dutch theology centered around the Dutch cities, while the conservative Calvinistic pietism was prevalent among the Dutch Christian Reformed Church in the Dutch rural areas. In Bavinck's view, it is supranatualism that must be deemed the head of the train due to the influence of the prevailing theological approaches to religion of his time.

Concerning the Dutch Reformed theology of his day, Bavinck comments that beginning in the eighteenth-century "English deism, French unbelief, and German rationalism found fertile soil in the Netherlands."[112] Afterwards, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, these various philosophical and theological thoughts impacted Dutch theology in earnest. Notably, the emphasis on the human and natural side by deistic rationalism and evolutionism brought out the so-called rationalistic, moderate versions of biblical supranaturalism.[113] Interestingly, this supranaturalism is characterized by an endeavor to divest its supernatural character. In the eighteenth-century, supranaturalism stressed God's revelation of teachings to the mind and a strengthening of the will by grace as divine authority and the work of the Spirit in the belief that sin had fully affected all human faculties, including the intellect and the will. However, at the turn of the nineteenth century, under the influence of a thoroughly rationalist understanding of Scripture, supranaturalism gradually endeavored to reach revelation through the guide of human reason, by placing a significant emphasis on the

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Netherlands," 433-460; Id., "Modernism and Orthodoxy," 68-114; Id., *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, (The Hague: Commercial Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, 1915).

[111] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 210. Cf. Hendrikus Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989), 97. Concerning Dutch theology of this age, H. Berkhof comments that "Whereas in many places in Europe after the Enlightenment theology attempted to determine its position vis-à-vis the new challenges, Dutch theology, exhausted by two hundred years of controversy, slept a deep supranaturalistic sleep." In addition to theology, he also indicates that Dutch culture as a whole had fallen asleep, and then, after the period of Restoration under King William I, it began to seek their new identity in the middle of enormous philosophical and religious change; K.H. Roessingh, *De moderne theologie in Nederland; hare voorbereiding en eerste period* (Dissertation, Groningen, 1914), 22-5.

[112] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 210.

[113] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 190.

reasonableness of faith at the expense of the content of revelation.[114]

In this way, these different foci led to disparate approaches to theology to be precise, to a theology which does not take revelation and faith as the starting point anymore. Namely, the authenticity, integrity, and trustworthiness of Scripture's teachings became established based on *fides humana*. So, it seems that supernaturalism still defended the necessity, possibility, and reality of revelation, but it rested on rational and historical ground. In so doing, divine revelation was not supernatural in an absolute sense but became something pure and noble because verified by human reason. Scripture was not the infallible God's Word but contained the Word of God. The object of theology was changed from God into the Supreme Being. The concepts of Christ, humanity, sin, conversion, and sanctification were inverted into the notions of a teacher, a purely intellectual being, weakness, correction, and a process of creating virtues.

In light of this, Bavinck notes that this supranaturalism, affected by rationalism, gradually denied the credibility of Scripture. The supernatural elements in Scripture, such as prophecy, miracle, and inspiration, were *ipso facto* reduced and finally abandoned. Instead, the historical criticism of Scripture was entirely accepted. All this led Bavinck to comments that "a so-called Biblical theology was drawn from the Scriptures, which did not deserve the name of dogmatics."[115] As Bavinck observes, while this supranaturalism sought to be biblical, the fact is that it was anticonfessional, antiphilosophical, and anti-Calvinistic. Concerning the impact of this *fides humana* on dogmatic thoughts, Bavinck explains that it was "a dogmatics that was deistic in its doctrine of God (theology proper), Pelagian in anthropology, moralistic in Christology, collegialist in ecclesiology, and eudaemonist in eschatology."[116] Hence, Bavinck comments on supranaturalism in its distorted fashion of his day, considering it "a conglomerate of certain commonplace, superficial Christian truths, not born from the depth of Scripture and utterly foreign to the spirit and vigor of the Reformed confession."[117]

Against this modified supranaturalism, Bavinck raises the objection that theology must be founded on divine revelation and the authority of His Word as the ground and the source of theology. Bavinck makes an effort to provide a robust understanding of Reformed theology, mainly according to Calvin's theology, adding his own trinitarian insights. Hence, as will be seen in chapter four, the doctrine of the Trinity is a theological foundation of Bavinck's thought, with its ontological and epistemological dimensions. Bavinck articulates his theology by emphasizing the ontological distinction between God and creature and arguing for the epistemological harmony of God's incomprehensibility and knowability, based on his doctrine of the Trinity.

3.2.2 The Groningen School

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[114] Bavinck, "The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands," 438; Id., "Modernism and Orthodoxy," 83.

[115] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 211.

[116] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 192.

[117] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 211, 212.

During the nineteenth-century, supranaturalism held undisputed sway over theology in the Netherlands but handed over the reins to the Groningen school, together with the influence of the spirit of the day. Bavinck was concerned about the Groningen theology, influenced by Phillip Willem van Heusde, the professor of Philosophy at Utrecht University.[118] Groningen theology became widespread, particularly in the northern provinces of the Netherlands, and it attracted national attention through a periodical journal for Cultured Christians, *Waarheid en Liefde*, published from 1837-1872, by the professors at the University of Groningen, Petrus Hofstede de Groot (1802-86), Johan Frederik van Oordt (1794-1852), and Louis Gerlach Pareau (1800-66).[119] Hendrikus Berkhof states that the rise of the Groningen theology should be regarded as the first conscious attempt to build a bridge between the gospel and post-Enlightenment thought in Dutch theology.[120] As Harinck points out, the Groningen school emphasized the national character of the Reformation in the Netherlands, considering Calvinism as "a later and foreign movement that disturbed the national Reformational religious climate that was exemplified by Erasmus."[121] For the Groningen school, the Reformation should be understood in terms of a biblical movement, opposing moral and organizational abuses, from the perspective of humanism rather than Calvinism. For the Groningen school, the doctrine was no longer the centre of theology, and it changed to life and ethical issues. They regarded a practical, undogmatic, social, and modern theology as a better form of Christianity.

Specifically, Van Heusde emphasized that Socrates and Plato have pursued true philosophy in terms of taking humanity as the starting point. He put a lot of emphasis on human education as a central role in his theological system, instead of revelation and doctrine, along with Socrates and Plato.[122] Following in this Socratic philosophy of Van Heusde, Groningen theology maintained that humanity is not only explained as the true source for all arts and sciences but also argued for its aim.[123] They underemphasized human nature's total corruption and argued that sin and redemption belong to ethical categories.[124] For the Groningen theology, history should be understood as a process of education towards an ideal human moralism.[125]

Specifically, the Groningen theology emphasized the Father-child relationship between God and humanity concerning God's fatherhood and His love, maintaining the possibility and

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[118] P. W. Van Heusde, *De Socratische School of Wijsbegeerte voor de Negentiende Eeuw*, 4 vols., (Utrecht, Joannes Altheer & Van der Post Jr., 1834-1839); Id., *Initia Philosophiae Platonicae*, 3 vols., (Utrecht, Joannes Altheer, 1827-1836); Id., *Brieven over het Beoefenen der Wijsbegeerte, inzonderheid in ons vaderland en in onze tijden,* (Utrecht, Joannes Altheer, 1837).

[119] Petrus Hofstede de Groot, *De Groninger Godgeleerden* (Groningen: A. L. Scholtens, 1855); Id., *Institutio Theologia Natura*, 4th ed. (Groningen: W. Zuidema, 1861).

[120] Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology*, 97.

[121] Harinck, "Abraham Kuyper's Historical Understanding and Reformed Historiography," 76.

[122] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 192.

[123] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 212.

[124] John Halsey Wood, *Going Dutch in the Modern Age: Abraham Kuyper's struggle for a free church in the Netherlands* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2013), 14.

[125] Roessingh, *De moderne theologie in Netherlands*, 35.

validity of human education by God.[126] Namely, God as the great nurturer, brings up His children to become obedient and pious Christians through His revelation in nature and history. Despite Adam's fall, humanity can attain the most glorious development through revelation. Christ is the revealer of God as being the perfect ideal of all virtues. Groningen theology considered the person of Christ as the center "to proclaim with authority the content of natural religion and morality and to instill it in the hearts of humankind." Concerning the Groningen theology's concept of Christ, Bavinck continues to note that "He[Christ] does so by raising up in history a person who with divine authority and power again reminds humankind of its moral destiny, lifts it up out of its decay, and again persuades it to go forward on the road of virtue."[127] For the Groningen theology, divine revelation was no more than the education of humankind to a state of conformity to God.[128] Thus, Bavinck remarks on Groningen's notion of revelation that "this theological movement replaced the idea of revelation and doctrine with that of education, thus incorporating an ethical component in the relation between God and man."[129]

Moreover, Groningen theologians could not accept the traditional Reformed theology of Christ's satisfaction, since "a blood theology that is inconsistent with the nature of God."[130] In the Groningen theology, the death of Christ should be considered something to be perpetrated by human beings, endured by Jesus, and permitted by God. From this moral perspective, Groningen theologians construed regeneration and conversion as an ethical transformation and progress. For them, Christianity was the highest religion, and the essence of Christianity consisted not in Christian doctrine but the person of Christ. In this regard, Groningen theology underlined the Church as the specific agent, namely, the training-institute of God for Christian formation.[131] However, Bavinck maintains that the Groningen theology reconstructed the doctrine of the atonement in the wrong direction. As Bavinck notes, Groningen theology attempted to understand Christ's death as an exemplary behavior in an ethical sense rather than the dogma of penal, substitutionary atonement. Bavinck firmly points out the problem of the Groningen understanding that "There may have been a psychological and historical necessity for Christ's suffering and death; for a metaphysical necessity there is no longer any room."[132]

In this study it will be argued that Bavinck made the doctrine of the Trinity in order to provide a metaphysical foundation for the understanding of the ontological distinction between God and humanity and offer an alternative to the knowledge of God by employing his own trinitarian epistemology. Additionally, the economic Trinity is also the foundation for the restoration of the image of God and the destiny of humanity in Bavinck's thought.

3.2.3 Modern Theology

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[126] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 115.
[127] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 289.
[128] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 213. Cf. Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 219.
[129] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 192.
[130] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 356.
[131] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 213, 214.
[132] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 386.

One can find many discussions and deep concerns for modern theology in Bavinck's thought. Bavinck voices his concern about the modern worldview of his time, particularly in terms of their characteristics and their influence. Considering the influence of modernism on Christianity, Bavinck warns of the dangers of modernism that "we cannot deny that nowadays Christianity is encountering a crisis as perhaps never before."[133] Notably, in his *Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands*, Bavinck singles out four figures as the leaders of modernism in nineteenth-century Dutch theology. Those are the professors at Leiden, Jan Hendrik Scholten (1811-85) and Abraham Kuenen (1828-91), the professor of philosophy at Utrecht University, Cornelis Willem Opzoomer (1821-92), and the Mennonite professor of the municipal university of Amsterdam, Sytze Hoekstra (1822-98). All were major threats to Dutch Reformed theology.[134] In Bavinck's view, the conflicts between Reformed theology and those adversaries were the inevitable results. Modern theology gradually became widespread and achieved considerable success in the Netherlands.

In more detail, then, Jan Hendrik Scholten (1811-85) is the first figure that Bavinck mentions. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on *De Dei erga hominem amore, principe religionis Christianae loco* under the guidance of his uncle, a professor of theoretical philosophy and literature, Philip Wilhelm van Heusde in the University of Utrecht.[135] As Berkhof comments, Scholten's first edition of his 'De Leer der Hervormde Kerk' was considered as the signal of the birth of Dutch modernism.[136] Scholten attempted to demonstrate Reformed theology and confessions through German idealism.[137] Under Hegel's influence, Scholten strived to put the new wine of his monistic deterministic system into the old bottles of Reformed terminology.[138] At an early stage of his career, Scholten raised a fundamental question concerning supranaturalism, especially concerning its unstable dogmatic foundation and its lack of philosophical depth.[139] Specifically, Scholten learned

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[133] Bavinck, "Modernism and Orthodoxy," 80.

[134] For a more detailed discussion on Bavinck's interactions with modern theology, see Cornelis Marius van Driel, *Dienaar van twee heren: Het strijdbaar leven van theoloog-politicus B.D. Eerdmans (1868-1948)* (Kampen: Kok, 2005).

[135] Johannes Hendricus Scholten, *De Dei erga hominem amore, principe religionis Christianae loco* (Trajecti ad Rhenum: Natan, 1836).

[136] Johannes Hendricus Scholten, *De Leer der Hervormde Kerk in hare grondbeginselen: uit de bronnen voorgesteld en beoordeeld,* 4th ed., 2vols (Leiden: Engels, 1861-62). Cf. Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology*, 98-103. Cf. Mackay, *Religious Thought in Holland During the Nineteenth Century*, 85-107. The first volume of his *De Leer der Hervormde Kerk* deals with the formal principle of the Reformation, the sole authority of Scripture, most representatively the doctrine of the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*. The second volume deals with the material principle of the Reformed faith as well as the unconditioned sovereignty of God.

[137] Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology*, 98.

[138] Editors, "Herman Bavinck," in *The Princeton Theological Review* 6 (1908), 533.

[139] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 215. Hence, according to Bavinck, under the strong influence of Alexander Schweizer's Die *Glaubenslehre der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche* (1844-47), Scholten decided to lay the groundwork for his theological works based on history and the church creed, along with the philosophy of Hegel, Schweizer, and Schleiermacher. Cf. Id., *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 25.

supranaturalism during his undergraduate days at Utrecht, but he gradually became dissatisfied with the insufficiency of historical apologetic evidence as a basis for religious faith and lack of philosophic depth.

As G. B. Wurth notes, in the first stage of his theological development (1843-47), Scholten's theology was deeply influenced by the debate with the philosopher C. W. Opzoomer of the University of Utrecht. Scholten occupied himself with an in-depth study regarding the principles of the Reformed faith and the relationship between theology and philosophy through a discussion with Opzoomer.[140] For Scholten's theology, the main pillars were the German speculative intellectualism and monistic determinism, and a historical-critical methodology.[141] Thus, according to Scholten, the Calvinistic doctrines of God's sovereignty and predestination can be harmonized with deterministic evolutionary, naturalistic science.[142] However, as Harinck rightly notes, Scholten wrongly considered Calvin as "being a monist and anti-supra-naturalist like himself,"[143] and attempted to make Reformed theology regain its place of honor by his own philosophical speculation. Bavinck assesses Scholten's theology in terms of its changes and the shift of focus.[144] While Scholten was and remained a conservative and supernaturalist in an early stage of his career, he was gradually driven away from the Reformed Confession to Reformed principles according to his own speculative reasoning; from historical facts to religious concepts. Finally, Scholten completely refuted the whole of supernaturalism in the end, declaring his own theological system to be pure spiritualistic monism.

Scholten eventually undermines the authority and content of Scripture as the epistemic sources of knowledge of God and wrongly seeks to derive the truth from the consciousness and personal faith of the believer.[145] For Scholten, the Scriptures belong to the Word of God, not vice versa, and human reason is the touchstone to judge the truth of the Word of God. Based on his emphasis on reason, Scholten exchanged all notions of supernaturalism for the idea of development in history and nature. Scholten's speculation made him separate the link between facts and ideas, between Christianity and history.[146] In light of this, Bavinck regards Scholten's theology as consciousness theology and notes the limits of consciousness theology as in conflict with a sound theology since all domains of the human faculties such as the intellect, the heart, reason, conscience, and feeling are merely organs to perceive the truth.

Second, as regards modern theology, Bavinck deals with the Leiden professor, Abraham Kuenen (1828-91), as one of the most renowned modernist theologians of his time, especially concerning the historical criticism of the Old Testament. Kuenen was known as "the Master" in the field of Old Testament studies until he died at Leiden on December 10, 1891.[147]

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[140] Hubbeling, *Synthetisch modernisme*, 127. Cited from Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 39.

[141] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 115, 369.

[142] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 37, 38. Veenhof considers Opzoomer and Scholten as the father of modern theology. Cf. Wood, *Going Dutch in the Modern Age*, 12.

[143] Harinck, "Abraham Kuyper's Historical Understanding and Reformed Historiography," 75.

[144] Bavinck, *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 25.

[145] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 78.

[146] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 215.

[147] Roessingh, *Het Modernisme in Nederland*, 181.

Gradually, Kuenen no longer wanted to do with the external authority of the Scriptures and thus excludes the supernatural elements such as prophecy, miracle, and inspiration from the Scriptures, based on his historical criticism. Kuenen insisted that the words of the Old Testament prophets were only the product of natural human development rather than the result of supernatural intervention. To Kuenen, in order to make Christianity fit for the modern world, the Bible should be considered a part of history, not as the norm for historical development.[148]

As to the third representative figure of the modern theologian, Bavinck convincingly claims that Modern theology made its first appearance in the Netherlands with C. W. Opzoomer (1821-92). Regarding Opzoomer's theology, Bavinck describes that "His [Opzoomer's] change from the idealism of Krause, which for a short time he defended, to the empiricism of Auguste Comte and Stuart Mill marked an important turning-point in the history of Netherlands science and philosophy."[149] Based on the empirical method, his theology influenced a large number of young theological students and even theologians in the Netherlands. Regarding his considerable influence on Dutch theology, Bavinck writes, "he contributed not only to a very great extent to the moulding of the mind of "Modern" theologians (more particularly of A. Pierson), but converted Scholten himself to empiricism."[150]

Amid the rapid development of science through experiments and hypotheses, Opzoomer had an empirical view of reality and further raised his voice in opposition to Supranaturalism.[151] Bavinck pays attention to Opzoomer's anti-supranaturalist position.[152] According to Bavinck, Opzoomer took "the existence of a distinct religious feeling or intuition" as a given that an inborn religious feeling is a foundation for religious faith and the source of religious representations.[153] As Berkhof states that "At a time, in Germany and elsewhere, idealism was still predominant in theology and the other humanities, people in the Netherlands were ready to make the shift to empiricism," the speculative idealism in the Netherlands entered into a new phrase, due to the influence of Opzoomer.[154]

Sytze Hoekstra (1822-98) asserted psychological subjectivism, focusing on anthropological experience and developments. Hoekstra was dissatisfied with the intellectualism and determinism of Scholten. For Hoekstra, believing is no less than a moral act of the human will and a foundation for one's internal spiritual self when confronted with life experiences. In distinction from Schleiermacher's concept of an absolute feeling of dependence, Hoekstra placed the foundation for faith in practical reason or the human will.[155]

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[148] George Harinck, "Why Was Bavinck in Need of a Philosophy of Revelation?" *The Kuyper Center Review* 2, ed. John Bowlin (Grand Rapids, WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), 31.

[149] Bavinck, *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 22.

[150] Bavinck, *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 24, 25.

[151] Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology*, 100-02.

[152] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 215.

[153] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:266, 278. Cf. Id., *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 40.

[154] Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology*, 101.

[155] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 243, 261.

His central argument is that all belief about a supersensory world is based on a belief in the truth of one's inner being, with his locating of one's experience as the only means of becoming conscious.[156] For Hoekstra, even though one can know God through human reasoning, this God is God as the Absolute. In this regard, he maintained that religion is less than a specific conception of life, neither a science nor a worldview. Human beings consecrate their life to the ideal of morality and holiness through religion. Hoekstra declared that what human beings need is the God which one's heart needs, which can be found within oneself.[157]

Even though the theology in the late nineteenth-century Netherlands had been significantly developed, notably through a debate between idealism and empiricism, in Bavinck's view, the main lines of theology in the Netherlands could be understood as a threat to Reformed theology. By warning against an uncritical acceptance of modern theology, Bavinck notes that indiscriminate acceptance of modern theology can bring many different problems. In Bavinck's estimation, it is evident that modern theology has been far too hasty, noting its superficial approach. Thus, Bavinck repeatedly warns his hearers of the possibility of causing problems such as the poverty of preaching, the emptiness of the churches, the inability to formulate a confession and dogmatics and the uncertainty of all Christian doctrines.[158] For Bavinck, as was noted in the previous section, Calvin's theology has powerful answers to the challenges of modern theology. Thus, Bavinck leverages Calvin's theology with his own emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity and its application to the doctrine of the image of God, against various modern theologies.

3.2.4 The Utrecht School

Bavinck singles out another tendency of his time with the Utrecht school as its center, which fell under the influence of the name of Réveil. According to Bavinck, through the writings and personal visits of men like César Malan (1787-1864), Ami Bost (1790-1874), Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigné (1794-1872), Adolphe Monad (1802-56), Louis Gaussen (1790-1863), the so-called Swiss Réveil transplanted to the theology of the Netherlands.[159] Indeed, the objections against the dominant spirit of modernism in the Netherlands, which were voiced by Willem Bilderdijk (1756-1831), Isaac da Costa (1798-1860), and the statesman-historian Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-76), show that they were highly indebted to the Réveil.[160]

In order to battle with the new challenges of "the spirit of Enlightenment rationalism," the advocates of the Réveil in the Netherlands sought to restore confessional and doctrinal

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[156] Cited from Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology*, 105. Cf. Sytze Hoekstra, *Bronnen en grondslagen van het godsdienstig geloof* (Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen, 1864), 24.

[157] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 217.

[158] Bavinck, "Modernism and Orthodoxy," 86.

[159] Bavinck, *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 14.

[160] Willem Bilderdijk has often been called "a forerunner of the Secession of 1834." Gerrit J. tenZythoff, *Sources of Secession: the Netherlands Hervormde Kerk on the Eve of the Dutch Immigration to the Midwest* (Grand Rapids, W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.,1987), 59. Cf. Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 11-3.

Reformed orthodoxy.[161] The Réveil devoted more attention to the depravity of humanity and the necessity for conversion and redemption rather than the benevolence and virtue of humanity.[162] Bavinck highlights that Réveil was of the utmost significance for the Dutch and its theology as an enormous factor, by providing these following rationales. First, although the Dutch Réveil did not primarily affect orthodoxy in religion, its influence played a considerable role in the personal realm of the human heart, the inner soul. Second, the Dutch Réveil invariably adhered to the core doctrines of the Reformation, such as the divine authority of Scripture, the divinity of Christ, the personality of the Spirit, original sin, the atonement of Christ, justification by faith, the necessity of regeneration, and sanctification. Third, the Dutch Réveil had zeal for spreading the gospel through lectures, meetings, pamphlets, Christian literature, Sunday schools, and charitable institutions.[163]

According to Bavinck, the Dutch Réveil was initially aimed at individual conversion and piety, but it gradually became focused on a matter of public attention. Evidently, this was one of the Protestant revivals and anti-modernist movements, but this Réveil was not considered "a well-defined movement."[164] M. Elizabeth Kluit defines the character of the Dutch Réveil as "no organized society but a small group of people who each in his own way fought against the superficiality, the stultification, and the deadness of the spirit of that time."[165] In this regard, noting a gradual difference of opinions between them, Bavinck also voices the characteristics of the Dutch Réveil as "neither national, nor positively in accordance with the Reformed doctrine," but as individualistic.[166]

Notably, Bavinck regards Jacobus Isaac Doedes (1817-97) and Jan Jacob van Oosterzee (1817-82) as the representative figures of this tendency in the Utrecht School. Bavinck points out Van Oosterzee's theological transition from subjectivism to objectivism. Van Oosterzee followed the School of Schleiermacher regarding the truth of Christianity that the truth of Christianity is based on a religious feeling or a religious experience, not a process of reasoning nor historical evidence.[167] However, after confronting Opzoomer's criticism, Van Oosterzee changed his position on the issue and supported the claim that the facts should be considered the central and objective proof for the truth of Christianity. Later, Van Oosterzee drew attention to apologetics to such an extent as to regard it more important than dogmatics.

Although these figures attempted to renew supranaturalism, Bavinck points out their limitations: that they regarded historical proofs as the ultimate grounds of faith. Bavinck criticizes the concept of faith in Doedes that he denied believing in authority and restrictively allowed moral authority in religion.[168] Indeed, Doedes assumed intellectual proofs as the

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[161] Bolt, "The Imitation of Christ in the Cultural-Ethical Ideal of Herman Bavinck," 137.

[162] George Harinck and Lodewijk Winkeler, "The Nineteenth Century," 458.

[163] Bavinck, *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 15.

[164] M. Elizabeth Kluit, *Het Protestantse Réveil in Nederland en Daarbuiten 1815-1865* (Amsterdam: Paris, 1970). 80.

[165] M. Elizabeth Kluit, *Maatschappij, School, en Kerk: Ottho Gerhard Heldring en het Réveil* (Hoenderloo: Strichting Hoenderloo, 1958), 20. Cited from tenZythoff, *Sources of Secession*, 60.

[166] Bavinck, "The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands," 443.

[167] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 513, 514.

[168] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 462, 541.

legitimacy of faith and science. Doedes maintained a distinction between knowing and believing. Thus, in Bavinck's view, Doedes tried to get to know the truth of Christianity through "unbiased, purely historical investigation."[169]

On the other hand, Van Oosterzee wielded apologetics and polemics to justify the faith over against the Groningen School and Modern theology. In Bavinck's view, although Van Oosterzee maintained that theology is a science, it is regarded as a specific science of faith; thus, he underlined the significance of its characteristic as a science as strictly as any other sciences. Concerning these opinions of the Utrecht School, Bavinck explains the relation between the historical proof and faith that "Both Van Oosterzee and Doedes chose their theological standpoint not *within* faith, but *before* it and on the *outside* of it."[170] In this way, for Bavinck they placed much emphasis on apologetics above theology.[171] Human reason was granted the right to verify the credentials of the truth of revelation. Ultimately, apologetics comes down to rationalism.

For their attempts to defend Reformed orthodoxy, Bavinck acknowledges their influence over the Church and theology in the Netherlands of his time. When the orthodox faith was considered an antiquated and invalid notion by the Groningen school and modern theology, Bavinck esteems that they were not ashamed to confess the central truths of Christianity bravely and did not hesitate to suffer for His sake. However, Bavinck objects to the historical apologetics of Utrecht school, since it defended the truth of Christianity through historical proofs.[172] For Bavinck, Christianity should be built on the foundation of faith, not human reason. The knowledge of the truth can be found only in the witness of God, not in human faith nor fallible human testimony. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the triune God provides for Bavinck an ontological foundation for being and an epistemological ground for knowing.

3.2.5 Ethical Theology

Ethical theology should be understand here to refer to the developments and imprints of Bavinck's theology involved in his intellectual context. Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye (1818-74) and one of his students, Johannes Hermanus Gunning (1829-1905), were the representatives of the ethical theology of this period. As an offshoot of the Réveil, the ethical theologians opened up a new vista for how to gain access to the knowledge of God and to become a true human being and a moral being, not by human reasoning and intellect, but by his soul, his heart, and his moral consciousness.

Concerning ethical theology, Bavinck states that the starting point of ethical theology is the regenerated subject, placing a purity of life before doctrine. All the truths in Scripture and the confession of faith were deduced from the Christian life, according to ethical theology.[173]

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[169] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 514n25.
[170] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 219.
[171] Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 271.
[172] Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 292.
[173] Bavinck, "The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands," 448.

Hence, the living congregation, no less than an imperfect and variable norm of life, is the main object of the Church, rather than doctrine and its preservation. Instead of maintaining doctrine, confession, and discipline of theology in absolute and judicial senses, what is of utmost importance were ethical preaching, moral discipline, and renewing by the Spirit. Ethical theology sought experiential Christianity.[174] On this basis, the most significant aspect of ethical theology is a conversion of humanity and a regenerated life. Until that renewal takes place as conversion, the cluttered state of the Church ought to be abjectly endured as being God's will.

Concerning the relation between faith and reason, it is generally conceded that de la Saussaye attempted to overcome the tension and opposition between faith and reason in an ethical way.[175] As regards the historical proofs, which were greatly valued by the Utrecht theology, de la Saussaye attached little value to historical proofs for the foundation of faith, rather, he attached greater value to internal evidences.[176] Namely, the recognition of the objective nature of truth was more a matter of manifestation in the conscience and life of the Christians.[177] Even though the ethical theologians gave their assent to the so-called orthodox propositions, they denied the definition of faith as an intellectual act. Instead, they laid the ground of faith in religious experience.[178] Although they accepted the churches' confessions, they had to be viewed as "expressions of inner religious life, the center of Ethical theology."[179] The faith was defined as a matter of heart and life. The truth is not intellectual, Bavinck comments, but thoroughly ethical by nature and personal; identical with the living Christ Himself.[180]

In the confrontation with ethical theology, Bavinck undertakes analysis and criticism of de la Saussaye, particularly concerning the character of the Word of God, its principles, and scope.[181] Even though Kuyper criticized Bavinck's critique of de la Saussaye for being too weak, Bavinck's assessment clearly shows the shortcomings of ethical Theology.[182] Regarding the authority of Scriptures, Bavinck criticized the fact that de la Saussaye described the nature of scriptural authority as moral. For Bavinck, he asserted that there is no longer any authority but morality in the area of religion. Humanity believes that the truth has the right to exact obedience more than they believe the truth based on authority. Namely, this means that moral authority equals morality.[183] Bavinck notes that this way of thinking causes serious conceptual confusion about what truth is and where it can be found in the area of

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[174] Wood, *Going Dutch in the Modern Age,* 59.

[175] Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye, *De crisis: kerkelijke tijdvragen, vrijmoedig beoordeeld* (Rotterdam: Wenk, 1868).

[176] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 537.

[177] George Harinck and Lodewijk Winkeler, "The Nineteenth Century," 475.

[178] Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 251.

[179] Wood, *Going Dutch in the Modern Age*, 15.

[180] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 221, 222.

[181] Bavinck, *De Theologie van Prof. Dr. Daniël Chantepie de la Saussaye*, 84-102. Cf. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus*, 65-114.

[182] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus*, 18.

[183] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 462. Cf. Id., *De Theologie van Prof. Dr. Chantepie de la Saussaye*, 52, 53.

religion. De la Saussaye considered the church's confession as an epistemic source, and thus Scripture was demoted to the norm. In a similar vein, Gunning placed the confession alongside Scripture as an epistemic source. Regarding Gunning's position, Bavinck argues that there is a fundamental problem since this idea is based on an absurd view between Church and Scripture.[184]

For de la Saussaye, intellectualism was more of a hindrance than a help to Christian life and Christian theology.[185] In reaction to this intellectualism, de la Saussaye suggested the so-called Christological-anthropological way. In comparison with the modernism of the nineteenth century, de la Saussaye's Christocentrism was assessed as a renewed way to the heart of the Christian confession as deeper than the humanistic Christology of the Groningen school and as quite different from the humanization of modernism.[186] For de la Saussaye, the idea of the union of the divine and human in Jesus Christ should be regarded as the Christian life model, particularly in terms of the kenotic character of Christ through divine self-denial. That is, the personal and existential relationship with Jesus Christ over that of confession and doctrine was emphasized in his theology.[187] In this regard, Bavinck asserts that de la Saussaye devoted himself to reconciling faith and science by his emphasis on the person of Christ. While ethical theology tried to reconcile the relationship between Christianity and culture, Bavinck disagrees with their attempts about the exclusion of Christianity from the public sphere, particularly in the realms of politics and education.

Against ethical theology, Bavinck develops his trinitarian epistemology. Considering its distinctive context in his debate with the ethical theologians, the significance of Bavinck's trinitarian epistemology should not be underestimated. Paying attention on *principia* of the Reformed tradition and deploying the distinction of the *principium cognoscendi* in a *principium externum* and *principium internum*, Bavinck deals with theological epistemology in his prolegomena of *Reformed Dogmatics*.[188] Moreover, concerning the Christian life, Bavinck tries to revitalize the public sphere, presenting an all-encompassing and balanced view, based on his trinitarian theology. This theological context leads Bavinck to articulate Christian theology for defending the truth of Christianity and lead the Christian life of his days in the right direction.

3.3 Conclusion

In order to place Bavinck in his theological context, this chapter investigated the background of neo-Calvinism and the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century theological tendencies

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[184] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 88.

[185] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 70-3. Cf. Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 64-9.

[186] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 72, 73. Cf. A. J. Rasker, *De Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk vanaf 1795* (Kampen: Kok, 1974), 137; Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 64.

[187] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 70-3. Cf. Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 269.

[188] Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 260.

in the Netherlands. Let me sum up the main points of the present chapter.

The first section provided a point of entry into Calvin's appraisal among neo-Calvinist circles in general and Calvin's position within Bavinck's thoughts in particular. The dominant image and role of Calvin among Protestants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Netherlands are examined. During this period, the shift of the role and function of Calvin is a fundamental defining point in reappraising Calvin among neo-Calvinists. By employing Frijhoff's proposed concepts of Calvin as icon and saint, this change can be described as a shift of emphasis from the iconic Calvin towards the saint Calvin. Namely, in the decades around 1909, there existed an increasing tension between Calvin as an icon and Calvin as a saint. The first-generation neo-Calvinists in the 1880s and 1890s represented by Kuyper were interested in Calvin's theology *per se* and considered it Christian principles, resting on the Word of God.

However, the role of Calvin gradually changed within Dutch neo-Calvinist circles in connection with Calvin's personal life. This means that from the emphasis upon Calvin's theology as a life system as well as Christian principle, some apparent and considerable changes took place towards the stress on Calvin's religious personality and character. That significant shift has taken place particularly between the first-generation and second-generation of neo-Calvinists. While the first-generation of neo-Calvinists had consistently identified Calvin as a man of Christian principles, the new scholarship of the second-generation of neo-Calvinists has begun to highlight Calvin's life as an example of the Christian life and an application of Christian principles. This issue directly sheds light on Bavinck's distinct position on Calvin among neo-Calvinists of his time.

Bavinck concurs with Kuyper's emphasis on Calvin's theology as the Christian worldview, unlike Kuyper, further he calls attention to Calvin's life as an example of the Christian life. One can discern Bavinck's positive appreciation of Calvin's theological insights as well as his personal life, notably in his public lecture on the occasion of Calvin's four hundredth Birthday. Even though Dutch neo-Calvinists responded skeptically to this commemoration of Calvin's birth, Bavinck highly celebrates it, presenting his own view in this lecture. Thus, Bavinck's intensive engagement with Calvin provides directly his position on Calvin's theology and his life as follows.

First, Bavinck speaks strongly about the significance of Calvin's theology for keeping the faith of Christians, giving them the confidence of salvation, and supporting them in their good fight to finish the race. Indeed, for Bavinck, Calvin's theology has had a considerable influence not only on the Protestant Churches and confessions but also in the political and social spheres against anti-Christian principles and the tide of unbelief. Notwithstanding that his days' prevailing tendencies were unfavorable to Calvin's theology, Bavinck maintains that it should be developed among the Churches and theology for the following centuries to the succeeding generations. It is quite clear that Bavinck argues that Calvin's theology can influence the whole of Reformed Christianity of the future, basically concurring with the emphasis on Calvin's theology as Christian principles of the first-generation neo-Calvinists. Although Calvin's theology is not the only true Christian theology, namely, Bavinck adds his voice to regard Calvinism highly as the richest and most beautiful form of Christianity. Calvin's theology must have played a significant role in laying the theological foundation and

further sharpened his thoughts and opened his eyes. Fundamentally standing on Calvin's theology will be explained in the following chapters as Bavinck defends and articulates Reformed theology, particularly with his own trinitarian insights against the challenges of his day.

Second, whereas Bavinck agrees with Kuyper's understanding of the significance of Calvin's theology as Calvinist principles, unlike Kuyper, Bavinck draws attention to Calvin's life and character. Bavinck emphasizes Calvin's life as well as his theology in the public lecture on Calvin celebrating the four-hundredth birthday of Calvin, and throughout Bavinck's writings. Indeed, Bavinck not only singles out Calvin's theology as one of most biblical forms of Christianity, but also does not hesitate in describing Calvin as an example of the Christian life. Without undermining the existing neo-Calvinist principle discourse of the first-generation, Bavinck is uniquely positioned to reevaluate Calvin's personality and character. Bavinck emphasizes Calvin's conversion in terms of the certainty of faith and the obedience of God's will.

The second section examined the theological landscape of the Netherlands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to sharpen Bavinck's awareness of the context of Dutch systematic theology of his time, this study focused on a theological analysis primarily through Bavinck's own writings. As has been noted, Bavinck expressed his thoughts on the features of Dutch dogmatics through several types of articles, pamphlets, and lectures. Bavinck's writings directly offer an insight into Bavinck's perspectives on the challenges of new theological tendencies. Considering that Bavinck's vision of the Christian life is closely related to his desire to address the issues of his time, it should be noted that Bavinck had the privilege of protecting Reformed theology by formulating his entire theology based on the doctrine of the Trinity, apart from all the devastating impact of the challenges of anti-Christianity and anti-trinitarianism. In this light, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters, Bavinck's theological context is an ideal place to study the development of the Reformed doctrine of the Trinity and the image of God and to examine the uniqueness of Bavinck's doctrines in particular. Hence, this theological context led Bavinck to establish exquisite and refined Reformed theology.

Chapter 4. The Doctrine of the Trinity

This study aims to discuss the analysis between Bavinck and Calvin, particularly concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God. For a meaningful comparative study of Bavinck and Calvin, the first part of this chapter offers Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, and the second part of this chapter explains major characteristics of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity.

4.1 Bavinck and the Doctrine of the Trinity

This section examines Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity. The setup of this section is as follows. First, in order to obtain an accurate and sufficient understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, Bavinck's understanding of the theological atmosphere of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in his attention to the doctrine of the Trinity is discussed. This analysis will shed light upon the urgent problem for the anti-Trinitarianism and anti-Christianity of Bavinck's day and his emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity as the theological foundation for a proper understanding of both ontology of God and the world and theological epistemology. When the main lines of the development of theology were toward atheism and evolutionism (4.1.1.), a monistic understanding of God and mechanical determinism (4.1.2.), a rationalistic view of deism, pantheistic confusion between God and the world (4.1.3.), an anti-revelation tendency and the rise of the historical-critical approach to the text (4.1.4.), Bavinck defies these theological tides, based on the doctrine of the Trinity. Given that several theological standpoints are deduced, which are of significance to Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, this analysis is necessarily preliminary.

Moreover, this section further explicates the precise sense of his understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. In order to grasp how Bavinck elaborates his own trinitarian arguments, this section considers Bavinck's understanding of the unity and diversity of the divine persons (4.1.5.), and the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity (4.1.6.). Then, for Bavinck, what are major-specific theological challenges that appeared on the scene in his time? What is the role of the doctrine of the Trinity for a proper understanding of the nature of God, the world, and relations between them? What primary and unique elements does Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity contain?

4.1.1 Atheism

The late nineteenth and early twentieth-century theological context provides the key to understanding Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity. In Bavinck's thought, various theologies and philosophies had influenced Reformed theology in general and the theology of the Netherlands in particular. Interacting with the new philosophical and theological movements, Bavinck comments that "Dutch theology has a character of its own, and a history

distinguished in many respects from that in other countries."[1] In Bavinck's estimation, the atheistic philosophy gradually established a bridgehead on both systematic theology and biblical studies to subvert the very fundamentals of Christianity. In his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck expresses his criticism to the atheism of his era strongly as follows: "Dogmatics, specifically the doctrine of God, shrinks by the day, and theology is no longer able to maintain its place. Theology is no longer able to speak of God because it no longer speaks from him and through him. It no longer has any names with which to name God. God becomes the great Unknown; the world first becomes a domain without God (ἄθεος), then a domain that is anti-God (ἀντίθεος)."[2]

When this atheistic tendency rapidly crept onto and made devastating impacts on the religious supernaturalist worldview of his times, Bavinck defended Christian theism. For him, the worldviews are fundamentally nothing less than the theistic and the atheistic.[3] It is the doctrine of the Trinity that provides the framework of Bavinck's argument against anti-religious atheism. Atheism holds that physics is satisfied with itself, and therefore there is no need for all metaphysical concepts of the supernatural in the development of natural science. Thus, the necessity, possibility, and reality of the supra-natural world were renounced by atheism. Especially when considering atheism arising from the nineteenth-century, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's philosophy should in no way be excluded from Bavinck's response to the intellectuals of that period.[4] Throughout his life, Nietzsche indeed committed himself to criticize Christianity and to reverse all its values. This highly critical attitude not only takes a stance against Christianity, in Bavinck's view but further suggests a new philosophy and morality.[5]

Nietzsche maintains that all Christian values must be transvalued, according to his own atheism. First, Nietzsche strongly criticizes that Christianity is a distorted religion by addressing the question of the authenticity of the teaching of Jesus.[6] Second, Nietzsche insists that Christianity is the religion of decadence by claiming that the church is the most corrupt thing that humanity has designed.[7] Third, from Nietzsche's perspective, Christians use imagination to build Christianity.[8] In Bavinck's thought, it is apparent that for

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[1] Herman Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands, in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Reviews* (1892), 210.

[2] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 103.

[3] Herman Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing* (Kampen: Kok, 1904), 51.

[4] Gordon Graham, "Bavinck, Nietzsche, and Secularization," in *The Kuyper Center Review*, ed. John Bowlin, vol.2 (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011): 16. Cf. Eglinton, *Bavinck*, 241.

[5] Herman Bavinck, *Hedendaagsche moral* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1902), 44; Id., *Philosophy of Revelation*, 249; Id., *Christelijke wereldbeschouwing: rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam op 20 October 1904*. 2nd ed. (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1913), 20, 21n1.

[6] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, trans. H.L. Mencken (Torrance, CA: Noontide Press, 1980), 83, 89, 90, 101-06, 111, 120, 141.

[7] Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 42, 43, 64, 155-59. Cf. Bavinck, *Hedendaagsche moral*, 46-8.

[8] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 19; Id., *The Antichrist*, 67; Id., *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Richard Polt (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 23, 24.

Christianity, Nietzsche was the powerful voice that needs to be confronted.[9] Bavinck acknowledges Nietzsche's far-reaching and multifaceted effect on modern culture.[10] Bavinck points to Nietzsche's stress on the phenomenal world created by imagination in the human mind.[11] Bavinck warns against Nietzsche's notion of the power of the will and the Übermensch, considering the development of the voluntarism of his day.[12] Bavinck points out a problematic aspect of Nietzsche's concept of morality that Nietzsche's thought is a very one-sided point of view.[13] Bavinck points out the problem of Nietzsche's understanding of Christianity about the impossibility of following Jesus' teaching or the inconsistency of Christianity.[14]

Concerning the atheism of the nineteenth century, including Nietzsche's radical critique of Christianity, Bavinck also considers this religious alternative to Christianity as a part of the modernism of his days.[15] Instead of making a counterargument against the claims, Bavinck mainly attempts to provide the metaphysical foundations for the account of religion and Christianity. The notion of the triune God is the only proper presupposition and foundation of Christian theism. The doctrine of the Trinity is, for Bavinck, the starting point for giving an account of the relationship between God and the world. Within this trinitarian framework, Bavinck utilizes foundational metaphysics for uniting Christians and bridging the gap between Christianity and culture. Bavinck not only clings to a Christian theistic metaphysic amidst the attempt to subvert the ground on which Christianity stands but also adheres to and defends Christianity and all its values on the supernatural level in relation to both ontology of the relationship between God and the world and theological epistemology.

Particularly in response to atheism's fundamental rejection of metaphysics, Bavinck stresses the necessity of the metaphysical foundations that all physics must presuppose metaphysics, promoting a distinctly trinitarian theology. Above all, the doctrine of the Trinity enables Bavinck to consistently demonstrate Christian theism, particularly with respect to God's existence and His works. Apart from God's triune being, there is no self-sufficient and self-existent notion of God. The fullness of life, fecund productivity, and absolute self-communication take place within the three persons of the Godhead. The triune God is transcendently exalted above the world, and at the same time, governs it and makes Himself known and communicates Himself to humans, in accordance with His almighty will. Notably, it was Bavinck's conviction that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity. Hence, for Bavinck, the possibility and reality of the knowledge of God are rooted in the

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[9] Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing*, 27.

[10] Gordon Graham, "Bavinck's Philosophy of Revelation," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45 (2010), 45. Graham notes Bavinck's attention to Nietzsche's philosophy that Nietzsche's spirit hovers over the whole text of his *The Philosophy of Revelation*, especially the chapter entitled, "Revelation and Culture."

[11] Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing*, 9.

[12] Herman Bavinck, "Primacy of the Intellect of the Will," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society,* ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 200.

[13] Herman Bavinck, *Hedendaagsche moral* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1902), 44-74; Id., "Ethics and Politics," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*, ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 272.

[14] Bavinck, "Christian Principles and Social Relationships," in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*: 133.

[15] Harinck, "The Religious Character of Modernism and the Modern Character of Religion," 74.

economic Trinity.

Moreover, Bavinck warns against atheism's denial of the realm of the supernatural and adheres to the existence of God in his stress on the relationship between God and humanity. When Bavinck discusses atheism, the problematic aspects are closely related to the entire realms of humanity that the denial of the divine being leads a human being into the wrong place, namely, the elevation into God's place. [16] In this sense, Bavinck builds his argumentation on his conviction that atheism is not proper to the nature of human beings. The explanation of human nature is, as will be seen in the next chapter, most profoundly manifested in Bavinck's emphasis on humanity as the image of the triune God. To be more specific, fundamental to Bavinck's argument against atheism is his emphasis on self-consciousness in humanity. Bavinck explains that religion is the intrinsic aspect of human nature, and thus the very core of self-consciousness closely involves religion. For Bavinck, the self-consciousness of its dependence and freedom is the firm foundation of religion. Considering the core of self-consciousness, including dependence on God and freedom, atheism is an intellectual and ethical abnormality by nature. [17] The self-consciousness leads humanity to belief in and service of a personal God, in Bavinck's view, and this fundamentally rests on the presupposition of the existence of God. For Bavinck, the knowledge of God is inseparably linked to the existence of God, "which is presupposed in and with the truth of religion." [18] By understanding the sense of dependence on God in self-consciousness as the essence of religion as well as the intrinsic nature of humanity, Bavinck can maintain that religion is a concern for all human beings, without exception. In this regard, given that human beings are the image of God, all religion is supernatural by nature, and Christianity indeed is the one true, supernatural religion.

The doctrine of the image of the triune God, as will be seen, offers ontological conditions for his account of the reality of human existence. Notably, according to Bavinck, the whole person himself is the image of God. This means that the image of God extends to the whole person, and no part in human beings is excluded from the image of God. [19] Just as the triune God has the self-consciousness, freedom, and relationships of the three persons in the divine being, humanity has self-consciousness, particularly in the senses of freedom and dependence. [20] In this way, the doctrine of the Trinity plays a major role in answering the challenges of atheism with respect to metaphysics concerning God and the world, so also concerning human nature as the image of the triune God.

4.1.2 Monism

In conscious dialogue with the various forms of monism, Bavinck consistently rejects the monistic worldview and defends and further develops Reformed theology on the grounds of

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[16] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 103.

[17] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 56, 60-79.

[18] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 160.

[19] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 533.

[20] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 213.

the doctrine of the Trinity. Bavinck criticizes the monism of his times by regarding it as "the dominant heresy of the nineteenth century."[21] By means of the concept of evolution, monism claims that the unity of humanity and the harmony of the world are possible without any diminution of the richness of reality. Within the framework of the development and progress of the human race, the idea of evolution was considered as "a magic formula."[22] When striving after the unity of reality of the world, monism asserts that this desired unity of the natural and human history can be decipherable by empirical investigation, scientific reflection, or philosophical abstraction. For example, Charles Darwin endeavors to embrace the misery in nature, based on the principle of struggle for existence via the notions of natural selection and survival of the fittest.[23] Just as Darwin was convinced the law of the development of nature, Karl Marx claims the development of human society, employing modern social sciences. Marx tries to explain the misery in society, based on the principle of class struggle, from the viewpoint of the materialistic or economic view of history.[24]

Firmly rejecting this monistic view, Bavinck declares that there is no principle or formula which governs all phenomena of nature or fits all universes with its variety of matters.[25] Although monism seeks to unite the reality of the world, Bavinck describes monism as "a mere disguise."[26] In Bavinck's view, monism inevitably produces deadly uniformity and multiformity, which manifests unity alone or diversity alone.[27] Bavinck states that it is evident that this monistic uniformity cannot resolve the conflict with the rich variety in the actual world. Pointing out the weakness and limitation of monism's striving for the uniformity of reality, he demonstrates how unrealistic monism is, namely, how monism overlooks the difference between a biological, a psychical, and an ethical organism.[28] For instance, concerning Darwin's theory of evolution, Bavinck notes that Darwin's observation about the misery in nature was led to agnostic naturalism. So, religion does not seem credible but seems problematic in any area. Darwin's theory finally leads human beings away from religion, since theological discussions are disconnected from reality and full of meaningless content. In this sense, Bavinck is convinced that monism is opposed to Scripture and must, in principle, oppose all revelation.

Over against the monistic evolutionary view, Bavinck offers a foundational account of reality and the nature of the world, based on the unity and diversity within the immanent Trinity. For Bavinck, it is the doctrine of the Trinity that provides the theological foundation for the unity and diversity of the reality of the cosmos against monism in an ontological sense and sets the overall architecture of Bavinck's argument for a creational destiny toward the glory of God in an eschatological sense.

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[21] Herman Bavinck, "Hedendaagsche Wereldbeschouwing," in *De Vrije Kerk* 9 (1883): 435-461; Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 30-46.

[22] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 10.

[23] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 35.

[24] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 114.

[25] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 44, 85, 118, 121, 163.

[26] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 40.

[27] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 435.

[28] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 118.

Most notably, Bavinck strives to resurrect the doctrine of the Trinity, in stark contrast to the monism of his former teacher Johannes Scholten. Among other faculty members at the University of Leiden, Scholten mainly occupies a unique position in nineteenth-century Dutch theology, since his modern theology, focusing on monism, expanded considerably over time.[29] At the University of Utrecht, Scholten wrote his doctoral dissertation on *De Dei erga hominem amore, principe religionis Christianae loco* under the guidance of his uncle, Philipp Wilhelm van Heusde.[30] While Scholten's first edition of his dissertation deals with the formal principle of the Reformation, the sole authority of Scripture, most representatively the doctrine of the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*, his 'De Leer der Hervormde Kerk' afterward is singled out as the signal of the birth of Dutch modernism.[31] Scholten's theology shows the influence of Hegelian thought, namely, that he demonstrates how Reformed theology or confessions found the fulfillment in idealistic thought.[32] Bavinck comments on Scholten's monism that "[I]n proportion as his philosophy came under the influence of Hegel, it became evident that he was striving to put the new wine of his monistic system into the old bottles of Reformed terminology."[33]

Based on his own hermeneutics of anti-supernaturalism and German speculative idealism, Scholten stressed the monistic image of God. The monistic understanding of God in Scholten's thought then leads to the appropriation of the world as described with a deterministic mechanical concept of providence. Based on this mechanical theistic determinism, Scholten claims the optimistic and evolutionary destiny of humanity. In this context, in Bavinck's view, Scholten's monism is the foremost challenger and achieved a strong position in Dutch Protestant modernist theology. For Bavinck, Scholten's misreading of God as monistic leads to the misunderstanding of the world as exclusively mechanical. Therefore, in order to defend Reformed theology, Scholten's monism needs to be dealt with sternly. Bavinck strives to resurrect the doctrine of the Trinity against Scholten's monistic image of God and his mechanical view of providence. Accordingly, what are the key features of Scholten's monism, and on what point does Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity play a role against Scholten's monism?

First, Scholten refutes supernaturalism. He is dissatisfied with and criticizes supernaturalism that rests on the insufficiency of historical apologetic evidence as a basis for religious faith and the lack of philosophic depth.[34] Under the strong influence of Alexander

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[29] K. H. Roessingh, *Het Modernisme in Nederland* (Haarlem, Holland: De Erven F. Bohri, 1922), 179; R. H. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten* (Kampen: Kok, 1966), 23; Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 11.

[30] Johannes Hendricus Scholten, *De Dei erga hominem amore, principe religionis Christianae loco* (Trajecti ad Rhenum: Natan, 1836).

[31] Johannes Hendricus Scholten, *De Leer der Hervormde Kerk in hare grondbeginselen: uit de bronnen voorgesteld en beoordeeld,* 4th ed., 2vols (Leiden: Engels, 1861-62). The second volume deals with the material principle of the Reformed faith, that is, the unconditioned sovereignty of God. Cf. Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology*, 98-103. Cf. James H. Mackay, *Religious Thought in Holland During the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), 85-107.

[32] Hendrikus Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989), 98.

[33] Editors, "Herman Bavinck," in *The Princeton Theological Review* 6 (1908), 533.

[34] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 215. Cf. J. H. Scholten, *Supranaturalisme in verband met Bijbel, Christendom en Protestantisme* (Leiden, 1867).

Schweizer's *Die Glaubenslehre der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche* (1844-47), Scholten decides to lay the groundwork for his theological works not based on the Bible but the human experience and reason, and he refutes the theological concepts of revelation and miracles in the Reformed tradition. While Scholten states that he made considerable efforts to demonstrate Reformed confession of faith, his understanding of the notion 'Reformed' is apparently different from the Reformed tradition.[35] Although Scholten considers Calvin as "being a monist and anti-supra-naturalist like himself," as Harinck rightly notes, his understanding of Calvin is also different from that shared by the Reformed tradition.[36] Based on historical-critical exegesis, Scholten insists that the Bible is not a revelation anymore, and therefore theology should distance itself from the authority of the Bible and dogmatic tradition.[37] By leaning on the rapid development of modern empirical sciences, Scholten argues that the Reformed faith and the principles of revelation need to be revised.[38] For Scholten, the Reformed faith should be understood as the absolute spirit by speculative reason. God is no more a personal God who intervenes in nature and human history through miracles. In Scholten's thought, the works of God are considered the same as natural law. In this way, theology became a kind of empirical science. Scholten plays a decisive role in the way of thinking about anti-supernatural concepts of the Reformed tradition and forces the Dutch Reformed church to accept these modern worldviews.[39]

While all concepts of supernaturalism were exchanged for the notion of development or process in history and nature by Scholten, Bavinck defends a supernatural feature of religion over against Scholten's anti-supernaturalism, promoting the validity of the existence of God, self-revelation of God, and the knowability of God, based on his trinitarian epistemology. Bavinck emphasizes that all revelation is supernatural, and without revelation, true religion cannot exist. Bavinck comments on the changes and the shift of focus in Scholten's theology that Scholten's own speculation made him sever "the bond between facts and ideas, between Christianity and history."[40] Bavinck is convinced that the trinitarian being of God underlies the epistemological foundation for not only all religion but also all science.

Second, Scholten argues the monistic image of God, under the influence of German speculative idealism. The philosopher, Cornelis Willem Opzoomer at the University of Utrecht, influenced Scholten's theology deeply from the early stages of Scholten's theological development. G. Brillenburg Wurth points out that it is generally acknowledged that there were four stages of theological development of Scholten's theology. Scholten occupies himself with an in-depth study regarding the principles of the Reformed faith and

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[35] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 17. Cf. George Harinck and Lodewijk Winkeler, "The Nineteenth Century," in *Handbook of Dutch Church History*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 474.

[36] Harinck, "Abraham Kuyper's Historical Understanding and Reformed Historiography," 75.

[37] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 37, 38.

[38] Bavinck, *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, A General View of the Netherlands 17 (The Hague: Commercial Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, 1915), 25.

[39] Veenhof, *Revelatie en Inspiratie*, 11.

[40] Bavinck, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands," 215. Cf. Bavinck, *Mental, Religious and Social Force in the Netherlands*, 25.

the relationship between theology and philosophy through a discussion with Opzoomer. After the debate with Opzoomer, speculative intellectualism became the main pillars of Scholten's theological method in conjunction with a historical-critical exegesis. Along the lines of Hegel's speculative intellectualism, Scholten separates the fundamental principles from the doctrines of Reformed theology in order to purify the concepts. As Hegel believes that philosophy can strip the historic symbolic forms and track down the pure idea underlying them, Scholten is convinced that the philosophical treatment of orthodox dogmatics can be the proper way to get closer to the true reality.[41] Initially, Scholten states that his theological quest for certainty proceeded from God's absolute sovereignty by faith; however, finally, it seems that his theological principle rests on deterministic mechanical monism through speculative rationalism.[42]

In response to Scholten's monistic understanding of God, Bavinck formulates a reinterpretation of Reformed theology and reprioritizes the Trinity of God again.[43] It should be noted that although Bavinck inherits Scholten's historical-empirical approach, he distances himself from Scholten's metaphysical presuppositions and modern theological perspectives. Since Scholten's idolization of determinism comes at the cost of the triune God, Bavinck emphatically explains the natures of God and human beings and the relationship between them.[44] Then, how does Bavinck articulate his doctrine of the Trinity against Scholten's monism and mechanical determinism?

Whereas Scholten emphasizes the monistic image of God, Bavinck emphasizes the triune God and develops the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. For Bavinck, the immanent Trinity is the starting point and the very foundation of Christianity. The essence of Christianity and the knowledge of God and the world can be maintained only based on a confession of the Trinity, especially of the immanent Trinity. To be specific, the absolute unity and absolute diversity in the three persons of the Godhead, as will be seen in the following sections, provide the grounds for the unity and diversity in the cosmos. Bavinck is convinced that the divine unity-in-diversity within the Godhead is manifested in nature and history as general revelation. Bavinck's trinitarian notion of unity in diversity is totally different from the uniformity or multiformity of monism. Based on the unity and diversity within the three persons of the Trinity, he rejects monism's deadly uniformity and multiformity.

Third, in contrast to the theological mechanism of Scholten, the organic relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity has a prominent place in Bavinck's thought.[45] For Bavinck, the cosmos has an inherently organic feature. In Bavinck's theology, the center of gravity of the argument concerning the relationship between God and the creature firmly rests on the proposition that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity.[46] Just as the unity and diversity of the immanent Trinity are the ontological grounds and

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[41] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 43.

[42] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 518.

[43] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 17, 135.

[44] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 104. Cf. Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 81, 149.

[45] Eglinton, "To Be or to Become - That Is the Question," 112.

[46] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 318.

presuppositions for the unity and diversity of all creatures, the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity is the very foundation for the nature of divine providence in the world. Since Scholten considers God as monistic rather than trinitarian in the light of the material principle of determinism, the nature of providence is also regarded as coercive and mechanical in his theology. As it were, within Scholten's predeterminism, God is none other than the Cause, the Spirit, or the idea of all existence. There exists only the process of cause and effect without the *telos*. Against Scholten's view of predetermination, Bavinck defends the Reformed view of predestination.[47] How does Bavinck defend God's works in creation and providence?

In Bavinck's view, the organic understanding of both creation and providence go together with the doctrine of the Trinity.[48] This organic motif repeatedly occurs in Bavinck's theology, where it is connected with a richly trinitarian doctrine of God, mainly manifesting the abundant relationship between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. In his *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing*, several key concepts of Bavinck's own understanding of the organic motif can be found.[49] Bavinck clarifies that unity and diversity exist simultaneously and harmoniously, and further unity precedes diversity towards a goal.[50] Whereas for deterministic monism, the creation does have a constant focus as the immediate action of cause-and-effect, Bavinck argues that the creature moves forward the eschatological *telos* for God's glory.[51]

In this sense, Bavinck's notion of organic takes a central place in the doctrine of the Trinity. God's sovereign relationship to the world is rooted in the nature of the triune God and His works. By considering the nature of the immanent Trinity in some sense, cornerstones of the economic Trinity, God's creation, His providence over the creation, and His redemption, presupposes the eternal generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. Bavinck underlines the historical-teleological aspect of the creation grounded in the eternal counsel of the triune God. The very being of the Trinity is organically manifested in the works of God. In the creation, preservation, and government of all creatures, the triune God brings the creature towards the *eschaton* for His glory. However, this is not a mechanical process between God and the creature. Organically rather than coercively or mechanically, God exercises His sovereignty over the entirety of nature and history.

In this way, Bavinck rules out the deterministic mechanical monism, stressing that all creatures have been made in all unity and diversity, manifesting God's attributes and perfections for the glory of the Triune God. For Bavinck, the doctrine of the Trinity is directly

[47] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 369, 374-77.

[48] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 68. Cf. Ibid., 80, 168, 170; Id., "Bavinck's Organic Motif: Questions Seeking Answers," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45 (2010), 63. Cf. Nathaniel Gray Sutanto also provides an articulation of Bavinck's organism in *God and Knowledge: Herman Bavinck's Theological Epistemology* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020), 17-30.

[49] Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing*, 50-65. Cf. Bavinck's notion of organic seems inherited not from the Idealism of Hegel and Schelling, the German History of Religions School, or the Dutch Ethical theologians, but from the Reformed traditions. Mattson, *Restored To Our Destiny*, 47-54; Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 59-62.

[50] Eglington, "Bavinck's Organic Motif: Questions Seeking Answers," 63.

[51] Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing* (Kampen: KoK,1904), 65.

related to organic cosmology. The notion of organic is essential to grasping Bavinck's view regarding the relationship between God and creatures. Against deterministic mechanical monism, Bavinck states that the confession of the Trinity in the Christian Church and faith is the grounds of the true view of nature and history.

4.1.3 Deism and Pantheism

In Bavinck's judgment, various forms of deism and pantheism have appeared repeatedly in the history of the doctrine as possible alternatives to Christianity.[52] Throughout his theological work, Bavinck sharply criticizes the errors of a deistic rationalistic view about God and the world and a pantheistic confusion between God and the world. For Bavinck, both deism and pantheism had made a devastating impact on the essence of religion.[53]

Specifically, given that the explicit distinction between Creator and creation is an essential characteristic of true religion, Bavinck argues that only the doctrine of the Trinity properly offers a stable and firm foundation for his account of the reality of God and creation.[54] For Bavinck, the distinction between Creator and creation is grounded on the being of God. Hence, Bavinck's definition of the being of God is important to grasp the Creator-creation distinction. Bavinck explores the being of God in relation to the notions of the self-existence and independence of God. In a discussion of divine immutability, Bavinck began with the concept of divine independence. In examining the independent, immutable being of God, Bavinck handles the distinguishing characteristic of the creation as dependent and mutable.[55]

In this regard, underlying the ontological distinction of Creator and creature is a more fundamental question concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Namely, the question of "What is the relationship between God and creation?" cannot be answered without appreciating a foundational trinitarian metaphysic. Alongside the ontological questions of the God-creation distinction, the question of "What is the true knowledge of God? How can human beings get knowledge of God?" can be answered by the doctrine of the Trinity. Particularly in answering the challenges of deism and pantheism with respect to the relationship between Creator and creature, Bavinck asks the question of "How can these two concerns be satisfied if not by the confession of a triune God?"[56] For Bavinck, only the doctrine of the Trinity can serve as the foundation for a proper understanding of God and the world both ontologically and epistemologically. Not only in the case of demonstrating the reality of the knowledge of God and the world, but further in all attempts to provide a foundation for creation and re-creation, Bavinck proposes the doctrine of the Trinity as a solution to the problems of deism and pantheism.

On the one hand, deism removes the connection between God and the world and causes

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[52] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 367-72. Cf. Ibid., 2: 155.

[53] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 331. Cf. Ibid., 1: 212; 2: 136. (Italics are mine.)

[54] Eglinton, "To Be or to Become - That Is the Question," 110, 111.

[55] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 331. Cf. Ibid., 1: 212; 2: 136. (Italics are mine.)

[56] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 332.

a perversion of the notion of God's personality. Bavinck describes deism's concept of God that God, who is absolutely hidden, is considered as 'cosmic depths,' 'absolute silence,' 'the unconscious,' 'the groundless.'[57] There is no possibility for the world to know God. Hence, there is no necessity for all divine works, including revelation.[58] This concept of God leads human beings to be self-sufficient, independent beings, endowed with intellect, and free will. Accordingly, there is no need of God for the whole of human life, even in the redemption of the soul.[59] Bavinck explains how deism raises the problems concerning the knowledge of God and the world that "Deism emancipated the world from God, reason from revelation, the will from grace."[60] In Bavinck's estimate, from the outset, deism is not only anti-supranaturalistic but also essentially irreligious, calling it the death of religion.[61]

On the other hand, pantheism blurs the distinction between God and the world, stressing the unity between God and the world, and causes a perversion of the concept of God's absoluteness.[62] Both divine self-consciousness and divine self-knowledge disappear, since pantheism erases the boundary line between God and the world. This pantheistic view leads human beings to be the epistemic source and standard of truth. Bavinck criticizes the influence of pantheism that "it is not God who saves man, but man who saves God."[63] Bavinck pointedly observes that the providence of God is rejected in favor of a pantheistic naturalism that "there is no room for the [act of] creation and therefore no room, in the real sense, for preservation and government."[64] Pantheism exhaustively identifies God and the world as a single fundamental substance. Bavinck opposes both deism and pantheism, considering them to be the death of theology, and thus both should be conquered in principle.[65]

Over against deism and pantheism, Bavinck points to God's absoluteness and personality, defending the doctrine of God and construing the relationship between God and the world. Bavinck notes that the tension between the divine absoluteness and the personality has long been debated in the history of religions and philosophy.[66] Concerning the history outside the sphere of God's revelation in Scripture, Bavinck comments that "we find that in all religious and philosophical systems the unity of the personality and absoluteness of God is broken."[67] He expressly states that though both deism and pantheism attempt to account for God's absoluteness and personality, they fail to provide a rationale accurately. Bavinck points to the limitation of the alternative religious views that "Absoluteness and personality, infinity and causality, immutability and communicability, absolute transcendence and likeness to the

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[57] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 332, 333.

[58] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 8.

[59] Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, trans. Henry Zylstra (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1956), 159. Cf. Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 80; 2: 602.

[60] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 6.

[61] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 600-03.

[62] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 159.

[63] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 232.

[64] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 599.

[65] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 212.

[66] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 29-52.

[67] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 34.

creature - all these pairs seem irreconcilable in the concept of God. We are caught up in an insoluble antinomy."[68] Within both deism and pantheism, by the same token, divine absoluteness is incompatible with divine personality.

Scripture teaches, according to Bavinck, God who is infinitely exalted above the whole realm of time (Rev. 1:8; 22:13), space (Acts 17:27-28), and every creature (Acts 17:24), at the same time, appears and manifests Himself in certain specific places, times, and persons.[69] Bavinck holds to both the absoluteness and the personality of God, and so that "in Scripture the personality and the absoluteness of God go hand in hand."[70] In accordance with the teaching of Scripture, Bavinck tries to defend the unity and harmony of both divine absoluteness and divine personality.[71] Then, the question can be asked as to how Bavinck maintains both God's absoluteness and personality in a coherent way.

Bavinck affirms that Scripture continually teaches God's absolute transcendence above and utterly distinct from all things. Bavinck notes that when God is described as 'the absolute,' it means "not an abstraction but a living, infinitely rich, and concrete Being, a Supreme Being."[72] It should be noted here that Bavinck's description of God as 'the absolute' is far from 'the absolute' in the nineteenth-century philosophy of idealism. While the term 'the absolute' in relation to God in the philosophical sense means that God is abstract being, without content, obtained by speculative abstraction. For Bavinck, the term 'the absolute' is theologically necessary for the description of God as "true, unique, infinitely full being, precisely because it was absolute, that is, independent being, belonging only to itself and self-existence."[73] When discussing the absoluteness of God, according to Bavinck, the first thing that Scripture teaches concerning God is that God is self-existent.[74] Bavinck goes on to cite a description of Augustine's writings on God's self-existence with the name of YHWH.[75] Bavinck emphatically declares the aseity of God that "God does not need the creation. He is Life, blessedness, glory in himself."[76] Bavinck notes the intimate connection between God's absoluteness and God's self-existence, maintaining that "absoluteness cannot be dispensed within that description since in this connection everything depends on describing God as God and on distinguishing him from all that is not God."[77]

Further, Bavinck holds to divine aseity, which marks out the trinitarian ontological being of God. Namely, the immanent Trinity is foremost and central to Bavinck's understanding of the absoluteness of God. As regards the immanent Trinity, Bavinck underlines that there exists absolute unity in essence and the absolute diversity in the three persons in the immanent Trinity. Within the immanent Trinity, Bavinck points to the divine fecundity,

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[68] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 47.

[69] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 33, 34. Cf. Ibid., 56, 110; Id., "Modernism and Orthodoxy," 99.

[70] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 34.

[71] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 117,118.

[72] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 120.

[73] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 123.

[74] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 150.

[75] Augustinus, *Sermones,* 6, n. 4; *Sermones,* 7, n, 7. cited from Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 37.

[76] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 332.

[77] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 122.

declaring God as "the absolute Being, the eternal One, who is and was and is to come, and in that way the ever-living and ever-productive One."[78] Against the deistic notion of God as an abstract entity or a lifeless principle, bearing mere monotonous and uniform existence, an infinite fullness of life and an absolute communicability within the immanent Trinity can give a satisfactory answer to the question of what the most fundamental ground for arguing for God's *ad extra* work of creation.

Moreover, Bavinck's affirmation of the personality of God is made possible by and depends upon his conviction of the relationship between the triune God's ontological existence and God's economic works in space and time. Against the doctrine of emanation as a pantheistic evolution and pantheistic comingling between God and the world, Bavinck explains the sharp distinction between God and the world. Based on his understanding of the trinitarian being of God *ad intra* and his works *ad extra*, Bavinck avoids the confusion between God and the world. Concerning the Creator-creation relationship, noting that there exists clearly the infinite ontological distance between God and creation.

In sum, in Bavinck's estimation, deism is fundamentally a perversion of God's absoluteness, and pantheism is essentially a perversion of God's personality. While deism radicalizes the absoluteness of God and disregards the personality of God, and pantheism radicalizes the personality of God and disregards the absoluteness of God. Bavinck forthrightly declares the absoluteness of God along with the God-creature distinction, grounded in the immanent Trinity and the personality of God along with the God-creature relationship, grounded on the relationship between immanent and economic Trinity.

4.1.4 Anti-Revelation Tendency

Not surprisingly, Bavinck's writings and addresses deal with the self-revelation of God.[79] In Bavinck's estimate, before the eighteenth century, the necessity, possibility, and reality of a special revelation was not the main issue of debate. However, the power of human reason came to the fore in the eighteenth century, and revelation consequently has been undermined and further demolished.[80] A vast amount of energy was expended in attacks upon the authority of Scripture and the legitimacy of God's self-revelation, based on the emerging empirical science and historical-critical exegesis in the nineteenth century.

Various philosophical views of Bavinck's days stand in sharp contrast to the place of

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[78] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 331.

[79] Bavinck's 1883 inaugural address on "The Science of Holy Theology" (*De wetenschap der Heilige Godgeleerdheid*) at theological seminary in Kampen in 1883 is intended to discuss a sound scientific theological methodology, the content of scientific theology, and the goal of scientific theology concerning the doctrine of the revelation. Bavinck publishes an article on the nature of theology as a science, entitled "Theology and Religious Studies," in 1892, which repletes with the content of the doctrine of revelation. This article serves as the foundation for the first volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics*. Also, Bavinck's 1902 inaugural address on "Religion and Theology" (*Godsdienst en godgeleerdheid*) at the Free University is firmly grounded to the doctrine of revelation. One can find a condensation of Bavinck's thought on the doctrine of revelation train of thought in his famous Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary of 1908.

[80] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 7.

revelation. At the time when Bavinck decided to go to study at Leiden, the University of Leiden was considered the mainstream of Dutch theology in the nineteenth century but furthermore as the representative name for modernist theology, along with the University of Groningen. Abraham Kuenen brought the University of Leiden great fame in the second half of the nineteenth century by means of his historical criticism of the Old Testament.[81] Kuenen gradually defied the authority of Scripture and thus excluded the supernatural elements such as prophecy and inspiration from Scripture. In his *De profeten en de profetie onder Israël*, Kuenen conclusively contends that the words of the Old Testament prophets are only the product of natural human development, not the result of revelation.[82] For Kuenen, in order to make Christianity fit for the modern world, the Bible should be considered as part of that history, as it were, "a corpus that consisted of a range of classical literature," not as the norm for historical development.[83]

For Bavinck, this crisis of the authority of Scripture is no less than a crisis of the premise of the existence of God, the self-revelation of God, and the knowability of God. In the face of the rise of the historical-critical approach to the text of Scripture, Bavinck fundamentally adheres to the authority of Scripture as the final norm for Christianity. In overt agreement with the view of revelation in the Reformed tradition, Bavinck declares with conviction that belief in Scripture is the starting point and the cornerstone of Christian theology.[84] Bavinck stresses that theology presumes the self-revelation of God and should accept it as its principle and method. In this regard, theology reproduces the content of the self-revelation. Bavinck is adamant in maintaining that "[D]ogmatics is the knowledge that God has revealed in his Word to the church concerning himself and all creatures as they stand in relation to him."[85]

On the other hand, German idealism regards the human mind and self-consciousness as first-order realities. To idealists, the knowledge of the object can be attained through the subjective perception of humanity. A human perception, through a process of the reasoning from the representation and the will of humans, is the basis and principle of the objectivity of knowledge. Monism strives to achieve a conceptual unity in opposition to divine revelation. Pragmatism places the criterion of all truth in satisfactoriness of mind, taking its foundation from its usefulness for life. Deism doubts the authenticity of revelation and claims that the fundamental principle of understanding reality is the autonomy of human reason with the anarchism of thought and the autosoterism of the will. For deism, there is no need for revelation to obtain knowledge or even salvation. Pantheism accounts for human beings as the epistemic source and standard of truth. Since pantheism equates the being of God with that of the world, there is no room for divine self-knowledge and divine self-consciousness as sources for the knowledge of God. Therefore, in pantheism, it is fundamentally impossible to apprehend knowledge of God in his creatures.

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[81] Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck en zijn tijdgenoten*, 23. Cf. K. H. Roessingh, *Het Modernisme in Nederland* (Haarlem, Holland: De Erven F. Bohri, 1922), 179.

[82] Abraham Kuenen, *De profeten en de profetie onder Israël,* 2 vols. (Leiden: P. Engels, 1875).

[83] George Harinck, "Why Was Bavinck in Need of a Philosophy of Revelation?" in *The Kuyper Center Review* 2, ed. John Bowlin (Grand Rapids, WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), 31.

[84] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 23, 24.

[85] Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation*, 226; Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 38.

Indeed, Bavinck feels the obligation to defend theological epistemology and pays substantial attention to the anti-revelation tendency and the doubt of the knowledge of God. Bavinck responds to these questions on religious certainty and the reality of the knowledge of God. In order to take up the challenges to the theological epistemology of his day, Bavinck passionately devotes some six hundred pages of exposition in the first volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics* to the question and his entire monograph on *The Certainty of Faith*. For Bavinck, it is necessary to justify the epistemological foundation as the precondition for the true knowledge of God. That Bavinck begins the prolegomena of his *Reformed Dogmatics* to provide the epistemological ground for the knowledge of God is not universally shared among the Reformed systematic theologians of his days.[86]

Notably, concerning agnosticism's denial of the knowability of God, Bavinck expresses his concern that agnosticism's concept of God is "an unknown invisible power," who cannot reveal himself, "who has neither consciousness nor will, who can in no way communicate himself, who is eternal silence."[87] In Bavinck's view, agnosticism's notion of God is antinomical, he notes, since "a knowledge of a being who is unknowable in himself, yet able to make something of himself known in the being he created."[88] In response to this antinomy of divine knowledge, Bavinck describes the knowledge of God as an adorable mystery. Here Bavinck is explicit: "This mystery cannot be comprehended; it can only be gratefully acknowledged. But mystery and self-contradiction are not synonymous."[89] One can clearly see that Bavinck speaks of both incomprehensibility and knowability at the same time. On the one hand, for the finite humanity, it is ontologically impossible to attain a thorough knowledge of God, being infinite. The infinite being of God is the incomprehensible one and thus is infinitely more abundant and far superior to all finite creatures. On the other hand, Bavinck convincingly affirms the knowability of God, noting that Scripture consistently assumes that "God is a person, a conscious and freely willing being, not confined to the world but exalted high above it."[90] That is, Bavinck holds firmly to the knowability of God through the self-revelation of God. As will be seen, while the incomprehensibility of God is based on God's absoluteness, according to Bavinck, but the knowability of God is rooted in God's personality. Bavinck explains a coherent and satisfying account of divine incomprehensibility and divine knowability, based on his doctrine of the Trinity.

For Bavinck, indeed, the doctrine of the Trinity provides a fruitful counterpoint to the rise of a more critical approach to theological epistemology, such as atheism, agnosticism, and anti-revelation tendencies. Bavinck's impassioned efforts to justify the ontological and epistemological foundations rest on his conviction that the Trinity is the very principle of being and knowing. Notably, just as the immanent Trinity is for Bavinck not only the starting point but also the main point in giving a foundational account of the ontological relationship between the Creator and the creature, the confession of the immanent Trinity is further the starting point for providing an account of epistemology.

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[86] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 91n39.
[87] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 51.
[88] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 48.
[89] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 49.
[90] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 30.

To be specific, in Bavinck's theology there is an intimate connection between the ontological distinction of God and the creation and the epistemological distinction between the incomprehensibility and knowability of God. As one might expect of Bavinck's trinitarian theology, for him, the bond between ontology and epistemology is supported by the doctrine of the Trinity that the immanent Trinity is reflected in the economic Trinity. Namely, a fullness of life, an infinite expansion, fecund productivity, and an absolute self-communication within the immanent Trinity ensures the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. The Son's eternal generation and the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son provide both the ontological ground for all creation and the epistemological ground for all knowledge. Under the locus of the immanent Trinity, Bavinck maintains that the triune God is the precondition for the knowledge of God.

More interestingly, Bavinck provides his own trinitarian epistemology, based on Reformed scholasticism between archetypal and ectypal knowledge.[91] In order to establish the certainty of the divine knowledge, Bavinck explains that God's own self-consciousness is archetypal, and the human knowledge of God can be called ectypal.[92] In Bavinck's theological epistemology, the underlying message and intention of the distinction between archetypal and ectypal theology are that God is not only distinct from his revelation and that the one who displays cannot be fully comprehended in the revelation, but also that the revelation in his finite creatures stands on the eternal truth of God. In light of this, Bavinck clearly explains that human beings can apprehend God but cannot comprehend God, and thus, human knowledge of God is only analogical, finite, and derivative, in distinction from absolute and infinite self-knowledge of God.[93] So, Bavinck affirms that although human beings do have true and authentic knowledge of God, at the same time, all knowledge of God is analogical. To be specific, for Bavinck, the nature of the human knowledge of God is analogous to the immanent Trinity.

Here Bavinck's confident distinction between the archetypal and ectypal knowledge of God should be understood again in light of his conviction that the immanent Trinity provides the grounds for the economic works of God. Bavinck's sophisticated examination of the relation between God's self-knowledge and human knowledge of God is based on the ontological distinction between God as the archetype and humanity as the ectype. Given the infinite ontological distance between the Creator and the creature, the possibility of the knowledge of God depends on God himself. Employing the great practical use of the

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[91] Henk van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 268. Cf. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy; Prolegomena to Theology*, vol.1, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 225; Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 106; Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, 27.

[92] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 212-4, 233; Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 107-10, 129, 135, 195-96, 209, 306, 320, 532, 554-5; Id., *De wetenschap der Heilige Godgeleerdheid*, 8. Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 229. The concept of archetypal and ectypal theology can be traced back to Franciscus Junius (1545-1602). This distinction between archetypal and ectypal theology has been generally accepted by the Reformed orthodox. Cf. Ibid., 1: 113-15, 222-24; Willem J. Van Asselt, "The Fundamental Meaning of Theology: Archetypal and Ectypal Theology in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Thought" in *Westminster Theological Journal* 64 (2002), 322-4.

[93] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:212-14; 2: 130.

distinction between archetype and ectype, Bavinck suggests that the doctrine of the triune God serves to solve this epistemological conundrum between incomprehensibility and knowability of God.

Furthermore, Bavinck's epistemology was intimately supported by his doctrine of the Trinity within the codification of Reformed doctrine. It is precisely here that Bavinck's own distinctive interests in the doctrine of the *principia* come to the fore. Bavinck's epistemology, far from being merely the imitation of the Reformed scholasticism, is intimately related in his trinitarian emphasis on the *principia* of theology.[94] Considering Bavinck's recourse to and application of the *principia* of Reformed Orthodoxy with respect to the triune God, it can be suggested that Bavinck's epistemology is the unique contribution of the Reformed tradition. God the Father reveals his self-knowledge, communicates it through God the Son as Logos, and introduces himself into the human consciousness in the Holy Spirit.[95] Specifically, the Logos plays a central conceptual role as a mediator between God and creation. When considering the trinitarian principle of theology, Bavinck maintains the intimate connection between God and creation and regards the Logos as the principle that connects 'subject and object,' and 'creator and creation' as a mediator between them.[96] In this regard, it is possible for Bavinck, not only to emphasize the Logos as the way to get knowledge of existence but also to speak of the way to get knowledge of God.

Moreover, all human knowledge indeed has a fundamental trinitarian basis. Namely, God the Father is the source of all being. It is created through his Word, God the Son. Through God, the Spirit, our faculty of reason corresponds to created reality. Bavinck amply demonstrates that the Trinity is the very principle of existence (the *principium essendi*) and knowledge (the *principium cognoscendi*). While Bavinck makes the classical distinction between a foundation of being and knowing, Bavinck draws a further distinction between an external foundation of knowing (a *principium cognoscendi externum*) and an internal foundation of knowing (a *principium cognoscendi internum*). His distinction between an internal and an external foundation of knowing is rare in the Reformed Orthodoxy.[97] To be more specific, concerning the principle of knowledge, Bavinck describes the principle in this trinitarian way further: the essential foundation (*principium essendi*) are God the Father; the external foundation of knowledge (*principium cognoscendi externum*) is God's objective revelation in Christ, recorded in Scripture; the internal foundation of knowing (*principium cognoscendi internum*) is the work of the Holy Spirit, who generates and guides believers, in human minds as an illumination.[98]

In sum, against the anti-revelation tendency of his day, Bavinck convincingly argues that although fundamentally God is truly an incomprehensible ontological being, humanity can

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[94] Van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 259, 261, 268-270.

[95] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 214.

[96] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 231.

[97] Bruce Pass, "Herman Bavinck and the Problem of New Wine in Old Wineskins," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 17, no. 4 (2015), 435, 448.

[98] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 210-14. Cf. For a more detailed analysis of Bavinck's epistemology in relation to its organic aspects, see Sutanto, *God and Knowledge*, 37-73.

obtain knowledge of the divine being through God's self-revelation.[99] Since God's self-knowledge is absolute and infinite knowledge, human knowledge is analogical and finite knowledge. On this basis, Bavinck admits that although the analogical notion of human knowledge is limited, at the same time true and sufficient, and thus, he argues that God's attributes can be displayed in humanity. By deploying the distinction between archetype and ectype and the doctrine of the Trinity, Bavinck not only preserves the inheritance that he received from the Reformed tradition concerning the concept of *principia* but further develops his own trinitarian epistemology. For Bavinck, the doctrine of the Trinity provides not only a metaphysical foundation but also theological rationale and grounding principle for an analogical human knowledge of God.

4.1.5 Unity and Diversity

Before embarking on the central concerns of Bavinck's emphasis upon the unity and diversity of the Godhead in his doctrine of the Trinity, it is necessary first to remember the intellectual and theological context in the nineteenth century. In Bavinck's perspective, the relentless attack on the doctrine of the Trinity in history is closely related to the unity and diversity in the very being of God. Especially Bavinck criticizes all monistic accounts of reality, represented as uniformity and multiformity. As we have seen, in order to counter modernism's monistic worldview of nature, history, and humanity, Bavinck articulates his doctrine of the Trinity by first stressing the absolute unity and diversity in the very being of God and then applying it to the unity and diversity in creation analogically. For Bavinck, only within the framework of the trinitarian being of God is there the possibility of harmonizing the unity in diversity of reality. Bavinck promotes a distinctly trinitarian theistic worldview by emphasizing the absolute essential unity and abundant diversity of the divine persons.

First of all, what Bavinck indeed maintains is that there exists *absolutely* God's ontological unity of essence, as shared among the three persons.[100] In Bavinck's view, the conception of the unity of God is most important because of the late nineteenth-century "moment that unity of God is denied or understressed, the door is open to polytheism."[101] With particular reference to the nature and essence of God, Bavinck notes that "Now the great challenge" faced with the doctrine of the Trinity of his day is "that the unity of the divine essence does not cancel out the Trinity of the persons or, conversely, that the Trinity of persons does not abolish the unity of the divine essence."[102] Following the tradition of Western Trinitarianism, such as Nicaea, and Augustine, Bavinck states that the divine unity itself is absolute and essential to the divine being without composition or division. Citing Augustine's thoughts on the Trinity, Bavinck describes that the Trinity derives not from the Father but from the unity of the essence of the divine being.[103] Accordingly, the Father, the

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[99] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 212-14, 310; 2: 130.
[100] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 300. Italics are mine.
[101] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 158.
[102] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 288, 289.
[103] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 303.

Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, the same in essence, and the same being. Undoubtedly, the divine nature exists in each divine person completely and quantitatively the same.[104] In so doing, Bavinck declares that there is one eternal, omnipotent, and omniscient being, having one mind, one will, and one power in the Godhead. Despite the distinction that exists among the three persons, there exists God's ontological unity of essence, and further, for Bavinck, this eternal unity is an archetype for unity in all creatures, including a human being.[105] In this regard, generation and procession in the divine being should be regarded as the eternal communication of the same divine essence.[106]

Particularly when it comes to the unity of simplicity, Bavinck stands in accord with the Reformed tradition that the divine attributes are identical with the divine essence.[107] Concerning the relationship of the divine attributes and divine essence, Bavinck rejects the claims of Duns Scotus, Nominalism, and the Socinians in the period of the Reformation that divine attributes are distinct from each other as well as from God's essence. Concerning God's essence, it is so evident that Bavinck stands in continuity with the thoughts of Calvin, declaring that Scripture speaks of a unique and independent existence and life of his own as "all being, the absolute fullness of being."[108]

That Calvin was reluctant to develop speculative and metaphysical discussions of the relationship between the divine essence and divine attributes is hardly debatable. Even in comparison with a more explicit discussion of the divine essence among Calvin's contemporaries, Musculus, Bullinger, and Vermigli, Calvin's thought is unique in his discussion of the divine essence.[109] When Calvin generally speaks of divine attributes, he refrains from dwelling on excessive speculation concerning the divine essence in itself.[110] At first glance, it can be easy to draw the wrong conclusion from Calvin's approach to the issue of the divine essence. However, it should be noted that Calvin provides a considerable discussion of the divine essence, following the teaching of Scripture.[111] Hence, Calvin's disapproval of excessive speculation concerning the divine essence does not mean that Calvin has a lack of interest in this subject, or he does not stand in the continuity of that of the Reformed tradition that, namely, the divine attributes are intrinsic to the divine essence.[112]

With precision, Calvin does not avoid a discussion concerning God's essence. Instead he

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[104] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 300.

[105] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 278.

[106] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 306, 308, 332.

[107] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 173.

[108] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 177.

[109] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 206.

[110] Calvin, *Comm. in Jer.* 51:19 Calvin argues, "we ought not to investigate the divine essence beyond what is appropriate."

[111] Calvin, *Praelectiones in Ezechielis prophetae*, Ezek. 1:25-26, in *CO* 40, col. 55-7; Ibid., in *CO* 40, col. 53; Ibid., Ezek. 1:28, in *CO* 40, col. 60; Calvin, *Commentarii in Isaiam prophetam*, Isa. 1:24, in *CO* 36, col. 51; Calvin, *Congrégation sur la divinité de Iésus-Christ*, in CO 47, col. 471-73. Cited in Richard A. Muller, "Historical and Theological Studies: Calvin on Divine Attributes: A Question of Terminology and Method," *Westminster Theological Journal* 80 (2018), 212-3nn83-91. Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 274.

[112] Muller, "Historical and Theological Studies: Calvin on Divine Attributes," 199.

prefers to discuss the manifestation of divine attributes *ad extra* as a revelation of his essence. It is quite true that Calvin does not engage in a *priori* discussion of the divine essence or resolve a question concerning the relationship of the divine attributes, particularly in relation to divine simplicity.[113] Calvin declares, "What is God? Men who pose this question are merely toying with idle speculations. It is more important for us to know of what sort he is and what is consistent with his nature."[114] Indeed, Calvin seeks a *posteriori* knowledge of the divine essence and attributes in God's works *ad extra* from the revelation of God.[115] This is important to note, given that Calvin highlights the essential nature of the divine attributes which belong to the divine essence, it is enough for him to pay attention to divine attributes rather than the divine essence since the manifestation of various divine attributes points to the one, simple divine essence.[116]

In comparison to Calvin's handling of the divine essence, Bavinck does not hesitate to directly identify God's essence as His attributes that "On account of its absolute perfection, every attribute of God is identical with his essence."[117] Bavinck consistently identifies divine attributes as related to His being and explains that attributes flow from the divine being.[118] Concerning the relationship of the divine essence and divine attributes, Bavinck rejects the claims of Duns Scotus, Nominalism, and the Socinians in the period of the Reformation that divine attributes are distinct from each other as well as from God's essence. In Bavinck's view, divine attributes are not distinguished from the divine essence, and, on the other hand, add nothing to the divine essence. Bavinck emphasizes that both divine attributes cannot be separated from each other completely. At the same time, there is a real relation among every attribute. Bavinck eloquently declares that "His attributes coincide with His being. Every attribute is His being. He is wise and true, not merely, good and holy, just and merciful, but He *is* also wisdom, truth, goodness, holiness, justice, and mercy."[119] In this regard, it is apparent that Bavinck believes the unity of divine simplicity between the divine essence and divine attributes. Bavinck further wants to maintain the connection between divine simplicity and divine aseity. Therefore, it is undoubtedly true for Bavinck that God is the independent and self-sufficient, and the absolute fullness of being, possessing everything, which is one. In God's being, there is no distinction between God's essence and God's attributes. In this regard, Bavinck clearly states the ontological divine unity of essence.

Second, Bavinck emphasizes that there exists *absolute* diversity in unity in God's infinite fullness. Within the triune being of God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are distinct subjects in the same divine nature and perfections. Scripture does ascribe a divine nature and divine perfection to the Son and the Spirit and puts them on a par with the Father. The divine nature manifests its fullness in three persons, and these three persons are not three individuals alongside each other and separated from each other but a threefold self-

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[113] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 153.

[114] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.2.6.

[115] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 205-8; Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 11-34.

[116] Muller, "Calvin on Divine Attributes: A Question of Terminology and Method," 213.

[117] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 173.

[118] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 138. Cf. Ibid., 270. Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 174, 176.

[119] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 135.

differentiation within the divine being.[120] By describing the immanent relations of the three persons, Bavinck asserts that the self-differentiation caused by the self-development of the divine nature in personality makes it three distinct personal properties: paternity; unbegottenness, active generation, and active spiration, filiation or sonship, passive generation, active spiration, procession or passive spiration.[121] Paternity, filiation, and procession are the eternal immanent relationships based on a complete co-extensiveness. Bavinck notes that there is no difference among the three persons substantially but only relationally. Concerning the relation of unity and diversity within the divine being, Bavinck thus obviously declares, "there is unity in diversity, diversity in unity. Indeed, this order and this harmony is present in him absolutely,"[122] Though there exist distinctions in the divine being, the unfolding of the divine being may not destroy the unity of the divine nature, but rather unfolds the diversity in its riches.[123] The diversity derives from, exists in, and serves the unity. There is God's eternal ontological unity of essence and diversity of persons in the Godhead. The unity and diversity in the immanent Trinity denote abundant diversity and supreme unity.

4.1.6 The Immanent and Economic Trinity

The understanding of the immanent Trinity is pivotal to Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, and in turn, his doctrine of the Trinity is the focal point of his entire theology. Bavinck highlights the significance of the immanent Trinity, arguing that the essence of Christianity can only be maintained, "if it had its foundation and first principle in the ontological Trinity."[124] Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity provides not only the knowledge of the immanent God but further a fundamental account of reality on the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. Then, how does Bavinck articulate the immanent Trinity for polemical purposes against contemporary theologians of his time?

Against every tendency to ignore or deny the immanent Trinity, Bavinck defends and promotes the significance of the immanent relations of the divine persons, applying his theological insights to the particular challenges of his own time. Bavinck comments on anti-trinitarianism of the day, "They decline to infer the existence of immanent ontological relations in the divine being from God's self-revelation in Christ and from his self-communication in the Holy Spirit."[125] In Bavinck's perspective, their attempts are obviously at odds with not only the doctrine of the church but also the teaching of Scripture. The basic premise of the immanent Trinity in Bavinck's thoughts is his emphasis upon the divine fecundity and the divine communicability.

First, Bavinck's argumentation of the immanent Trinity takes into account the divine fecundity. Bavinck declares that God is the One who has a blessed life of his own: "God is a

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[120] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 303.
[121] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 305.
[122] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 331, 332.
[123] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 306, 435, 436.
[124] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 296. Italics are mine.
[125] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 295, 296.

plenitude of life, an 'ocean of being.' He is not 'without offspring" (ἀγονος). He is the absolute Being, the eternal One, who is and was and is to come, and in that way the ever-living and ever-productive One."[126] Bavinck distinctively emphasizes the notion of the divine fecundity within the divine being, namely, "a fullness of being, an infinite abundance of life."[127] When Bavinck considers the divine essence, personal attributes, and relations of the three persons of the Godhead, he concentrates on this divine fullness. Notably, according to Bavinck, the divine name "Elohim" should be emphasized as "the deity in the fullness and richness of its life." Among various names.[128] Bavinck highlights the divine fullness in the divine being and its significance for the understanding of the immanent Trinity in these words again: "God is no abstract, fixed, monadic, solitary substance, but a plenitude of life. It is his nature (οὐσια) to be generative (γεννητικη) and fruitful (καρπογονος). It is capable of expansion, unfolding, and communication."[129] On this basis, over against the cold abstraction of Deism and the confusions of pantheism, Bavinck states that it is a divine fullness that can give a satisfactory answer to the question of what the most fundamental ground for arguing the living God is and what makes possible the immanent acts of the three persons in the divine being is. For Bavinck, this fecund productivity is what enables Bavinck to consistently maintain the existence of the immanent Trinity and hold fast to the confession that the triune God is an infinite fullness of blessed life.

Second, Bavinck argues that the divine communicability is the presupposition and foundation of both the triune activity *ad intra* and the triune activity *ad extra.* The divine communicability within the eternal and immanent relations existing between the persons of the Trinity leads to a proper understanding of creation. Bavinck criticizes several conceptual confusions of the concept of divine communicability that Gnosticism knows no creation but only emanation, and Arianism knows nothing of emanation but only of creation.[130] Bavinck gives a proper, biblical understanding of divine communicability: the one is a communication within the divine being, the other is a communication outside the divine being. The former comes to expression clearly in Bavinck's understanding of the eternal generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. The latter is called God's economic works such as creation and revelation. For Bavinck, divine communicability, together with the infinite divine fullness of life, is the presupposition of the economic Trinity. Bavinck summarizes the heart of the immanent Trinity this way: "[I]f the divine being were not productive and could not communicate himself inwardly (*ad intra*), then neither could there be any revelation of God *ad extra*, that is, any communication of God in and to his creatures."[131] In Bavinck's thought, it is thus apparent that this divine fecundity and divine communicability are the basic premises of the immanent Trinity.

And, importantly, concerning the ontological and epistemological understanding of God, the world, and the God-world relationship, Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity hinges on the

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[126] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 331.
[127] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 300.
[128] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 261.
[129] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 308n118.
[130] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 419, 420.
[131] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 332.

intimate relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. Fundamentally, Bavinck expounds his views on the relationship of the immanent and economic Trinity that the immanent Trinity is the very ontological foundation for the economic Trinity, at the same time, the economic Trinity is the epistemological ground for the immanent Trinity.[132] As noted above, notably, the fecund productivity of God and the divine communicability within the immanent Trinity are preconditions for the economic Trinity. Bavinck argues that generation and procession in the divine being make possible all the works of God *ad extra* such as creation and revelation.[133] Specifically, given the atmosphere of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century concerning the rise of diverse forms of anti-trinitarianism of the Creator; atheism, the monistic doctrine of God, the alternative understanding of creation; the views of emanation or evolution, and the deterministic mechanical view, for Bavinck, it is the trinitarian doctrine of God and its relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, in particular, that gives a satisfactory answer to not only the ontological understanding the Creator-creation distinction, but also the epistemological understanding of the incomprehensibility and knowability of God.

To be specific, on the one hand, when the immanent relations of the divine persons manifest themselves outwardly in God's works *ad extra*, God's eternal ontological unity of essence entails that all divine works are indivisible and common to the three persons. As a reflection of the immanent relations of the divine persons, Bavinck demonstrates not only the relations of the three persons as distinct subjects but also how they work both in creation and redemption, having a threefold divine cause.[134] "All the works *ad extra*: creation, providence, rule, incarnation, satisfaction (atonement), renewal, sanctification, and so on, are works of the Trinity as a whole."[135] Bavinck declares that these three persons are modes of being, sharing the same divine nature and divine attribute, although distinguished by their own names and particular works.

On the other hand, while emphasizing God's trinitarian works as a whole, at the same time, Bavinck underlines a trinitarian order and a division of work among the three persons. Namely, the immanent diversity of persons entails a diversity in God's economic works in terms of the order and distinction of persons. Bavinck stresses the priority of the Father and creation. This priority of the Father and creation gives a prominent place to obedience to the law of God.[136] So, considering the order of the economic Trinity *ad extra*, Bavinck argues that an apparent order of the divine persons within the divine essence is manifested in the works of God *ad extra*. By the same token, it is permissible for Bavinck to ascribe the different properties to the three persons in an economic sense. Based on the differentiating

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[132] According to Wolfhart Pannenberg, the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity can be traced to Johann Augustus Urlsperger. Johann A. Urlsperger, *Vier Versuche einer genaueren Bestimmung des Geheimnisses Gottes des Vaters und Christi* (1769-1774); Ib., *Kurzgefasstes System meines Vortrages von Gottes Dreieinigkeit* (1777). Cited in Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 291n111.

[133] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 318, 420-23; 3: 277, 280, 281; Id., *Philosophy of Revelation*, 27, 78.

[134] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 272.

[135] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 320.

[136] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 246.

prepositions in Scripture, Bavinck declares that the Father works of himself through the Son in the Spirit.

For Bavinck, the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* is of great importance for the explanation not only of the *ad intra* works of the three persons of the Trinity but also for the *ad extra* works of the Trinity for the redemption of humanity. One can see clearly what Bavinck has in mind when he seeks to relate God's eternal counsel *ad intra* to God's redemptive works *ad extra*, by presenting detailed examinations of the *pactum salutis. Albeit not without* criticism of the doctrine in the Reformed tradition in terms of some of the finer points, Bavinck makes no question of the biblical basis of the *pactum slautis*. In this regard, Bavinck makes three points through the Scriptures: (1) that the relationship of the Father and the Son is clearly manifested in this eternal counsel; (2) that the Son was chosen by the Father as mediator and Logos from eternity; (3) that as mediator, the Son voluntarily obeyed the will of the Father for the redemption of humankind.[137]

Notably, with respect to the immanent Trinity, it is the *pactum salutis* that sheds light on the relationships and life of the three persons in the divine being as "a covenantal life, a life of consummate self-consciousness and freedom."[138] Bavinck reformulates the *pactum salutis* with some emphasis on the distinction between the divine essence and divine counsel. When it comes to the relationship between God's being *per se* and His works *ad intra*, Bavinck does not identify the divine essence as divine counsel. Although the *pactum salutis* is the highest expression of divine counsel, for Bavinck, the divine counsel is closely related to but distinct from the divine essence. Bavinck avoids the conflation of the divine essence and the divine counsel that the counsel of God, noting although the divine counsel is "closely connected with God's being, may not be equated with that being."[139] In this regard, for Bavinck, the *pactum salutis* most vividly manifests the trinitarian nature of God's being and its full reality and the relationships of the three persons, but it is not the divine essence *per se*. Nevertheless, the *pactum salutis* stands as of primary importance in Bavinck's trinitarian theology, *since it is apparent that the pactum salutis helps us to understand the life and inner relationships of the three persons.*

For Bavinck, the *pactum salutis* is an excellent example of the undertaking of the three persons in which all cooperate, and each has a unique and distinct role and particular task. Concerning the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, Bavinck is convinced that the unity of the essence of Godhead and diversity of the three persons entails the intimate oneness and distinct three-ness dimensions of both creation and re-creation. The *pactum salutis* shows the inseparable operations of three divine persons, although the distinction of persons is preserved.[140] By maintaining the ontological essential unity and diversity of the three persons, Bavinck affirms that there is only one will of God among the three persons. Hence, *the three persons of the Godhead together* conceive, determine, carry out, and complete the entire redemption of humanity. There is absolute self-consciousness,

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[137] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 213-15, 377.

[138] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 214.

[139] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 373.

[140] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 109, 110; 2: 319; 3: 215.

the greatest freedom, and the most perfect agreement in the three persons. *At the same time, one can find that each of the three persons of the Trinity has a particular task of his own. As it were, in the pactum salutis, the Father plans the works of salvation, the redemption is achieved by the Son, and the Holy Spirit applies it.*

Most importantly, the *pactum salutis* sheds light on *Bavinck's unique contribution to the doctrine of the Trinity* with his emphasis upon Christ's threefold office as a mediator. *I*t is noteworthy that Bavinck consistently notes the appointment as mediator of Christ and his pre-incarnate execution of his threefold office in the *pactum salutis*. Bavinck explains that, in the *pactum salutis*, the Father appointed the Son as mediator between God and humankind, and the Son voluntarily admitted to being mediator and accomplished the work of the mediator through the complete obedience of the will of God. To be specific, from eternity, the Son was constituted as its surety and mediator, and immediately after the fall, the Son fulfilled the mediatorship. The Spirit made effective administration and dispensation of the *pactum salutis* for the believer of the earth in time and history. Within the divine being, as noted above, there is God's holy and gracious will, God's work par excellence, God's attributes of truthfulness, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and God's greatest power and absolute freedom. In the *pactum salutis,* God's being is glorified in the manifestation of the divine attributes by the mutual undertaking of the three persons.

When we consider Bavinck's enthusiastic portrayal of humanity as the image of the triune God, as will be seen in the next chapter, it is Bavinck that posits a close relationship between Christ as the true image of God and humanity as the image of God concerning the execution of the threefold office. Bavinck repeatedly emphasizes humanity as the image of the triune God has an ultimate destiny for glorifying God by manifesting divine attributes, virtues, and perfections. Just as the Son, the second person of the Trinity, accepted the unique mediatorial work of reconciliation with the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, through his complete and voluntary obedience, Bavinck promotes a distinct view of humanity as the image of the triune God. Human beings can manifest knowledge in mind, righteousness in the will, holiness in the heart, when they are united with the person and work of Christ, via the exercise of the threefold office. For Bavinck, the mystic union with Christ provides a foundational ground of the nature and destiny of humanity as the restored image of God that ultimately serves to glorify God. On this basis, Bavinck goes on to point out that the imitation of Christ is the heart of Christian life as the restored image of God. The imitation of Christ takes place in the realms of the ethical with the manifestation of divine attributes and divine virtues.

In Bavinck's view, the image of God, endowed with knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, is constitutive of human nature. Human beings were created for the glory of God by manifesting and conforming to God's attributes. From the beginning of creation and continuing after the restoration, human destiny and its ultimate goal are to glorify God. As will be seen, Bavinck repeatedly emphasizes that the divine attributes and divine virtues are manifested in the exercising the threefold office in relation to human nature and human destiny. In this regard, recall that for Bavinck, the immanent Trinity as God's being is mirrored in the economic Trinity, particularly in the creation and re-creation of humanity, via the exercise of the threefold office, manifesting God's attributes and virtues for God's glory.

Based on the union with the person and work of Christ, through the imitation of Christ, participating in the threefold office of Christ, human beings glorify God in the manifestation of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. God's attributes coincide with God's being. God's attributes are manifested in God's works. Namely, God's works *ad intra* are mirrored in God's works *ad extra*, by means of the manifestation of God's attributes. For from God's works *ad intra*, and through God's works *ad extra*, and to God's being are human beings. To God himself be the glory from eternity to eternity (Rom. 11:36). To God be glory in humanity as the restored image of the triune God, united with Christ, throughout all generations, forever and ever (Eph. 4:21).

4.2 Calvin and the Doctrine of the Trinity

In contrast to the voluminous scholarship on Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity is an area of Calvin's theology that has received relatively little attention. Only one recent monograph on the theme exists.[141] Still, the general opinion among Calvin scholars is that Calvin's theology is trinitarian in both content and form.[142] The *Institutes*, for instance, have been modeled after the trinitarian structure of the Apostles' Creed.[143] Calvin engages in discussions on the Trinity current in his day. First, defending himself against Pierre Caroli's suspicions of heresy (1537), later targeting the anti-trinitarianism of Michael Servetus (1546) and Giovanni Valentino Gentile (1558). There are four major characteristics of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity: (1) the clarification of the exegetical foundation, (2) the moderate use of trinitarian terminology, (3) the emphasis on the deity of the Son and the Spirit, (4) the emphasis on the economic Trinity.

4.2.1 Clarification of the Exegetical Foundation

The first prime characteristic of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity is its clarification. While Bavinck tries to give convincing answers to the questions raised in his own day, by elaborating the doctrine of the Trinity, Calvin prefers to elucidate more clearly. Calvin consistently distances himself from unbiblical trinitarian terms and speculative medieval approach. In the face of the unbiblical terms of Servetus and the Italian anti-trinitarians about the concept of 'person,' Calvin articulates the issue of the trinitarian terms of the councils of the early church with a clear-cut and balanced definition of 'person' in his last edition of the *Institutes* of 1559.[144] Calvin provides biblical evidence for the legitimacy of using the

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[141] Arie Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid: de drie-eenheid bij Calvijn* (Kampen: Kok, 2004).

[142] B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1974), 192; Randall C. Zachman, *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian*, 176; I. John Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79.

[143] David C. Steinmetz, "The Theology of John Calvin," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 118.

[144] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.2, 6. Cf. Baars, *Om Gods Verhevenheid,* 104-21, 273-5.

term "hypostasis," through an exposition of Hebrews 1:3.[145] For Calvin, the term "hypostasis" and "person" are not human inventions, but of the revelation of God, which manifests the distinction between the person of the Father and the Son. Calvin does not systematically discuss the doctrine of the Trinity out of scholastic inquisitiveness.[146] For Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity can be adequately understood in and through an examination of Scripture rather than the more speculative or rational arguments.[147] In his view, Scripture itself proves the doctrine of the Trinity without excessive speculation overruling revelation.[148] Calvin uses the *dicta probantia* method for the doctrine of the Trinity, which means "proof texts are gathered from Scripture that are to function as the biblical basis for a certain doctrine."[149] So, Calvin's thoughts on the Trinity are far from being abstract and speculative but instead present a clear Scriptural basis for the understanding of the triune God.

Moreover, Calvin does not warmly accept the analogical metaphors or rational arguments for the triune God in his theological system. Bavinck enthusiastically leverages a trinitarian analogical metaphor to formulate his own doctrine of the Trinity. Based on his conviction that the Trinity *ad intra* is revealed in the Trinity *ad extra*, along with the archetypal and ectypal distinction of Reformed theology, Bavinck not only highlights the *vestigia trinitatis* in nature and history, but further takes a positive attitude in relation to the whole human being and the whole human race, via his organic motif. On the contrary, Calvin argues that the development of the trinitarian metaphors or the use of trinitarian argumentations drawn from human nature is excessive speculation into a mystery of the triune God. Instead, Calvin resorts to Scripture itself more than any attempt to illustrate the Trinity through human analogies or metaphysical reasoning, in order to avoid speculation or extravagance in language about God.[150] In this respect, Calvin keeps away from the so-called Augustinian psychological metaphors of the Trinity. In general, Calvin follows Augustine's trinitarian theology and admitted the mutual relations of the three persons. However, he not only evinces no great eagerness for Augustine's analogical language as proof for the Trinity but also criticizes Augustine's analogical approach to the doctrine of the Trinity.[151] Calvin is certainly not keen on finding the vestiges of the Trinity in human consciousness or reason. For Calvin, indeed, these analogies do not serve as proofs of the Trinity and thus should be understood as a kind of excessive speculation. Hence, the elaboration of trinitarian metaphors and various references to the trinitarian imprint never become significant elements in the doctrinal expositions of Calvin.

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[145] John Calvin, *Comm.* on Heb. 1:3; Id., 1.13.6. Cf. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 215.

[146] Baars, "The Trinity," 246.

[147] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 189, 194, 206. Cf. Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Trinity of God*, 2nd ed., vol.4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 68, 151, 157; Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 276.

[148] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 206, 224, 225; Edward A. Dowey, Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 125-26, 146.

[149] Baars, "The Trinity," 247.

[150] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.18.

[151] Calvin, *Comm. in Gen.* 1:26. Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 151, 152.

Furthermore, Calvin also distances himself from the previous allegorical, typological, or pre-critical exegesis of medieval tradition. Calvin cannot accord normative status to the received doctrine of the Trinity from the patristic and medieval scholastics due to incorrect formulae of the doctrine of the early church and weak exegetical foundations. Like the other Reformers of his day, clear biblical grounds for the doctrine of the Trinity are particular of importance to Calvin. He tries to find support for the doctrine of the Trinity through historical exegesis as well as his own exegesis. For instance, Calvin offers a genuinely representative discussion of general scriptural proofs for the Trinity. Combining two passages from the New Testament: Ephesians 4:5 and Matthew 28:19, Calvin demonstrates the oneness of faith and baptism in Ephesians 4:5 through a close connection with the oneness of the name into which we are baptized in Matthew 28:19. Calvin points to baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which is the place to witness the unity of God, declaring that "Word and Spirit are nothing else than the very essence of God."[152] Calvin pays considerable attention to the literal sense of the readings of the text over against the too quick or too substantial interpretations of the older exegetical tradition.[153]

Hence, for establishing clear biblical foundations for the doctrine, Calvin does not hesitate to find the proper meaning of the text of Scripture. For Calvin, certainly, Scripture is not the sole, but the final authority to provide a solid foundation for truth.[154] In the Preface to the French edition of the *Institutes* published in 1560, Calvin urges the reader "to have recourse to Scripture in order to weigh the testimonies that I adduce from it."[155] Following the literal meaning of the text, Calvin considers direct declarations of Scripture or concepts drawn from the text as the foremost basis of the doctrine of the Trinity. Calvin's emphasis on the literal exegesis of the text is firmly grounded in his Scriptural adherence, coupled with a careful interpretation of texts from both Testaments.

In making these points, Calvin discards many proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity when these proofs rest on skewed explanations of Scripture. Thus, Calvin is cautious about the use of such inconclusive texts.[156] For example, Calvin agrees with John Chrysostom's claim concerning "the equality of the Son with the Father" along with the notion of the consubstantiality (*homoousia*) of the Father and the Son in Colossians 1:15 during the Arian controversy; however, he notes that it is a feeble argument when its use of the word "image" is understood as rendering "Christ's essence" rather than "an epistemological term."

[152] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.16.

[153] Richard A. Muller, "John Calvin and later Calvinism: the Identity of the Reformed Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 131. Cf. Ibid., 143.

[154] For a detailed study of the issue concerning *Sola Scriptura* can be found in Arnold Huijgen, "Alone Together: *Sola* Scriptura and the Other Solas of the Reformation," *Sola Scriptura: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Scripture, Authority, and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hans Burger, Arnold Huijgen, and Eric Peels (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 79-104. Cf. For a more comprehensive study of this subject with regard to Calvin, see Arnold Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology: Analysis and Assessment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 261-318.

[155] John Calvin, Preface to 1560 French edition of the *Institutes*, In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 8. Id., *Institutes*, 1.13.21.

[156] Calvin, *Comm. in Col.* 1:15.

Regarding the interpretation of the trinitarian exegesis of the church fathers on Hebrews 1:1-3, Calvin agrees that Hebrews 1:3 speaks of the deity of the Son, just as this passage is generally understood as a scriptural text for Christ's divinity in the Patristic era. However, he puts more emphasis on the eternal nature of Christ and insists that Christ should be rendered here as the image of the substance of the Father. In this regard, this passage is necessary to Calvin, in terms of showing the hypostatic distinctiveness of the Father and the Son, sharing the same essence.[157] Another significant text criticized by Calvin concerning the doctrine of the Trinity from the church fathers was concerning Isaiah 6:3. Although it is evident that Calvin agreed with the interpretation that the angelic worship of God is closely related to three persons in one essence of the Godhead, for Calvin, it is not enough textual evidence to prove the unity and the distinction in the Godhead.[158]

Furthermore, Calvin contributes to a clearer understanding and a more precise conceptualization of the meaning of the Trinity, providing several passages from Scripture which serve as the proofs for the doctrine of the Trinity in his *Institutes* and *Commentaries*. Calvin not only notes the weakness in the previous exegesis but also puts forth considerable exegetical effort in an attempt to support the trinitarian reading of the text of Scripture. Calvin rejects the interpretation that the plural form of Elohim in Gen. 1 and the word "us" in Genesis 3:22 can be a proof-text for the three persons of the Trinity.[159] Calvin does not prefer Augustine's exegesis of Genesis 18:2 that Abraham's three visitors are seen as a visible indication of the three persons of the Godhead as proofs for the doctrine of the Trinity.[160] Calvin's comments on Micah 5:1 point to the deity of Christ as a proof for the Trinity, but he emphasizes the decision to send Christ to the world that God has already taken in eternity.[161] Calvin comments that Psalms 2:7 does not indicate the eternal generation of the Son as a proof for the Trinity but, instead, God's revelation of the deity of the Son resurrected from the dead.[162]

In this way, Calvin does not follow classical formulas blindly. Unless it has been tested against the Word of God, Calvin does not regard any text as authoritative for the doctrine of the Trinity. Calvin desires that his exegetical and expository work is to clarify the writer's intention, in order to get the most concise and the most precise meaning of the text of Scripture.[163] In this sense, one of Calvin's main contributions to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity is to offer a series of clear alternative exegeses of text without resorting to any further speculation or Trinitarian metaphor to the reformulation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

4.2.2 Moderate Use of Trinitarian Terminology

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[157] Calvin, *Comm. in Heb.* 1:1-3.
[158] Calvin, *Comm. in Isa.* 6.
[159] Calvin, *Comm. in Gen.* 1:1; 3:22.
[160] Calvin, *Comm. in Gen.* 18:2.
[161] Calvin, *Prael. in Mich.* 5:1.
[162] Calvin, *Comm. in Ps.* 2: 7.
[163] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 281.

The second characteristic of Calvin's approach to the Trinity is his moderate use of traditional trinitarian terminology. As has been shown before, as a humanist, Calvin weeds out 'proof-texts' for the doctrine of the Trinity that he regards as unconvincing. Calvin emphasizes the priority of Scripture over all other normative doctrines of tradition or any particular formulations of trinitarian terms, considering the text of Scripture in the simple, actual, and literal sense.[164] Calvin admits the usefulness of trinitarian terms for describing the divine being and His works, but these terms must be kept within the message of Scripture, namely on condition of the limits set by the Word of Scripture. For Calvin, if these trinitarian terms are used devoutly by Scripture, the trinitarian terms can be admitted, but must be "kept in reverent and faithful subordination to Scripture truth, used sparingly and modestly."[165] When Calvin defies anti-trinitarianism even in later phases of his career, his use of traditional terms is moderate.[166]

In this regard, Calvin's attitude towards trinitarian terminology can be characterized as follows: even though he admits the legitimacy of these terms, nonetheless, he urges caution in the matter of forming and developing the doctrine of the Trinity by excessive use of them. As will be seen, Bavinck undoubtedly stands in continuity with Calvin's thoughts concerning the legitimacy of using trinitarian terminology, however, Bavinck puts more emphasis on the use of extra-biblical terms, without any hesitation in his own formulations on the doctrine of the Trinity.

While Calvin does use particularly traditional trinitarian terms in his confessions of faith and his theological works, his approach to trinitarian language remains abstemious. Until the end of the 1530s, Calvin hesitates to use trinitarian terms in the normative confessional statements. In the first edition of the *Institutes* of 1536, Calvin mentions trinitarian terms, but he allows only limited trinitarian terms in comparison to the later version of the *Institutes*. Calvin's abstemious view of trinitarian terms is closely related to the pastoral motive.[167] Calvin does not increase the use of trinitarian terms both in the catechism and the confession during this period, with the partial exception of the prefatory epistle to the 1537 and 1538 catechisms. Moreover, Calvin uses trinitarian terms sparsely in his sermons. According to Baars' research, Calvin mentioned the concepts of "person" and "being" only in nine passages of his sermons.[168] In his sermons, although Calvin uses the trinitarian terms of

[164] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 286. Cf. Thomas F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1994), 47.

[165] Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.13.3, 4.

[166] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 230; Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Trinity of God*, 2nd ed., vol.4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 148; Gene Haas, "The Trinitarian Shape of Calvin's Theology and Exegesis of Scripture," in *Aspects of Reforming*, ed. Michael Parsons, Studies in Christian Thought Series (Paternoster Press, 2013), 224.

[167] Concerning Calvin's somewhat limited use of the trinitarian terminology, B. B. Warfield, R. Muller, and A. Baars pay attention to Calvin's pastoral motif. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 200; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 67; Baars, "The Trinity," 245. Cf. Baars, *Om Gods Verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 100, 101. For the more detailed study on Calvin's accommodation and its systematic-theological analysis and assessment, see Arnold Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology: Analysis and Assessment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

[168] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 102, 344, 344nn8, 9.

"person" and "being," these terms are merely mentioned without accentuating these words or giving further explanation to them. Even though Calvin uses some trinitarian terms in Geneva Catechism of 1542, there is no case in his other catechetical writings. Calvin does not merely reiterate the previous tradition of the use of trinitarian terms. He uses at least a minimum degree of traditional trinitarian terms. At the beginning of his career, it is quite clear that Calvin urges caution in the matter of forming and expressing the doctrine of the Trinity through trinitarian terms.

Consequently and interestingly, Calvin's reluctant attitude toward the trinitarian terms in the 1536 *Institutes* and his sparse use of the trinitarian languages in the *Confession of Faith* issued in 1537 results in accusations from two churchmen of a small town of Neuchâtel, Chapponeau and Courtois.[169] Pierre Caroli also accuses Calvin of being tainted with Arianism and Sabellianism, along with Calvin's friends Guillaume Farel and Pierre Viret, on the ground of his refusal to subscribe to the Athanasian Creed at the Synod of Lausanne on May 15, 1537.[170] While Calvin agrees with the Niceno-Constantinopolitanum and the Athanasian Creed, his position is based on his perspective that the Reformed Church had not yet officially approved of it. So, Calvin's initial hesitancy about the use of trinitarian terms does not mean that he denies the legitimacy of the doctrine of the Trinity as well as trinitarian terms. At this point, Calvin declines Caroli's suggestion to subscribe to the ancient creeds due to his decision to follow the authority of God speaking in Scripture rather than others.[171] Obviously, Calvin's intention is neither depreciation nor derogation of the creed. He does not criticize its content but the formulations of the creed.[172] In response to a series of accusations leveled against Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity and anti-trinitarian teachings from beginning around 1540, accordingly, it would seem that the demand for the trinitarian terms gradually emerged to defend the doctrine of the Trinity.

Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that Calvin tries to develop and clarify the doctrine of the Trinity quickly and polemically in the debates with the anti-trinitarianism of the era.[173] However, for Calvin, the trinitarian terms must always be used within the limitations set forth by Scriptures. It may be said with certainty that the moderate use of trinitarian terms is a significant facet of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity.

4.2.3 The Deity of the Son and the Spirit

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[169] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 66. Cf. François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of his Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 165; Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 204-6.

[170] See Stephen M. Reynolds, "Calvin's View of the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds," *Westminster Theological Journal* 23 (1960): 33-37. Cf. Arie Baars, "The Trinity," in *The Calvin Handbook,* trans. Gerrit Sheeres, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008), 245; Bavinck, "Calvin and Common Grace," 452.

[171] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 207.

[172] Baars, "The Trinity," 245.

[173] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.5. Cf. Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid,* 268; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 59-62, 66.

The third characteristic of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity is his emphasis upon the consubstantiality of the three persons of the Trinity, through an extended discussion of the divinity of the Son and the Spirit. Calvin emphasizes the full essential equality of the persons of the Godhead in essence against any essential subordination of the Son and the Spirit to the Father.[174] Over against the trinitarian heresies of his own days, for Calvin, the most significant argumentation in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity is to demonstrate the deity of the divine persons. Indeed, the deity of the Son and the Spirit occupies the largest portion of Calvin's discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity in his *Institutes*.[175] From the first edition to the final edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin's main argumentation for the doctrine of the Trinity lies in the consubstantiality of the three persons. From his first edition of the *Institutes* of 1536, Calvin briefly deals with the deity of the three persons from several proofs from Scripture.[176] In the *Institutes* of 1539, against Michael Servetus and the medieval Jewish exegetists such as Abraham Ibn Ersa, David Kimchi, and Rashi, Calvin passionately proves the deity of the Son with many evidence-based arguments from Scripture.[177] Proceeding from the assumption that Scripture teaches that both the Son and the Spirit contain in themselves the whole divine essence, Calvin obviously tries to make room for the unity of the divine essence that all persons of the Trinity are equal in essence while affirming the distinction of the persons without any division of the divine essence.

Remarkably, Calvin's emphasis on the deity of the Son and the Spirit derives more from an emphatic biblical exegesis, following the humanist principle *ad fontes*, rather than from abstract speculation of the existence of God.[178] Calvin's appeal to Scripture ought to be understood in terms of not only a humanist principle, *ad fontes*, but also a theological principle. Scripture is normative and the touchstone for all doctrine because it is God's Word.[179] For Calvin, authority is not given to antiquity but Scripture. Calvin's precise approach to Biblical sources, for instance, leads him to argue the deity of the Son and the Spirit. The exegetical foundations of the deity of the Son were of profound importance to Calvin, with his emphasis upon and his adherence to the literal sense of the text. Indeed, Calvin tries to present various forms of argumentations concerning the truth of the divinity of the Son in his exegetical and polemical works. In order to understand and state the deity of the Son, for Calvin, it is important to establish a firm foundation through exegetical exposition.

Specifically, first, concerning the deity of the Son, Calvin maintains that the identity of the Son as the eternal Logos is attested in Scripture.[180] In commenting on John 1:1-3, Calvin holds that the world was made through the Son, upholding all things by his powerful word.

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[174] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 229. Ibid., 233; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 81; Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 242, 243.

[175] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.7-15.

[176] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 77.

[177] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 124, 125.

[178] On the characteristics of Calvin's humanism and his distinctive reception of the humanist biblical exegesis, see Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 106-113.

[179] Calvin, *Inst.*, 4.17.43; Id., *Comm. in Eph.* 2:20.

[180] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.7, 8; Id., *Comm. Gen.* 1:3.

Calvin highlights the idea that the Son is not only the eternal Word but also the eternal Wisdom that is with God and itself is God.[181] Moreover, Calvin connects John 1:1 with Hebrews 1:3 to build up the biblical ground for both deity of the Word and the Son. "The eternal Word," from Calvin's perspective, "was destined by the eternal counsel of God to be first-born of every creature," is identified as the Son with the confirmation from Micah 5:2.[182] Second, Calvin continues his argument by focusing on naming Christ the various divine names such as "Elohim" (Ps. 45:6), "Jehovah" (Jer. 23:5, 6; Joel 2:32; Prov. 18:10), and "the Lord of Hosts" (Isa. 8:14; John 20:28; Rom. 9:33; Mal. 3:1) in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament, Calvin underlines the eternal Deity of the Son.[183] In Calvin's reading of the text, Christ is called "the Mighty God," (Isa. 9:6), and "the eternal God who elsewhere declares that he will not give his glory to another" (Isa. 42:8) refers to the deity of Christ. In Particular, Calvin considers the application of Jehovah to Christ of decisive evidence to understand the eternal deity, thereby identifying Christ with God the Father in respect of their being.[184] Third, Calvin not only introduces various works of Christ but also singles miracles out as evidence for the essential divinity of the Son of God.[185] Calvin argues that these works revealed in Scripture for identifying Christ as God are genuine evidence of Christ's divinity (John 5:17,18; Heb. 1:3; Isa. 43:25; Matt. 9:4,6).[186] Calvin also insists that the deity of Christ is affirmed concerning Christ's miracles (Matt. 10:8; Acts 3:6; John 5:36, 10:37, 14:11).

Moreover, in Calvin's view, just as scriptural proofs for the deity of the Son, the deity of the Spirit rests on an exegetical basis. To be specific, for Calvin, the deity of the Spirit is demonstrated by several themes: the works of the Spirit in creation, the inspiration of the prophets, the distribution of grace, and the author of the future immortality.[187] Namely, the divine works are attributed to the Spirit as a creator and preserver for all life in Heaven and on earth. It is the Spirit who speaks through the prophets and regenerates his people and preserves them to live eternally as the author of regeneration and of future immorality, the mediator of communion with God and justification, and sanctification. When Scripture speaks of believers as the temple of God, the divine name is given to the Spirit. The divine attributes as the omnipresence of the Spirit are drawn from Scripture. What is more, Calvin focuses on the oneness between the Spirit and the Father as he stresses the unity between the Son and the Father.[188] Calvin, indeed, insists both on deity and personality of the Spirit, namely, that the Spirit is not only truly God but also distinct personhood.[189]

Furthermore, when Calvin argues the deity of the Son and the Spirit, the most significant argumentation is to present the divine attributes of the divine persons. Whereas Calvin mounts his arguments for the intrinsic consubstantiality of the triune God by presenting the

[181] Calvin, *Comm. in Joh.* 1:1-3.
[182] Calvin, *Comm. in Micah*, 5:2.
[183] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.9-11.
[184] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.13.
[185] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.12.
[186] Calvin, *Comm. in John* 1:1.
[187] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.15.
[188] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.13.14.
[189] Calvin, *Comm. in Joh.* 14:16, 16:13, 14.

divine attributes of the aseity of the divine persons, as will be seen, Bavinck focuses on God's inner trinitarian relationship by relating the aseity of God with the absoluteness of God intimately. Calvin devotes himself to demonstrate that Christ has its divine attribute of *aseity*. For Calvin, the Son of God is to be distinguished from God the Father, not by essence but by relation. Calvin maintains the eternal generation of the Son for the deity of the Son by stressing that the divine essence is unbegotten, but the divine person is begotten. Since the generation of the Son from the Father "is neither an origin in time nor an origin of being," in Calvin's view, the generation of the Son from the Father should be understood as an origination of sonship, not of divinity.[190]

On this basis, Calvin is obliged to demonstrate the deity of the Son and the Spirit for the defense of the Trinity, particularly in relation to the aseity of the Son, confronting the challenges of anti-trinitarianism. From the first edition of the *Institutes* of 1539, which is retained throughout the subsequent editions, mainly against Caroli, Calvin argues the deity of the Son with his eternal essence, existing in himself. Calvin emphasizes that the Father is neither the sole God nor the essence giver. For Calvin, the notion of the Son's aseity means that the essence of the Son is of itself *a se ipso*, not of by the Father.[191] Namely, the generation of the Son from the Father should be understood not in terms of a matter of essence, but terms of the relationships within the three persons.[192] In order to prove the deity of Christ, Calvin highlights that Christ is the self-existence of God.

Calvin rejects Servetus' denial of the Son's eternity, and that the Word obtains an independent subsistence only in creation by criticizing the fact that Servetus misunderstands the generation of the Son. Servetus claims the radical oneness of God both in essence and in person and denies the eternal generation of the Son. Given Servetus's own logical grounding of the concept in the assumption of there being no eternal generation of the Son, the Son became the Son of God by God's eternal decree. Therefore, Servetus claims the temporal generation of the Son that the Son is called the Son of God before the incarnation in only a figurative sense, not in a real sense.[193] On the contrary, Calvin insists on the full divinity of the Son and Christ's eternal sonship. For Calvin, Christ is the only begotten Son by the Father in eternity, not at the time of the incarnation. Christ is the Son of God by nature, not by adoption.[194]

Moreover, in Calvin's view, Gentile leans too much on Father or the person of the Father that God the Father alone is the self-existent God as the ultimate source of being and cause of the Son and the Spirit, poured his own divine essence into the Son and the Spirit. Against the claim of Gentile concerning the aseity of the Father alone and the derivation of the Son and the Spirit from the Father, Calvin consistently argues the essential aseity as well as substantial distinctions of the persons.

To sum up, in a word, in order to underline the full essential equality in essence and the

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[190] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 325.
[191] Calvin, *Inst*., 2.11.13.
[192] Calvin's response to Caroli is found in his *Pro G. Farella et collegis eius adversus Petri Caroli calumnias defensio*, in CO, VII, col. 289 et seq. cited in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 325.
[193] Calvin, *Inst*., 2.14.5, 7.
[194] Calvin, *Inst*., 1.13.22, 23; 2.14.5, 6, 8.

true distinction among the three persons, the deity of the Son and the Spirit was highlighted by Calvin. Indeed, Calvin is convinced that the unity of God never impedes the distinction of the three persons. The one divine essence is equally attributed to each of the three persons. Calvin offers considerable exegetical support for the deity of the divine persons, using the divine names, the divine attributes, particularly with an emphasis upon the attribute of aseity, and the various divine works and miracles of Christ, in evincing the deity of the Son and the Spirit. Significantly, Calvin expresses concerns over the denial of the deity of the Son and the Spirit of the radical subordinationism of his day, through his emphasis upon the aseity of the Son. This is a prominent feature of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity.

4.2.4 The Economic Trinity

Finally, one of the distinctive features of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity consists of his emphasis on the economic Trinity rather than the immanent Trinity. Although there is no definitive explanation as to why Calvin does not choose to develop discussions of the immanent Trinity, there is general agreement that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity is largely focused on the economic Trinity.[195] Why doesn't Calvin elaborate in detail the Immanent Trinity, except for comparatively few writings dealing with the *filioque* and the intra-trinitarian relations?

This question points towards Calvin's fundamental principle of divine knowledge again. For Calvin, Scripture alone must be the final authority for any discussion of the Trinity (*sola scriptura*). So, the *sola scriptura* principle plays a pivotal role in establishing the trinitarian doctrine.[196] Calvin tries to develop the doctrine of the Trinity more deeply through the exploration of the text of Scripture while believing Scripture as the final authority (*sola fide*). Calvin keeps in mind that human beings are placed in a position of reception to find the meaning of the text of Scripture and follow the hermeneutic of interpreting Scripture in and through Scripture, namely, by means of the self-revelation of God (*sola gratia*). In order to clarify obscure and uncertain Scriptural passages, Calvin emphasizes that Christ is the focal point of the reading of the text of Scripture (*sola Christus*).

When considering his hermeneutic of citing the direct declaration of Scripture and of establishing doctrine from the text of Scripture, it seems that Calvin does not take a keen interest in elaborating the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. For Calvin, it is apparent that Scripture mentions the eternal distinctions and interrelations of the divine three persons within the Godhead. However, in Calvin's view, the teaching of Scripture is minimal

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[195] Declan Marmion and Rik van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 139; Philip Walker Butin, *Reformed Ecclesiology: Trinitarian Grace according to Calvin* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1994), 6; Joseph P. Murphy, *The Fountain of Life: John Calvin, the Devotio Moderna and Metaphorical Theology of Trinity, Word, and Sacrament* (Palo Alto: Academica Press, 2011), 200; Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1988), 201.

[196] For a detailed discussion of the Reformed view, including Calvin, on *sola scriptura* and its relation between *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, and *solus Christus*, see Huijgen, "Alone Together: *Sola* Scriptura and the Other Solas of the Reformation," 83-99.

concerning the immanent Trinity. So, Calvin does not reject the eternal generation of the Son. Although Calvin adheres to the *filioque*, following the Western trinitarian perspective, and acknowledges God's being and the relations among the three persons, he does not present the particular way of the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit further. Calvin is convinced that any attempts at understanding the doctrine must be made by following the reading that Scripture interprets itself.[197] Hence, Calvin does not take a step forward to explain in detail concerning the immanent Trinity, mainly how the Son was generated, and the Spirit proceeded. For Calvin, this idea of the divine generation is a mystery beyond all human comprehension.

Concerning the inner relationship within the Godhead, Calvin refers to a specific order and a relation of three persons of the Trinity because here, "it is not fitting to suppress the distinction that we observe to be expressed in Scripture."[198] Notably, Calvin explains the relational aspects between the three divine persons of God, rather than the relations of generation and procession, from the perspective of the absolute equality of the persons.[199] Calvin also puts little emphasis on the concept of "perichoresis."[200] Calvin is more interested in elaborating an analysis of how each person of God is self-existent God.[201] Hence, instead of referring to the relations of the three persons, Calvin prefers to call the divine persons only the Father as beginning, the Son as wisdom and the Spirit as power. By emphasizing the self-existence of Christ as God more than the relationship of the three persons, Calvin contributes to establishing the same essence in its fullest sense.

On the other hand, in Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, the economic Trinity is much more in the foreground than the immanent Trinity, which is mainly focused on its soteriological purpose and content. Calvin conceives the doctrine of the Trinity as the essential foundation of the whole doctrine of redemption.[202] In light of *solus Christus*, the deity of Christ is highlighted.[203] The resurrection of Christ from the dead is important for Calvin as the most definitive evidence for the divinity of the Son. In his commentary on Hebrews 1:5, Calvin states that the resurrection of Christ indicates the sure visible revelation of the eternal generation of the Son and not vice versa.[204] The identification of Christ is the true God, and our Savior gives a substantial certainty of salvation for the believer. Rather than the eternal generation of the Son, it is the resurrection of Christ from the dead that Calvin regards as an ideal way of arguing the deity of the Son as the second person of the Trinity. Moreover, Calvin understands the mission of Christ in the world as a sign of eternal generation, and also the Spirit's coming forth and His being poured out at Pentecost as a sign of eternal procession. In this sense, Calvin emphasizes the procession of the Spirit from the

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[197] Calvin, *Inst*., 1.13.25. Cf. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 257.

[198] Calvin, *Inst*., 1.13.18.

[199] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 43.

[200] Calvin, *Inst*., 1.13.19. Cf. Baars, "The Trinity," 251. Id., *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 303, 304.

[201] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 251, 273.

[202] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 200.

[203] Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1988), 201.

[204] Calvin, *Comm. in Heb.* 1:5.

perspective of the salvation of the believer, not in terms of the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son itself.[205]

Calvin dedicates himself to providing a firm and practical knowledge of God for believers, demonstrating a Scriptural foundation for the economic Trinity. While Calvin briefly examines this when speaking of the immanent Trinity, it is clear that the economic Trinity is more fully examined in Calvin's *Institutes*, commentaries, and sermons. Mainly in his commentaries, Calvin's examination of the economic Trinity is most profoundly apparent with his emphasis as the fullness of salvation history. Whereas Calvin makes the point more clearly in the *Institutes* when he states the deity of the Son and the deity of the Spirit more fully than in his commentaries, Calvin's description in his commentaries reveals the more economic aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity with the focus of soteriology more than did Calvin on this point in the *Institutes*.[206]

For example, in Calvin's commentary, there is some saving knowledge of the triune God to be found. For instance, his commentaries on Psalms 45:7 and 1 Corinthians 1:15 provide a hermeneutical framework for understanding God's revelation and His gracious acts towards sinners through Christ as mediator. Calvin presupposes the trinitarian unity between the Father and Son when he makes the point that the incarnate Christ should be considered as a pivot of divine accommodation concerning Christ's Mediatorial office.[207] Concerning theological epistemology, for Calvin, it is impossible to obtain divine knowledge apart from Christ as the Mediator. Therefore, these passages put a soteriological focus on the office of Christ as mediator between God and humanity, not on the eternal being of Christ.[208] In his commentary on Matthew 12:31, Calvin points to the work of grace that the Spirit endows us with, from the perspective of the economic Trinity concentrated interest in the salvation of humanity.[209] Commenting that the "hypostasis" of Hebrews 1:3 is synonymous with "subsistence," although Calvin stresses the distinct hypostasis, he does not further make a statement in support of the immanent Trinity. In Calvin's view, what the writer of Hebrew wants to make clear here is not about the being of God, but instead how Jesus reveals himself to us.[210]

Moreover, in Calvin's sermons, one can encounter his trinitarian understanding of the work of salvation in terms of the Father's will, the Son's accomplishment, and the Spirit's application. Calvin gives a detailed account of the redemptive mission of the Spirit by the Father and the exalted Christ in salvation history rather than the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son.

All in all, Calvin surely wants to describe the work of salvation as the economic Trinity, both in the commentaries and the sermons. Most of Calvin's attention is on the soteriological aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity rather than mentioning the trinitarian terms or the issue of intra-trinitarian relationships. Considering Calvin's argument for the doctrine of the Trinity,

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[205] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid,* 328.

[206] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 300; Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 182.

[207] See Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 236-244.

[208] Calvin, *Comm. in Ps.* 45:7; *Comm. in Cor.*1:15.

[209] Calvin, *Comm. in Matt.* 12:31.

[210] Baars, *Om Gods verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 312, 313.

it is reasonable to insist that Calvin is not so keen on explaining the immanent Trinity, and his doctrine of the Trinity is much more focused on the economic Trinity as the divine *ad extra* work of salvation and practical godliness of Christian life. This does not mean that Calvin rejects the idea of the eternal generation of the Son and the *filioque* or the discussion of the intra-trinitarian relations itself. Albeit without the use of either of the terms 'the immanent and economic' Trinity or the clear distinction between them, there are some of the adumbrations in the thoughts of Calvin. Calvin does not make a clear distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity, but he seems to imply an intra-trinitarian relationship, or at least indicates some aspects of the relationship between these three persons in the entire work of salvation.

Indeed, Calvin does not take an approach to the inner nature of God's being in the sense of speculation. In the light of Scripture, the teaching inherited from previous ages must always be judged and be subject to correction. Based on the principle of *sola scriptura*, Calvin tries to understand the truth of Scripture and receives the knowledge of the Trinity. For Calvin, the fundamental principle is that the doctrine of Scripture leads to the doctrine of the Trinity. Calvin shows little interest or knowledge in the immanent Trinity rather than the economic Trinity, applying the principle that Scripture is its own interpreter. Most importantly, for Calvin's thought, the triune God communicates himself to humanity in Christ by the Spirit through Scripture for the salvation of humanity. In God's works of creation and redemption, God reveals himself as triune God with His grace in saving and restoring His people. Calvin is admittedly focused on God's trinitarian works and His attributes rather than God's trinitarian essence.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter explained the doctrine of the Trinity in order to discern Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin. Before delving deeper into the analysis of the theological relationship between them, the examination of the thoughts of Bavinck and Calvin was carried out thematically, focusing on biblical exegesis, trinitarian terminology, analogical metaphor, trinitarian epistemology, several theological aspects in terms of doctrinal assumption, approach to the issue and the emphatic point. As examined above, there is a considerable difference between them in terms of theological contexts and reactions.

For Calvin, in his defense against Pierre Caroli's suspicions of heresy (1537), the anti-trinitarianism of Michael Servetus (1546), and Giovanni Valentino Gentile (1558) in the mid-sixteenth century, the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated. When Calvin speaks about the doctrine of the Trinity, he endeavors to be obedient to the teaching of Scripture by faith, and to be a keen reader of God's personal communication with human beings, accommodating Himself to human capacity, and to be a faithful believer in the knowledge of the triune God as God's gracious gift, stressing one's gratitude to God as the response to God's glorious grace in Christ. Calvin emphasizes the full essential equality of the deity of the Son and the Spirit and highlights the economy of the salvation of the triune God in Christ. For Calvin, the knowledge of the triune God indeed presents a more ample picture of the work of salvation for the glory of God. Concerning the authority which Calvin attributed to their writings, he

surely believes that Scripture is not the sole but the final authority (*sola scriptura*), and emphasizes a faith toward God's accommodation to human beings (*sola fide*). In Calvin's conviction, God is highly exalted above humanity. Through God's accommodation to us, human beings can receive divine knowledge only by faith. Calvin puts himself in a receptive position (*sola gratia*), craving the knowledge of God's glorious grace in Christ (*solus Christus*).

For Bavinck, the doctrine of the Trinity plays a crucial and central role in Bavinck's entire theology. The characteristics of Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity are the distinctive elaboration of the doctrine of the Trinity with his own insights over against anti-trinitarianism of his days. First, Bavinck defends the metaphysics concerning God and the world, against atheism as represented by Nietzsche and evolutionism as represented by Darwin. The doctrine of the Trinity enables Bavinck to demonstrate the existence of God and His works. Second, Bavinck resurrects the Trinity of God again, against Scholten's monistic image of God. The unity and diversity within the immanent Trinity provide an ultimately satisfying explanation against monism's deadly uniformity and multiformity. Third, Bavinck examines God's decree concerning the relationship between God and creation, against the mechanical determinism of monism, the rationalistic view of deism, and the pantheistic confusion between God and the world. Bavinck affirms both God's absoluteness and God's personality, grounded in the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. Fourth, Bavinck defends and develops the theological epistemology, against anti-revelation tendency and the historical-critical approach to the text of Keunen. Both God's incomprehensibility and God's knowability are explained through Bavinck's own trinitarian epistemology.

When Calvin is compared to Bavinck, as exactly what these features will be analyzed in chapter six, the careful observer will see similarities and differences in their respective thoughts. The following conclusion makes a point of briefly summarizing these points.

First, Calvin devotes considerable attention to the clarification of the exegesis of the text in order to an assurance of salvation and a firm knowledge of the triune God to the believer by finding support for the doctrine of the Trinity in historical exegesis, and by discarding allegorical exegesis. By comparison, Bavinck elaborates more in detail on the doctrine of the Trinity concerning the immanent Trinity and the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, taken from the text of Scripture and coupled with his trinitarian theological perspective.

Second, Calvin acknowledges the necessity and legitimacy of the trinitarian terms. Nonetheless, he urges caution in forming and developing the doctrine of the Trinity through excessive use of them. Like Calvin, Bavinck admits the necessity and legitimacy of the trinitarian terms for a proper understanding of the triune God. However, Bavinck is more extensive for using it in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity than Calvin. Calvin uses the Trinitarian terms moderately, while Bavinck emphasizes the use of extra-biblical terminology without hesitation in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity throughout his theological work than Calvin does.

Third, both theologians maintain that all creatures display various signs of the identity and attributes of God, namely, the vestiges of the Trinity. However, there are differences between them. Calvin keeps away from any attempts to illustrate the Trinity through the

human analogies or metaphysical reasoning. While Calvin is not interested in developing the so-called psychological analogies of Augustine's way of thinking about the triune God, Bavinck emphatically argues that the vestiges of the Trinity are analogically mirrored but most evident in humanity as the whole human person and the whole human race among all creatures.

Fourth, both theologians elucidate theological epistemology according to their own insights. While Calvin pays little attention to the issue of the clarity and certainty of the knowledge of God, Bavinck enthusiastically seeks to account for religious certainty of faith and knowledge of God, by presenting his own trinitarian epistemology. Specifically, Calvin elaborates more on God's works rather than God's essence. This is because Calvin's epistemology rests on his firm conviction that God's essence remains behind His divine accommodated revelation. By comparison, Bavinck devotes considerable attention to arguments for the trinitarian principle of epistemology, indeed about the doctrine of the immanent Trinity *per se* and the relation between immanent and economic Trinity.

Fifth, the deity of the Son and the Spirit occupies the considerable large portion of Calvin's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity. In order to explain the truly essential equality of the persons in essence as well as the full distinction of the three persons, notably, the deity of the Son and the Spirit is consistently underlined by Calvin. More specifically, both Calvin and Bavinck certainly concur in speaking of an independent, self-existent God. Calvin points directly to the aseity of the Son as the decisive attributes for further evidence of the deity of the Son. By comparison, Bavinck takes a different approach to the doctrine of the Trinity. He closely relates the concept of the aseity of God with the absoluteness of God. In Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, the ontological fullness of life and productivity, absolute relationship, and activity within the immanent Trinity are fully stressed more than by Calvin.

Sixth, concerning the unity and diversity of the divine persons, there is a substantial consensus between Calvin and Bavinck. However, there are differences between them in terms of theological emphasis. Calvin's challenge is to stress the unity in essence and the distinctiveness of the divine persons, with his emphasis on the full essential equality of the deity of the Son and the Spirit, against the challenge of the modalism of Servetus and the subordinationism of the Italian anti-trinitarians. For Calvin, the key to understanding divine oneness in essence and the personal three-ness of the Godhead is to approach it in terms of the aseity of the divine persons. By comparison, Bavinck emphasizes the absolute unity in diversity and diversity in unity, against monistic accounts of reality with the notions of uniformity and multiformity. Bavinck's solution to this deadly uniformity and multiformity is to provide a solid theological rationale for the Christian worldview of organic unity and diversity. For Bavinck, the confession of the immanent trinitarian being of God is not only the starting point, but it is also the convincing answer to all metaphysical and epistemological questions.

Seventh, there is a difference in the underlining reason for their treatment of the immanent and economic Trinity between Bavink and Calvin. While Calvin places more emphasis on the economic Trinity than the immanent Trinity, Bavinck distinguishes the doctrine of the Trinity between the immanent and economic Trinity and elaborates on the immanent Trinity and its relationship with God's outward works. Notably, for Bavinck, the

immanent Trinity is the very foundation of the ontological and epistemological foundation for humanity. On the grounds of the divine fecundity and the divine communicability, Bavinck promotes the idea that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity. Ontologically, without the eternal generation of the Son, creation, and re-creation is impossible. Epistemologically, despite an absolute ontological distance between God and creation, all creatures reveal the immanent Trinity. The Father reveals himself in the Son and through the Spirit. Specifically, by deploying the Reformed distinction between archetypal and ectypal, Bavinck maintains that the absolute and abundant unity and diversity in the Trinity are the source of all cosmic unity and diversity.

Along with these similarities and differences between Calvin and Bavinck concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, one can also confirm how their doctrine of the Trinity affects the perspective on humanity as the image of God. Most remarkably, while Calvin defines humanity as bearing the image of God as the perfect excellence of human nature, Bavinck declares that humanity is not something in human beings, but the human being himself is the image of the triune God. For Bavinck, humanity does not merely bear God's image only in part, or any conditions. Namely, the image of God extends to the whole person. We will delve into the doctrine of the image of God of Calvin and Bavinck in chapter five.

Chapter 5. The Doctrine of the Image of God

This present chapter deals with the doctrine of the image of God in the theology of Calvin and Bavinck. In the first section, Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God is discussed, and the second section examines the significant characteristics of Calvin's doctrine of the image of God. The objective of theses sections is to understand and grasp the comprehensive perspective on each of their thoughts on humanity as God's image concerning the origin, essence, and destiny. In these sections, the creation, corruption, and restoration of the image of God will be explored.

5.1 Bavinck and the Doctrine of the Image of God

5.1.1 The Creation of the Image of God

5.1.1.1 The Divine Origin of Humanity: From the Immanent Trinity

When Bavinck considers the essence and destiny of humanity, he preferentially focuses on discussing the origin of humanity: *Where did human beings come from*? The origin of humanity is fundamental to Bavinck, since his conviction that its origin defines the essence and destiny of humanity.[1] In Bavinck's view, although the divine origin of humanity has never been questioned in the previous history of Christianity, the whole tenor of discourse on the alternative doctrine of creation was entirely changed under the influence of the pantheism and materialism of the eighteenth century.[2] In Pantheism, God's essence is identical to that of creatures. Creation is replaced by the notions of emanation or evolution. Materialism claims that all creation and phenomena of the world must be regarded as mechanical combination or separation of atoms. Darwinism insists that humanity is nothing more than evolved animals, employing the notions of survival for existence by natural selection and heredity.[3] In light of these considerations, the origin of humanity was regarded as having originated from matter, as having originated by chance, or having evolved from apelike creatures.

Bavinck sharply criticizes these alternative views of human origins as fundamentally unbiblical. Bavinck expresses in-depth criticism of these views and considers them to be products of the imagination. Noting that these views rest on empirical investigations and logical reasoning, Bavinck comments, "it is a castle in the air, without any solid foundation, and without any severity of style, an air castle in the true sense of the word."[4] Specifically, Bavinck indicates his disagreements with Darwin's theory of evolution, pointing out its weakness and limitation.[5] First, in this evolutionary view, there still remains a riddle over the

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[1] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 196, 199.
[2] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 512, 533.
[3] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 513; 3: 73. Cf. Id., *Philosophy of Revelation*, 293; Id., *Our Reasonable Faith*, 191.
[4] Herman Bavinck, "Creation or Development," trans. J. H. de Vries, *The Methodist Review* 83 (1901), 856.
[5] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 514-23; 3: 39. Cf. Id., *Philosophy of Revelation*, 35, 41, 51, 102, 148; Id.,

origin of life. Second, a Darwinian framework does not explain the further development of organic entities in terms of the diversity and complexity of living being within species. Third, there are no definite proofs of the origin of humanity from animal ancestry. Fourth, all Darwinian answers fail to explain the emergence of humanness in terms of its mental aspect. In Bavinck's analysis, Darwin's theories make humanity created in God's image degrade to the level of an animal. For these reasons, Bavinck concludes that the theory of evolutionary naturalism does not resolve the question of the origin of humanity but instead points to a return to the doctrine of creation that Scripture teaches.

Against these alternatives concerning the origin of all things, Bavinck affirms the divine origin of humanity on the grounds that it is scriptural teaching that the triune God is the author of all creatures.[6] For Bavinck, God is the starting point and foundation of the existence of creation. Above all, Bavinck emphasizes that Scripture presupposes the existence of God.[7] In Scripture, the self-existence of God is never in doubt for a moment, as the name YHWH indicates. For Bavinck, the existence of God in reality is the origin of all things. Any creature should never be detached from God. Nothing exists apart from God. Then, as compared and contrasted with the alternative doctrines of creation of his time, what is the characteristic of the doctrine? How and on what grounds does Bavinck fundamentally argue that creation is intimately connected to God?

The origin of humanity is most splendidly described in Scripture as the image of God.[8] Bavinck declares that Scripture attests that God created humanity as the image and likeness of God. In Bavinck's analysis, there is no essential material distinction between the words 'image' and 'likeness,' noting that Scripture used those words interchangeably. For Bavinck, the image of God is integral to the very being of humanity, and thus he does not state that human beings *bear* or *have* the image of God but *are* the image of God.[9] It means that every human being has one and the same origin in God. Every human being also has a divine origin in the whole Deity, not only in some divine attributes. Every human being was created after the image of God in terms of the whole person, as it were, that nothing in human beings is excluded from God's image. In this regard, when the image of God is considered in humanity as a whole, its meaning can be fully unfolded. For Bavinck, as will be seen, the origin of humanity as the image of God is essential to the understanding of the human essence and human destiny. Then, how does Bavinck demonstrate the status and the significant meaning of humanity created in the image of God among all creatures?

Like Calvin, it is evident that the doctrine of the image of God maintains an important distinction that offers ontological conditions for Bavinck's account of the unique position of humanity among all creatures. Bavinck insists that humanity occupies a prominent place with God among all creatures in terms of being and degree. The image of God manifests the highest perfection of God more than among all the other creatures.[10] Bavinck affirms that the

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Our Reasonable Faith, 190-6.

[6] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 420.

[7] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 75, 89.

[8] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 531, 532.

[9] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 174; 2: 530, 554, 556. Italics are mine.

[10] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 36.

nature of humanity is the supreme revelation of God, namely, the crown of the whole creation, the epitome of nature, both *mikrotheos* (microgod) and *mikrokosmos* (microcosm), while every creature is the embodiment of divine thought.[11] Bavinck highlights a unique relationship between God and human beings, establishing a clear set of definitions of religion as "the distinctive relationship or position of human beings to God, expressing itself in all of life, and based on the distinctive relation of God to human beings."[12] In common with Calvin, Bavinck underscores the relational aspect of the image of God with respect to the Father-child relationship of humanity to God for His glory.

Added to that, Bavinck further underlines the doctrine of the Trinity as the basic foundation for all creatures as well as human beings. The existence and work of the triune God, for Bavinck, is intrinsically related to the ontological construal of the created reality. On this point, there is a difference between Bavinck and Calvin. Bavinck emphasizes that one can find the vestiges of the Trinity throughout the world since creation was made ontologically to reflect the very nature of the triune God. As already seen in chapter four, Calvin tends to deemphasize the approach to the impress the Trinity on human nature in connection with the concept of vestiges of the Trinity. Bavinck's use of the notion of vestiges of the Trinity stands in contrast to the usage by Calvin. Bavinck maintains that a*ll* these vestiges of the Trinity are most clearly evident in humanity, based on his emphasis on the image of the triune God as constitutive of humanity ontologically.[13] As will be seen, for Bavinck, this difference between Calvin and Bavinck concerning the definition of the image of God, notably, as the image of the triune God, makes a considerable difference concerning the nature and the purpose of humanity. It is quite apparent how significant the definition of humanity as the image of the triune God is in Bavinck's understanding of the human essence and the relation between the essence, the capabilities, abilities, and the faculties of human beings. Let me note four characteristics of Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God: (1) the ontological emphasis on the image of God, (2) the image of the triune God, centered on the whole person, (3) the trinitarian view of the unity and diversity of humanity as a whole, (4) the image of God as prophet, king, and priest.

5.1.1.2 The Ontological Emphasis on the Image of God

Bavinck provides a wealth of insight into the content of the essence of human beings. In Bavinck's view, the notion of humanity as the image of the triune God is intimately bound up with the understanding of the essence of humanity. This is Bavinck's understanding that the essence of humanity is incorporated into the divine image. More precisely, Bavinck emphasizes the point that human beings *are* the image of God by having ontological significance.[14] This definition that Bavinck presents is in essence different from Calvin's

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[11] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 530, 531, 561.

[12] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 59. Cf. Bavinck intentionally uses the Dutch word *verhouding* ("relation") to describe the relational direction from God to human beings, and the Dutch word *betrekking* ("post, position, job, office") to describe relational direction from human beings to God. Ibid., 59n135.

[13] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 135, 333, 577.

[14] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 530. Cf. Ibid., 533, 554, 556; Id., *Reformed Ethics*, 33. Italics are mine.

argument that human beings *bear* the image of God.[15] Hence, as the image of God, the essence of human beings is not only different in degree but fundamentally distinct from that of all creatures. Considering the image of the triune God as the essence of humanity, Bavinck firmly defends the doctrine against the two alternatives, namely, naturalistic and supernaturalistic views of human nature.

First, Bavinck criticizes naturalism for the concept of the image of God, particularly its understanding of humanity in the state of integrity.[16] The naturalistic account of the integrity of human nature is that humanity was created as a neutral being with morally indifferent powers and potentialities. Naturalism locates the image of God in a natural possibility of perfection, mainly on the freedom of the will. For naturalism, the human state of integrity created after the image of God is a state of childlike innocence.[17] From this perspective, human nature is identified as a moral indifference and formal freedom of moral choice. Hence, human beings achieve their ultimate destiny through their own work and volition. This view finally leads to the evolutionary view of human nature as an endless process of self-willed improvement.

In comparison with this naturalistic view, Bavinck's understanding of the original state of humanity is basically and, in essence, different. Bavinck maintains that Scripture teaches that human beings were created not as morally indifferent but as positively good. Bavinck declares, "Adam did not have to *become* good, he *was* good and had to ensure that he *remained* good."[18] Above all, Adam was the image of God at once, Bavinck declares, good and holy, since for human beings, the moral good as a condition of being is derived from God, who is good and holy.[19] On this basis, in Bavinck's view, the first human in the state of integrity should be understood as an adult.[20] Bavinck states that it is entirely valid that Adam was immediately created physically and ethically mature with original righteousness rather than being childlike. In reaction to the naturalistic view of humanity existing between good and evil without certain qualities of intellect and will, Bavinck argues that Scripture attests that human beings were created in true knowledge in the mind, righteousness in the will, and holiness in the heart. In this way, Bavinck explains that humanity as the image of God was created good, since God is good.

After the fall into sin, humanity cannot be the true image of God. For Bavinck, the image of God is the essence of humanity, as will be seen, which is different from Rome's notion of a *donum superadditum*. Hence, when the image of God in humanity was totally corrupted, this means that the essence of humanity was totally corrupted. After the fall, although human beings still remained human beings created after the image of God in an ontological sense, human beings became abnormal, as it were, as sinful humans.[21] Not only were human virtues lost, but also human faculties were profoundly corrupted. Moreover, the

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[15] Italics are mine.

[16] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 534-39.

[17] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 535.

[18] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 39.

[19] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 42.

[20] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 106.

[21] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 553, 585.

whole realm of humanity was spoiled and ruined. Like Calvin, acknowledging the total corruption of humanity, Bavinck speaks of the ontological state of human beings that human beings are still called the image of God and should be respected as such.[22]

Second, Bavinck maintains that Roman Catholic supernaturalism regarding human nature is inherently inadequate. He notes that Rome's supernaturalism rests on the ontological dualism between nature and grace. In Rome's view, nature and grace are ontological opposites. For Bavinck, the main point at issue is the problem with a dualism that conceives of nature and grace as a vertical ontological relationship between lower and higher realms. Hence, grace is conceived as a supernatural elevation of nature. Roman Catholic theology results in a dualistic view of the natural and supernatural man. So, on the one hand, humanity can exist in the purely natural sense, without supernatural grace, only possessing natural virtues. On the other hand, the supernatural man is humankind endowed with the superadded gift of the image of God, possessing supernatural virtues. In Bavinck's view, Rome argues that the lower state of human nature can be raised above their own nature by an infused and extrinsic grace as the higher state of grace. This supernatural grace can consecrate human nature as a supplemental addition to human nature. Here, according to Rome, the first humans received the image of God as a superadded gift, and for them, the original righteousness was given in the image of God as a supernatural grace.[23] Therefore, when the first Adam sinned, what he has lost is the mere image of God as a superadded grace. Even despite the fall, human beings became natural humans as a being without the image of God, and thus the natural qualities of the essence of human beings have still remained whole. Hence, when the second Adam delivered human beings from the guilt and punishment of sin, what humanity received again is this same image of God as a superadded grace. In this way, in Rome's supernaturalism, both before and after the fall, the superadded grace was granted to humanity, in order to elevate nature above itself.

From this ontological dualism of nature and grace, the state of glory is viewed as the mystical condition that far transcends the state of nature concretely as an elevation of nature rather than a restoration of nature.[24] Hence, in Bavinck's assessment, for Rome, the final destiny of human beings is to divinize humanity through a mystical fusion of the soul with God.[25] Supernatural infused grace is regarded as how human beings make this mystical view of final human destiny by doing good works. By infused grace, human beings can do the meritoriousness of good works, ultimately, to receive eternal life as a divinization of the essence of humanity.

Over against Roman Catholic supernaturalism, Bavinck maintains that Rome's view of humanity in the state of glory is entirely wrong since Scripture nowhere teaches that the final

[22] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 550, 585.

[23] T. Aquinas, *Summa theol.*, I, qu. 100, art. 1; *Sent.*, II, dist. 20, qu. 2, art. 3; II, dist. 29, qu. 1, art. 1. Cited from Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 541.

[24] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 542.

[25] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 539, 542, 548, 587; Cf. Ibid., 1: 358; 3: 573-79; 4: 72. The Roman Catholics distinguish between the actual grace (*gratia actualis*) and the habitual grace (*gratia habitualis*). They argue that human beings are elevated to the supernatural order by habitual grace and are participated in the divine nature in some manner. Cf. Id., *Reformed Ethics*, 36.

destiny is a melding with the divine nature. Rome's supernaturalism claims that human beings reach their ultimate destiny of glory through meritorious works by means of God's grace as the supernatural power to perform good works. Namely, grace is the only power that enables human beings to do good works. At this point, Bavinck says that this concept of grace is not properly understood regarding the state of glory. What Bavinck recognizes here is that the failure to construe the relationship of grace and glory directly properly leads to the failure to relate grace and nature properly. Rome's dualistic ontology between the natural and the supernatural, assuming a hierarchical dualism of lower nature and higher supernatural, is not what Scripture teaches concerning the essence of human beings. In Bavinck's view, Rome's claim proceeds from the assumption that the image of God as a supernatural, superadded gift is separable from the essence of human beings. For Rome's supernaturalism, after the fall, human beings can exist as a natural being, without the supernatural righteousness. In light of Bavinck's criticism, the original righteousness is natural rather than supernatural, and thus it is inseparable from the essence of human beings. Namely, the original righteousness is not a superadded gift but originally and integrally belongs to the essence of humanity.[26] Bavinck undoubtedly maintains a total corruption of human nature over against Rome's claim that original sin is just a loss of the superadded gift and the notion of a natural man devoid of a superadded gift.

By contrast with the dualistic view of Rome, Bavinck articulates the organic unity of human nature and suggests the foundational principle that grace restores and perfects human nature. Most notably, Bavinck makes a distinct contribution to the discussion that the image of God is constitutive of the essence of humanity. In common with Calvin, Bavinck states the importance of the relational aspects of the image of God by arguing that the understanding of humanity as the image of God is inexplicable apart from communion with God. However, more than that, Bavinck articulates more about the ontological aspects of the image of God from his trinitarian perspective. He emphasizes that it is only in the context of the archetypal-ectypal relationship between humanity and the triune God that Bavinck's view of humanity as the image of the triune God can be accurately and fully understood in terms of both ontological and relational senses. By grounding his concept of the creation of humanity in the trinitarian being of God *ad intra* and his works *ad extra*, as will be demonstrated, Bavinck passionately maintains that the whole human person is ontologically constituted the image of the whole Trinity. This ontological construal of the image of the triune God further leads to not only the relational human nature of humanity as a whole and an organism, but also the eschatological destiny of humanity. If so, in Bavinck's theology, precisely what does it mean to be human beings as the image of the triune God ontologically, and what is Bavinck's articulation of this doctrine of the image of the triune God?

5.1.1.3 The Trinitarian View of the Unity and Diversity of Humanity as a Whole

Bavinck's trinitarian theology makes a significant contribution to the doctrine of the image of God. In keeping with Bavinck's consistent emphasis, the doctrine of the Trinity provides the

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[26] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 543.

intrinsic resources for the understanding of humanity in his theology. Bavinck maintains that the triune God provides an essential foundation in himself for the existence of human beings.

Notably, given his repeated deploying of the archetypal and ectypal distinction between the triune God and humanity, for Bavinck, what is of utmost importance is the immanent Trinity. When Bavinck comes to articulate the doctrine of the image of God, the immanent Trinity is the starting point in giving an account for human beings. As has been previously noted in Chapter four, with particular focus on the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, Bavinck affirms that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity.[27] All the works of God *ad extra*, that is, not only are grounded in the *ad intra* relationships of God but also manifests God's ontological relationships. From this perspective, Bavinck emphasizes that the unity and diversity in the triune God as the archetype is an essential foundation for all the unity and diversity in humankind.[28] "Just as God is one in essence and distinct in persons," Bavinck maintains, "so also the work of creation is one and undivided, while in its unity it is still rich in diversity."[29]

Specifically, concerning the unity in humankind, Bavinck maintains that it is undoubtedly true that human beings have a deep unity with respect to the mutual physical relationship as well as religious and ethical relationship.[30] For Bavinck, the creation of humanity as the image of God is the presupposition of the unity of religion and the moral life in humanity. Namely, without religion as a distinctive relationship between humanity and God, in Bavinck's view, the moral life as human relationships with each other is impossible. The ontological essence of the unity of humanity as the image of God leads directly into one and the same purpose and destiny of human beings. In addition to his emphasis upon the unity of the ontological unity of human essence, at the same time, Bavinck points out that there is an obvious diversity among the human race in gender, age, class, rank, character, talent, and ability.[31]

In light of his consistent account of humanity as an ectypal unity and diversity in humanity, Bavinck further labors to articulate the organic character of humanity. Among the more striking aspects of Bavinck's contribution is his declaration of the unity and diversity of humanity as a whole. For Bavinck, not only the individual but also the human race in its entirety are organically created in the image of God. Bavinck argues that God's archetypal unity in diversity is the foundation for all human relationships.[32] Namely, the unity and diversity of the immanent Trinity sets the overall architecture of Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God and provides the foundation on which he develops the unique concept of humanity as an organism. Bavinck maintains that the world, including a human being, can be described as an organism, which means that "all the parts are connected with each other and influence each other reciprocally."[33] Bavinck expresses humanity in the sense of organism

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[27] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 318.

[28] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 54.

[29] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 422.

[30] For a detailed Bavinck's explanation of religion and morality, see Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 62-75.

[31] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 471. Cf. Id., *Our Reasonable Faith*, 206.

[32] Pass, *The Heart of Dogmatics*, 106.

[33] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 436.

that "Every human person is an organic member of humanity as a whole, and at the same time that, in that whole, he or she occupies an independent place of his or her own."[34] In the light of his perspective on both individuals and humankind, the origin, nature, and destiny as the image of God can be properly explained as an organic whole. Bavinck strongly emphasizes the perspective of humanity as a whole in relation to the image of God that "Not the man alone, nor the man and woman together, but only the whole of humanity is the fully developed image of God, his children, his offspring."[35] Every human person is not merely an aggregate mass of individuals but organic members of the whole human race.[36] From this standpoint, it is impossible to develop any radical individualism, since no one exists as a solitary creature.[37] In Bavinck's words, humanity is described as a living soul, an organic unity, one race, and one family.[38] Humanity stands, falls, and will be raised up together.[39] Humanity as the image of God is, therefore, properly unfolded only in the mutual fellowship of humanity as a whole.

The beginning of the story in Bavinck's *The Christian Family* fully captures and shows this unity and diversity of humankind in his point well. In the first human beings, there is a unity of origin, nature, and destiny among men and women. Both men and women were equally created in the image of God, and the soul and body are intimately united in one person. Together, both men and women possess the same nature and a unique ontological position among all creatures, displaying God's image and likeness for the same goal of God's glory. At the same time, there is a diversity among men and women in the manner in which they were created. Man's body comes from the dust of the earth, but the woman was created from the body of a man. Man is different from a woman, with his own sex, character, and vocation. Bavinck declares that within this unity, both men and women remain two, having their own identity, character, and vocation. There is harmony between unity and diversity. Even though men and women have the same calling, they achieve this calling through the exercise of a different task and activity. The family is Bavinck's example of this view: "Father, mother, and child are one soul and one flesh, expanding and unfolding the one image of God, united within threefold diversity and diverse within harmonic unity."[40] In this way, Bavinck notes that it is only by God's intentional deliberation that the unity in diversity within humankind exists in nature from the very beginning and it is not a result of sin, but an accomplishment of God's will and His sovereignty.

5.1.1.4 The Image of the Triune God, Centered on the Whole Person

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[34] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 587.

[35] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 577. Cf. Ibid., 2: 303, 305; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant Th.D. diss.*, (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953), 81.

[36] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 380; 3: 587. Cf. Id., *Reformed Ethics*, 49.

[37] Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 217.

[38] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 306, 577, 3: 102; Id., *Our Reasonable Faith*, 240. Cf. Anthony A. Hoekma, Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant Th.D. diss., (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953), 81.

[39] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 106, 148.

[40] Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, 8.

The doctrine of the Trinity is particularly crucial for Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God. How does Bavinck apply the doctrine of the Trinity for his formulation of the doctrine of the image of God?

First, Bavinck forthrightly declares that human beings are the image of the whole deity. Central to his understanding of the image of the whole deity is the notion that human beings were created after the image of the whole triune God, neither of one of the three divine persons nor one of the virtues or attributes of God. Bavinck emphasizes that a human being is not the divine self, but a finite creaturely impression of the whole Trinity.[41] The entire deity is the archetype of human beings.[42] Human beings are called God's portrait in miniature, his imprint, effigy, or ectype.[43] For Bavinck, the triune being of God is the absolute archetype for all creatures, and human beings are the ectype for the glory of God. While all creatures display the vestiges of the Trinity, human beings display these vestiges brilliantly as the image of the triune God.

Bavinck further expands his understanding of the image of God with reference to the Son. As Bavinck indicates, in Scripture, the Son is called the Word, the image, the Son, or the imprint of God (John 1:1, 14; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). The Son ought not to be regarded as some part of the divine being. His nature absolutely conforms to that of the Father. In this sense, Bavinck underscores the fact that just as the Son is the image of the whole deity, human beings are also the image of the whole deity. However, it should be noted that Bavinck points out that there is a great difference between the Son and humanity. Namely, the Son is the image of God in an absolute sense, and humanity is the image of God in a relative sense. While the Son is the eternal only begotten Son, humanity is the created son of God. The Son is the image of God within God divinely, but humanity is outside of the divine being in a creaturely manner.

Second, the understanding of the whole person is of vital importance for Bavinck in giving a fundamental account of the nature of humanity as the image of God. For Bavinck, the image of God extends to the whole person. For Bavinck, Human beings do not merely bear God's image only in part, any faculties, or any conditions. Unlike Calvin, Bavinck declares that "the whole human person is the image of the whole Deity."[44] Nothing in human beings is excluded from the divine image. For Bavinck, religion is the distinctive relationship of the whole person with thinking, feeling, willing, etc. of all abilities of the soul and the body to God.[45] In Bavinck's words, "The whole being," namely, "not *something in man* but *man himself*," is the image of God.[46] Given Bavinck's affirmation that the whole human person is the image of the triune God, which he further supports by his view of the image of God as constitutive of humanity, at this point, it is precisely here that Bavinck's emphasis upon the whole person in relation to the image of God differ from Calvin's view of the image of God, centered on the human soul. On this basis, Bavinck underscores how sin

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[41] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 561.

[42] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 533, 554; Cf. Ibid., 1:212, 233; 2: 107-10.

[43] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 36. Cf. Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:531-33.

[44] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 533.

[45] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 59.

[46] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 554.

has profoundly affected the whole person, and hence grace also restores the whole person. The whole person, including one's whole life and all the labor in the family, society, the state, art, science, is spoiled and ruined by sin and restored by grace.

More specifically, Bavinck elaborates on how the whole person is related to the image of God. The key aspects of human nature are examined with particular reference to the soul, the faculties, the body, virtues, and dominion over the earth. First of all, Bavinck highlights the soul as the spiritual nature of humanity and declares, "the spirituality, invisibility, unity, simplicity, and immortality of the human soul are all features of the image of God."[47] For Bavinck, Scripture uses the two terms 'soul' and 'spirit' interchangeably. The soul implies that human beings have a spirit of their own as life-principle received from God, unlike the animals. The soul is given to humanity from the beginning, as humanity's spiritual component, and it is organized for and adapted to a body, and for intellectual and spiritual life, to the sensory and external faculties. Notably, while the evolutionary, atheistic, and mechanical theories of his time denied the existence of God and the spiritual, the soul within human beings is more than anything else that which forms the rationale for the revelation of the attributes and perfections of God more clearly than all other creatures.[48] Particularly among the faculties of the human mind, Bavinck pays attention to the heart as "the *organ* of man's life."[49] Bavinck highlights the priority of the heart; it is the center, seat, and fountain of entire physical and psychic life, of emotions and passions, of desire and will, even of knowing, feeling, willing, and acting.[50]

With respect to the human faculties, in Bavinck's thought, all human faculties are the parts of the image of God in terms of which the capacities and activities of the faculties manifest God's attributes and perfections.[51] Bavinck agrees with Augustine's trinitarian view that the faculties of heart, mind, and will (*memoria, intellectus, voluntas*) are an analogy of the Trinity that the persons of the Trinity have an order in immanent relations. In Bavinck's thought, all human faculties are ontologically equal. The soul is not more divine than the body. Although there is ontological equality in the human faculties, at the same time there is an order within human faculties. For instance, standing with Augustine's trinitarian analogy, Bavinck argues that life flows from the mind and the will from the heart.[52] Surely, Bavinck admits that the divine image is revealed more in some parts than others. Like Calvin, at this point, Bavinck argues that the image of God emerges more clearly in the soul rather than the body, more visibly in the ethical virtues rather than the physical virtues.[53] However, even though there is a difference in degree and capacity of reflecting God's glory within human beings, this does not hinder the notion that the whole person is constituted the image of God. From his trinitarian perspective, while Bavinck concedes that the soul is superior to the body

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47 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 556.

48 Bavinck, "Creation or Development," trans. J. H. de Vries, in *The Methodist Review* 83 (1901), 11.

49 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 556.

50 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 254-69, 277-79; 2: 556-57.

51 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 557.

52 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 557; 4: 153.

53 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 555.

in some sense, with reference to the essence of humanity, it is evident that there remains ontological equality of the spiritual and corporeal, the soul and body.

Particularly as regards the nature of the body in the image of God, Bavinck emphasizes the significance of the identity of humanity in terms of a single personality composed of both the soul and body from his fundamental trinitarian ontology.[54] For Bavinck, there exists unity and diversity within human faculties connected and mutually influencing each other. Given that human beings do not have or bear the image of God but are the image of God, Bavinck highlights that not only the soul but also the body belong to the image of God. If human beings are defined merely as consisting of the soul and body, this definition might lead to the misunderstanding of ontological dualism. It is obviously true that Bavinck's account of the ontological existence of humanity rests on his anti-dualistic polemic and his trinitarian view on humanity as the image of the triune God and as an organic whole. With respect to the relationship between body and soul, Bavinck notes that "there is not a unity, identity, and sameness of matter and spirit, but a harmonious joining in which matter is subject to spirit."[55]

On this basis, in Bavinck's view, the body of a human being is one of the indispensable elements of the essence of humanity, describing the body as a "marvelous piece of art from the hand of God Almighty and just as constitutive for the essence of humanity as the soul."[56] Concerning the intimate, organic connection between the soul and body, Bavinck speaks of reciprocal interaction and influence of body and soul. Thus, Bavinck declares, "one nature, one person, one self" is the subject of both the soul and body and of all their activities.[57] Therefore, for Bavinck, the essence of human beings consists above all in the most intimate union in the distinction of the soul and body in a single personality.[58]

Furthermore, Bavinck discusses why the body is integral to the essence of humanity in relation to the image of God, likewise the soul. First, when considering the state of sin after Adam's sin, Bavinck clearly describes its consequence for human beings as the total corruption of the whole person. Bavinck maintains that sin precipitated the ruined image of God, and it has profoundly affected the whole person.[59] Second, with emphasis on the total corruption of the whole person, Bavinck accounts for the total renewal of the whole person that the work of Christ restores the whole person.[60] Third, considering the incarnation of Christ, Bavinck states that it is proof for the body of humans as an essential component of God's image. Fourth, Bavinck explains that the true conversion includes the whole person comprehensively, encompassing "one's intellect, heart, will, soul, and *body*."[61] Fifth, concerning the benefit of eternal life in relation to the Lord's Supper, Bavinck also holds that

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[54] A helpful discussion on this topic can be found in Jessica Joustra, "An Embodied Imago Dei: How Herman Bavinck's Understanding of the Image of God Can Help Inform Conversations on Race," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11 (2017): 9-23.

[55] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 46.

[56] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 559. Bavinck emphasizes that Scripture reconciles the human soul and body (Job 10:8-12; Ps. 8; 139:13-17; Eccles. 12:2-7; Isa. 64:8).

[57] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 559.

[58] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 694.

[59] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 554.

[60] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 91, 98.

[61] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 152. Italics are mine.

it is clear that eternal life is a benefit granted to the whole person, not only spiritually but also physically.[62] Sixth, concerning death, Bavinck maintains that the whole person, not only his soul but also his body, dies and belongs to Sheol. That is to say, Just as the whole person was destined for life through obedience, Bavinck states that both the soul and body also succumb to death by transgression.[63] Seventh, the state of the blessed in heaven bears a provisional character "inasmuch as the body is integral to our humanity."[64] Eighth, in the day of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead will occur in order to restore "the temporary rupture of the bond between soul and body" in all human beings, and human beings as the whole person, in both the soul and body, will stand before the judgment seat of God.[65] Ninth, Bavinck presents the resurrection of the dead as evidence of the necessity of the body for the essence of human beings as the image of God. Bavinck insists that the true resurrection is not just a reunion of the soul and body, but also a renewal after God's image. Viewed in this light, Bavinck points out the identity of the resurrection body as the essence of human beings.

Concerning the dominion over the earth in relation to the image of God, Calvin rejects this view, insisting that "Nor is there any probability in the opinion of those who locate God's likeness in the dominion given to man…whereas God's image is properly to be sought within him, not outside him."[66] In comparison with Calvin, Bavinck pays more attention to the dominion over the earth in connection with the divine image. Bavinck notes that the image of God and dominion over the earth are clearly related, based on the teaching of Scripture, namely, on Genesis 1:26, 28; 2:19-20; 9:2-3. For Bavinck, dominion over the earth is "not an external appendix to the image; it is not based on a supplementary special dispensation."[67] Although Bavinck does not argue that dominion over the earth is a constituent factor of the image of God, he emphasizes the expanding dominion over the earth in relation to the unfolding of the image of God intimately.

5.1.1.5 The Image of God as Prophet, Priest, and King

For Bavinck, the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king is closely tied in with the nature and properties of the essence of human beings. Bavinck deems this threefold office of utmost importance to consider the grounds of both the original purpose and ultimate destiny of humanity as the image of God. Bavinck's conviction is that the destiny of humanity lies in the unfolding of the image of God, more pointedly in the exercise of the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.[68] Bavinck relates the threefold office to his doctrine of the image of God distinctively.

More accurately, Bavinck describes the fact that human beings were created as the prophet who explains God and proclaims his excellencies, as the priest who consecrates

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[62] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 579, 580.
[63] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 600.
[64] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 641.
[65] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 693.
[66] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 4.
[67] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 560, 561.
[68] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 334.

himself with all that is created to God as a holy offering and as the king who guides and governs all things in justice and rectitude.[69] Bavinck relates these threefold offices directly to the virtues of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, which were given to humanity as the image of God in the state of integrity at creation.[70] For Bavinck, the ultimate purpose of all creatures is to manifest divine attributes and virtues for the glory of God.[71] By the same token, God's will for humanity is to reflect his attributes and virtues as the imprint of God's very being for His glory. In this sense, Bavinck describes human nature in the state of integrity at creation as "of full-grown, aware, freely acting agents," and as immediately endowed with the virtues of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.[72]

So, Bavinck insists on a clear connection between the virtues of the image of God and the threefold office of prophet, king, and priest. Bavinck explains how the virtues of the image of God and the threefold office of prophet, king, and priest are closely related in terms of nature and destiny of humanity. In Bavinck's perspective, these virtues were granted to humanity as the image of the triune God for the glory of God. As has already been noted, with respect to human nature, one of Bavinck's most intriguing statements is that "the whole human person is the image of the whole Deity."[73] When Bavinck speaks of the essence of human beings, by deploying the Reformed scholastic distinction between archetype and ectype knowledge, he maintains that God is the absolute archetype for human beings, and thus humankind is called God's portrait in miniature, his imprint, effigy, or ectype. The whole human person shines the vestiges of the Trinity brilliantly as the highest and richest revelation of God among all creatures, notably by exercising the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. In Bavinck's understanding, not only the individual but also humanity as a whole and one complete organism were anointed as prophet, priest, and king, unfolding the one God's image, for manifesting God's virtues and attributes. Bavinck argues that human destiny is intimately and organically related to the exercise of the threefold office: "Only humanity in its entirety - as one complete organism, summed up under a single head, spread out over the whole earth, as prophet proclaiming the truth of God, as priest dedicating itself to God, as ruler controlling the earth and the whole of creation - only it is the fully finished image, the most telling and striking likeness of God."[74]

Bavinck further develops this threefold office in relation to the nature and properties of the essence of human beings. Bavinck basically stands with the Reformed notion on the threefold office as the unique mediatorial role of Christ for humanity's salvation. Based on Scriptural teaching, Bavinck describes Christians as "a holy, royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)," "prophets who declare the excellencies of God, confess his name, and know all things (Matt. 10:32; 1 John 2:20, 27)," "priests who offer up their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10)," and "kings who fight the good fight, overcome sin, the world, and death, and will someday reign with Christ (Rom.

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[69] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 562.
[70] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 560.
[71] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 386, 389,
[72] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 537, 557, 558.
[73] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 533.
[74] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 577.

6:12–13; 1 Tim. 1:18–19; 2 Tim. 2:12; 4:7; 1 John 2:13–14; Rev. 1:6; 2:26; 3:21; 20:6),” and thus “anointed ones” (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16).[75] Bavinck clearly states, “He[God] created us after his image in order that we might know, love, and glorify him and serve him as prophets, priests, and kings.”[76]

Bavinck's understanding of the image of God in relation to the threefold office is highly important not just because it supports restoring the image of God by grace through Christ's mediatorial work but further because this manifests the *ad intra* works of God, through the manifestation of knowledge, holiness, and righteousness. At this point in his treatment, these virtues should be considered as communicable attributes of God.[77] Namely, Bavinck's emphasis upon the image of God with the threefold office ultimately leads us to the *ad intra* works of the three persons of the Trinity.

5.1.2. The Corruption of the Image of God

When considering the impact of sin on humanity concerning guilt, punishment, and the consequences of sin in general and the process of the act of sinning in particular, Bavinck's position leaves little room to doubt the universality of sin and the total depravity of humanity.[78] Namely, nothing less than deprivation and disturbance of the whole person being the image of God and the entire human race is under the influence of sin. Regarding the sinful nature of humanity, among Bavinck's central concerns is the need to resist Pelagianism and Roman Catholicism, which are at odds with the teachings of Scriptures.

First, Pelagianism rejects the doctrines of original sin and universal sinfulness of humankind. For Bavinck, Pelagianism's understanding of the effect of sin on humanity is unacceptable. Pelagianism claims that the subject of sin is not the whole human person but merely the free will of humans. According to Pelagianism, the human free will is considered as “the image of God, the first principle and foundation of the dominion granted him,”[79] and thus the image of God consisted not in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, but solely in “a free personality.”[80] In Pelagianism, it is the free choice of the will that provides the possibility to sin or not to sin. In this regard, the universality of sin is explained in terms of the activity of imitation.

On this basis, Pelagianism asserts that human free will can still lead to a holy life preventing from the influence of sin. The mind (νους) or the spirit (πνευμα) in humanity has remained free from sin. Sin only resides in the flesh (σαρξ).[81] Sin is not innate, and it is always based on an act of free will. Pelagianism distinguishes between sin (sinful inclination) and guilt (deliberate and voluntary transgression). While the former is called sin, it is not a real sin but mere ignorance. In Pelagianism's view, all human beings are born with pure souls

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[75] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 375, 376.
[76] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 376.
[77] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 192-96, 216-28.
[78] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 82, 83.
[79] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 42.
[80] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 86.
[81] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 81.

in the same state as Adam before sin existed in a state of childlike innocence, of moral indifference. Pelagianism claims that the influence of sin can be carried away in every human life when the free will is applied in the right direction.[82] By virtue of the free choice of the will, humanity makes it possible for their knowledge and deed to be good. According to Pelagianism, human beings stand or fall by themselves.[83] Adam's fall is merely a bad form of sin. In this way, Pelagianism rejects the universality of sin and argues that this universal sinfulness is a result of mere imitation of a bad example.

Over against this Pelagian objection to original sin, Bavinck maintains the total depravity of human nature. For Bavinck, this human depravity is the inability for good in terms of natural impotence, not moral impotence.[84] Bavinck stresses that sin not only corrupts the content of the whole human person but also makes one's activity work in another direction and abused, away from God, not towards Him. In his *Reformed Ethics*, Bavinck expounds on the state of the human person under the power of sin, which involves these two elements: "1. *turning away from* God, enmity, hatred against God, scorning God, a refusal to surrender oneself - in other words, withholding oneself from God; and 2. *turning to self*, a commitment to self, a surrender to self - in other words, selfishness - a love of something other than God, namely, oneself; the deification of self, the glorification of self, adoration of self."[85] In the light of the above illustration, Adam's sin is nothing less than "a change of condition, existing differently, standing in a different relationship to God than before, a turnabout in the relation to God."[86] Unlike Pelagianism's view that humanity reverts to merely the so-called neutral condition, in Bavinck's perspective, indeed, the single act of Adam brought the whole person under the permanent condition of total depravity.

Notably, Bavinck articulates the process of the act of sinning in humanity in terms of the one sinful act of the whole human person.[87] Compared with Calvin, Bavinck's contribution to the understanding of fallen humanity is his detailed explanation of the process of sin in humanity. Bavinck elucidates that the process of sin has occurred in the whole human being. Concerning the process of sin, he examines the effect of sinning on humanity in this way that "[S]in gains entrance through the *consciousness*, works on the *imagination*, arouses *yearning*, reaches for the ideal that is conjured up, and finally, having perceived it through the *senses* under the influence of that imagination, *grasps* for it."[88] Bavinck highlights the idea that sin begins in human consciousness with the darkened understanding and continues with the imagination, stimulates the inclination, it was finally completed by the will. In this regard, Bavinck states that the whole person participated in the first sinful act, which

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[82] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 66. Cf. Ibid., 2: 536-39; Id., *Reformed Ethics*, 81.

[83] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 43. Cf. These ideas of Pelagianism are founded in Socinianism, Remonstrantism, and rationalism. Pelagians derive the state of innocence of children from their exegesis of Jonah 4:11, Psalm 106:38, Matthew 18:3, 19:14, Luke 18:17, John 9:3, 1 Corinthians 7:14. Ibid., 3: 44-53, 85-93.

[84] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 122.

[85] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 81. Cf. Id., *Our Reasonable Faith*, 229.

[86] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 82.

[87] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 78-82; Id., *Our Reasonabl Faith*, 223.

[88] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 80. Cf. Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 67.

consisted of the activities of all human faculties.[89] Since the entire process of the first sin occurred in humanity in the one sinful act, Adam's sin corrupted the whole person, including all faculties and virtues. Even though there are varying degrees of participation on the first sin, for Bavinck, Scripture says that the whole person sinned, beyond a doubt.

Second, Roman Catholic theology holds the dualistic view of human nature. In Rome's view, human nature could be distinguished between the image of God as supernatural gifts and a natural human (*homo naturalis*).[90] Thus Rome's dualistic notion of humanity between the supernatural and natural leads to the notion that what virtues belong to which aspect of human nature. Rome insists on the possibility of the existence of a human being without the image of God, taking the name of a natural human. A natural human, deprived of the superadded gifts due to original sin, is capable of doing good in a natural sense, not supernatural.[91] In this sense, the fallen nature of humanity is in reality identical with uncorrupted nature.[92] For Rome, humanity had lost the supernatural gifts, but the natural gifts have remained intact. Hence, in the light of Rome's view, humanity can abstain from all actual sins by limiting the fall to the loss of supernatural gifts, and it is possible to acquire a natural state of bliss through sacramental grace.

On the contrary, Bavinck maintains the organic unity of the human person based on a confession of humanity as the image of the triune God. For him, the image of God is intimately connected to the essence of humanity. Bavinck states that for human beings, to be created in God's image and likeness, "is not something extraneous and additional, a *donum superadditum*, but belongs to the essence of being."[93] In this regard, the divine image is constitutive of the nature of humanity. Hence, concerning the effect of sin on the nature and condition of humanity, Bavinck argues that the corrupted image of God should be defined as a total corruption of human nature, rather than a loss of the supernatural gift. For Bavinck, given that the image of God belongs to the essence of human beings, the consequences of sin means the absence of true life and the corruption of God's image.[94] In Bavinck's view, therefore, there is an inherent limitation in Rome's understanding of the relationship between the essence of humanity and the image of God.

Firmly standing in continuity with the Reformed distinction between broad and narrow concerning the image of God, Bavinck speaks of the total corruption of the whole human person. Considering the image of God by means of a discussion of the broad and narrow senses helps when the understanding of the state of sin as well as the state of the integrity of humanity in the image of God. Namely, in the broader sense, while it is undoubtedly true that the essence, capabilities, and faculties of humanity were corrupted and polluted by sin, human beings remain humans even after the fall. Scripture tells us that, after as well as before the fall, human beings are still regarded and must always be respected as the image of God (Gen. 5:1; 9:6; Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9). This means that humanity has continued

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[89] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 3: 28, 29.
[90] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 3: 96.
[91] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 3: 87, 96.
[92] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 3: 43.
[93] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4: 614.
[94] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 548.

existence as the image of God and not lost its human nature. However, in the narrower sense, concerning the consequences of sin on humanity, it is true that after the fall human beings totally lost the ethical properties of the image of God completely, as it were, human virtues such as knowledge in the mind, righteousness in the will, and holiness in the heart (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).[95]

Furthermore, by pointing out that sin had entered the whole human race, Bavinck attempts to articulate the meaning of the universality of sin.[96] Concerning the state of corruption, Bavinck presents an organic view of humankind that all human beings are sinners, "sharing in common guilt, tainted by the same impurity, subject to the same death, and requiring the same redemption."[97] Thus, in Bavinck's mind, it is paramount to accent that not only the entire human person but also the whole human race had been born under the guilt and punishment of sin.[98] Bavinck describes the sinful state of humanity this way: "[S]in is not located on and around humans but within them and extends to the whole person and the whole of humankind."[99] Just as humankind is created with original righteousness, as the one body with many members in the state of integrity, so also humankind remains one in the state of corruption. Not merely from Scripture, in all places and times, throughout the ages and the whole history of humanity, the universality of sin is to be found within every man's conscience as well as every moment and throughout daily life. For Bavinck, there are not only individual sins and guilt but also universal, social sins and guilt. If so, how does Bavinck maintain the connection between the first sin and this universal sinfulness of the whole human race?

Based on his conviction that Scripture postulates an organic relationship of humanity as a whole, Bavinck affirms the universal sinfulness of humankind. Pelagianism denies the universal corruption and guilt of the human race. In their view, each human has independence from the sinful desire and deed. However, for Bavinck, it is not only in conflict with the teachings of Scripture at every point, but is also at odds with the whole history of humankind. Specifically, as Bavinck notes, the apostle Paul presents a profound treatment of the organic unity of humankind juridically and ethically in Roman 5 and 1 Corinthians 15.[100] The universality of sin presupposes the significance of the first Adam as head of the human race. Unless humanity as a whole is united in one head, the universal sinfulness cannot be properly understood. Mainly based on the covenant relationship between God and Adam, Bavinck emphasizes that "God considers and judges the whole human race in one person."[101] Thus, on the one hand, Adam failed to obey God's law, and hence the influence and impact of Adam's fall on humankind are extended to the whole human race.[102] On the other hand, as another head of the new humanity and the second Adam, as will be explained in the

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[95] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:174. Cf. Ibid., 3:123, 2:550.

[96] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 231-233; Id., *Reformed Ethics*, 148.

[97] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith,* 240.

[98] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 197.

[99] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 81. Cf. Ibid., 79, 119.

[100] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, Cf. Id., *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 578; *Our Reasonable Faith*, 245, 246.

[101] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 578.

[102] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 406. Cf. Id., *Our Reasonable Faith*, 241-249.

following section, Christ takes Adam's place and restores the entire fallen human race by the achievement of God's law.

5.1.3 The Restoration of the Image of God

For Bavinck, the restoration of the image of God should be understood in terms of the understanding of humanity as an organism. When Bavinck speaks of fallen humanity, he highlights that the devastating effects of sin and its impact is extended to the whole human person, at the same time, to the whole human race at all times and places. On the one hand, Bavinck delineates an entire process of sinning that has occurred in the first human being in one single moment, conceiving the human person as an organic unity. By grounding his concept of the whole human race as a single organism in the unity of a federal head, Bavinck defends the universal sinfulness of the whole human race in all times.

Concerning the restored image of God, his organic view on the image of God is reinforced by a comparison between Adam and Christ. Notably, Bavinck focuses attention on Adam's special and unique position as the representative of humanity as a whole as well as the first human. Bavinck underlines the fact that there is a physical, ethical, and federal unity of humanity in Adam.[103] In his view, Adam was the beginning root of humanity and the head of all humanity. Adam was not merely a private person, according to Bavinck, since all human beings were included in him. It is important to remember that Adam's life and conduct could extend to the boundaries of humanity and affect the ends of creation in both space and time.[104] Based on Bavinck's conviction of an organic existence of humankind, Adam occupies at the head of humankind in terms of significance and influence on the whole of humanity. Adam constitutes the organism of humanity. Because of the transgression of God's law by Adam, the essence, capabilities, and faculties of human beings were totally corrupted, and the ethical properties were utterly lost.

Hence, Bavinck explains how Christ occupies a wholly unique place as the head of the new human race, just as Adam has a unique position as the representative of the old humankind. Namely, as the failure of Adam results in total depravity and the universal sinfulness of the whole human race, the success of Christ also extends to the whole of humanity and results in righteousness and life. That is, Christ makes it possible for the whole of humanity not only to gain what Adam lost but also what Adam would have obtained. From this organic vision of humanity, Bavinck underlines the idea that the whole person has been completely corrupted by Adam's sin and can be wholly restored by grace in Christ.[105] Moreover, for Bavinck, the redemption of humanity is a restoration not merely of individuals as the image of God but also of the whole of humanity as the image of God.

For Bavinck, the redemption of humanity is not an elevation of human nature, but the restoration and perfection of humanity. Based on those doctrines of the "added gift" and "the meritoriousness of good works," Roman Catholics claim the ontological dualism between

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[103] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 102.
[104] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 105.
[105] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 345.

nature and grace, and thus the final human destiny is to divinize humanity by an elevation of nature.[106] In this regard, for Rome, the state of the glory of humanity eventually reaches into a mystical fusion with the divine nature. In contrast with this Roman dualistic view on human destiny, Bavinck argues that there must be an organic connection between nature and grace that grace restores and perfects nature. Hence, for Bavinck, the restoration of the image of God is even better than that of being in the state of integrity, but it is not a complete replacement.

Most importantly, with respect to the restoration of the image of God, it is precisely here that Bavinck's own unique interests in the doctrine of the threefold office come to the fore. Concerning human nature and human destiny, for Bavinck, what is of utmost importance is the manifestation of God's attributes and virtues, for the glory of God.[107] In keeping with human nature and human destiny, Bavinck insists that knowledge, righteousness, and holiness are intimately bound up with the exercise of the threefold office. Central to this study is the observation that, for Bavinck, the restoration of the image of God is also intimately related to exercising the threefold offices of prophet, priest, and king. Indeed, with respect to the restoration of the image of God, Bavinck pays special attention to the exercise of the threefold office.

What is Bavinck's distinctive understanding of the restored image of God, in comparison with Calvin's? Bavinck emphasizes that the unfolding of the image of God is intimately related to the exercising the threefold offices of prophet, priest, and king. Concerning the human nature and the image of God, in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, that Bavinck adheres to the exercise of the threefold office is evident, "As such it also befits humans in the state of integrity. They were created, after all, after God's image in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Adam was prophet, priest, and king, and as such was called to glorify God's name, to consecrate himself with all he had to God, and to govern and direct all things in accordance with the will of God."[108] By the same token, in his *Our Reasonable Faith*, Bavinck declares that "the three offices with Christ was commissioned are a reference to the original calling and purpose of man."[109] Bavinck obviously relates the original ordained purpose of the image of God to Christ's threefold office. The Son, the second person of the Trinity, was anointed by the Father with the Spirit from eternity, bearing the name of Messiah, Christ. Bavinck emphasizes that Christ was appointed exactly to the threefold office by God's eternal counsel. Bavinck declares that "The doctrine of the threefold offices lays a firm connection between nature and grace, creation and redemption, Adam and Christ."[110]

On this basis, Bavinck emphasizes, through the mystic union with the person and work of Christ, human beings can participate in the exercise of the threefold office, and thus they can exhibit the true image of God and achieve their human destiny again. By union with Christ, humanity unites with the person, works, and benefits of Christ. Bavinck deals with the

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[106] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 548, 587.
[107] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 386, 389.
[108] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3: 331.
[109] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 334.
[110] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 334.

threefold office in close relation to the person and work of Christ as the Mediator.[111] The Son, the second person of the Trinity, was anointed by the Father with the Spirit from eternity, bearing the name of Messiah, Christ. This ordination to the threefold office is no accident, but God's will. Bavinck notes that it is only by God's eternal counsel that Christ was appointed exactly to the threefold office. Based on the union with Christ, Bavinck argues that the benefits of Christ are that which again anoints human beings as prophet, priest, and king. It is the union with Christ leads Bavinck to insist that humanity as the restored image of God achieves its vocation to be an imitator of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. At this point, for Bavinck, Christ not only redeems the fallen humanity as the Mediator of redemption, but also serves as an example for the restored humanity in his threefold office.

Considering this framework, Bavinck's doctrine of the restored image of God should be understood in light of the imitation of Christ. For Bavinck, through the imitation of Christ, humanity can reach its final destiny by manifesting the divine attributes for the glory of God. In Bavinck's thought, the imitation of Christ refers to the ethical qualities, not physical qualities. In his essay, *The Imitation of Christ*, Bavinck discusses the erroneous forms of the imitation of Christ, pointing out a misguided glorification of martyrdom, a mere copying of the lifestyle of Christ, illegitimate mysticism, and rationalism.[112] Bavinck emphasizes the true meaning of the imitation of Christ in relation to the ethical dimension both in the content and shape of the Christian life.[113] According to Bavinck, the imitation of Christ takes place in the realms of ethics concerning communicable attributes rather than incommunicable attributes of God. The restored image of God can participate in these communicable attributes of God by imitating Christ.[114] In a similar vein, Bavinck also continues to point out, "The shape of our life is not physically, substantially, like the form of Christ."[115] The correspondence of the Christian life's shape with that of Christ is possible in relation to the person of Christ based on the union with Christ through faith, and this correspondence "manifests itself in a variety of virtues, but especially in righteousness and love. Righteousness or holiness is complete agreement with the law - that is, with moral freedom."[116] In this way, Bavinck connects his doctrine of the threefold office of Christ with the manifestation of the divine attributes in his discussion of the imitation of Christ.

Bavinck stresses that God's will through the exercise of Christ's threefold office is closely related to human nature and human destiny. By exercising the threefold office, humanity can manifest God's attributes of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The union with the work of Christ's threefold office leads Bavinck to insist that humanity can achieve its vocation and purpose to be an imitator of Christ as prophet, priest, and king during their life as Christians. For Bavinck, the imitation of Christ means manifesting God's attributes,

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[111] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 570.
[112] Herman Bavinck, "The Imitation of Christ," ("De navolging van Christus, I, II, III," in *De Vrije Kerk* 11 (1885): 101-13, 203-13; 12(1886): 321-33) in Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 372-401.
[113] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 340; Cf. Id., "The Imitation of Christ," 206.
[114] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 318.
[115] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 340.
[116] Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 341.

not merely copying or imitating Christ outwardly.

As seen above, for Bavinck, in his discussion of the restoration of the image of God, the exercise of the threefold office is an indispensable aspect of understanding human nature and human destiny. Human nature, as the image of God, lies in the image of the triune God. Inasmuch as humanity has its origin and nature in the triune God, it also has its destiny in the triune God. The glory of God is the ultimate goal of humanity. Considering that God is glorified through the manifestation of attributes, the ultimate human destiny as the restored image of God lies in the imitation of Christ. Through union with the person and work of Christ, humanity can participate in the exercise of the threefold office, which sheds light on a manifestation of God's attributes for God's glory.

5.2 Calvin and the Doctrine of the Image of God

Calvin's understandings of humanity and the image of God have received relatively little attention from Calvin scholarship compared to other topics of Calvin studies. In the early twentieth century, T. F. Torrance's 1949 study on Calvin's thoughts concerning human nature is the only full-length study appearing for many years, and since then it seems that scholars have avoided studies of Calvin's doctrine of human nature and the image of God.[117] Over the past few decades, however, Calvin's teaching about human nature has attracted a certain amount of attention.[118] This increased interest in recent studies clarifies Calvin's view of human nature and the image of God and contributes to a better understanding of Calvin's theological focus. In this section, three major characteristics of Calvin's doctrine of the image of God are examined: (1) the relational emphasis upon the Image of God, (2) the soul as the center of God's image, (3) a Christocentric understanding of gender unity and diversity.

5.2.1 Creation of the Image of God

5.2.1.1 The Divine Origin of Humanity: From the All Surpassing Excellence of God

Following the teaching of Scripture, Calvin declares that human beings were created in God's image and likeness.[119] Calvin makes no distinction between the 'image' and the 'likeness' of God, noting that these terms were used interchangeably in Scripture. In Calvin's discussion of humanity created in God's image, God is undoubtedly the most fundamental focal point and

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[117] T. F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949).

[118] There has been increasing interest in Calvin's anthropology in general and his view of the image of God in particular, with several full-length monographs for the last thirty years. Mary Potter Engel, *John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); J. van Eck, *God, mens, medemens: Humanitas in de theologie van Calvijn* (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1992); Shu-Ying Shih, *The Development of Calvin's Understanding of the Imago Dei in the Institutes of the Christian Religion from 1536 to 1559* (Heidelberg: Ruprecht Karls University, 2004); Jason van Vliet, *Children of God: The Imago Dei in John Calvin and His Context* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009).

[119] John Calvin, *Institutes*, 1. 15. 2, 3; 2. 12. 6; Id., *Commentary on* Gen. 1:26, 9:6.

basic principle. On the grounds of the all-surpassing excellence of God, Calvin describes the image of God within humanity employing his proposed notion of "the whole excellence" or "an inner good of the soul."[120] Calvin relates the image of God closely to the excellence that God bestowed upon humanity by nature. The excellence was given to human nature in the state of integrity at creation. Human beings display divine attributes, precisely through this excellence of human nature. The excellence of human nature manifests divine attributes, when all human organs and their capacities within the human being are performed properly. Calvin wholeheartedly believes that humanity is "the noblest and most remarkable example of his justice, wisdom, and goodness."[121]

With respect to the relationship between the image of God and human nature, it is best expressed as to what Calvin assiduously describes that humanity bears God's image. Calvin explicitly denies the identification of the image of God and the essence of human nature. Unlike Bavinck's more ontological stress on the image of the triune God as constitutive for the essence of humanity, Calvin underlines the idea that human beings *bear* the image of God, and are endowed with God-like attributes and capacities. Calvin expressly states, "I admit that Adam *bore* God's image, in so far as he was joined to God (which is the true and highest perfection of dignity)."[122] Calvin also expressly states that believers are considered God's children because "they *bear* his image."[123] In this respect, Calvin, unlike Bavinck, does not equate the essence of human nature with the image of God.

When Calvin's understanding of human nature and the image of God are explored, both the ontological and relational aspects of the image of God can be found. Concerning the ontological aspects of the image of God, Calvin acknowledges the unique dignity of humanity, in distinction from other creatures. Notably, as will be seen in the following sections, Calvin maintains that the image of God which God bestowed upon the human soul is closely related to the essence of humanity. Calvin is convinced that Scripture teaches that the soul is not only the proper seat of the image of God but also an immortal substance by demonstrating the constitutive place of the soul in humanity. Given that Calvin's emphasis on human creation as the image of God and the immortality of the soul, it is evident that humankind is ontologically superior to all other creatures.[124]

Regarding the unique ontological place of humanity, Calvin takes a similar view of Bavinck's emphasis on the ontological character of the image of God. Calvin warns against mystical tendencies of his days concerning the attempts to blur the line between God and creation. Calvin denies any notions that the essence of humanity is an emanation of God's very essence. Calvin seems to be careful to speak of the relationship between human essence and the image of God. For Calvin, it is enough to stress that the human soul that God engraved His own image upon is an immortal yet a being created in an ontological sense, in distinction from the life-spirit of other creatures. More importantly, in Calvin's view, the relational aspect of God's image for the personal communion and fellowship of humanity and

[120] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 3, 4; Id., *Commentary on* Gen. 2:7.
[121] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 1.
[122] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 12. 6. (Italics are mine).
[123] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 14. 18. (Italics are mine).
[124] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 3.

God, as will be seen, is the distinguishing characteristic of humanity, when considering that the final human destiny is the glory of God, by reflecting God's attributes.

5.2.1.2 Relational Emphasis on the Image of God

In his treatment of the various aspects of the image of God, Calvin prefers to think of the image of God primarily in terms of its relational aspects. Calvin's utmost interest is to lead believers to a proper understanding of the integrity of humanity and the ruined state after the fall and highlight God's glorious grace in salvation. From the redemptive-historical perspective, Calvin is zealous at this point to maintain how God restores the relationship with fallen humanity, as was previously noted, with particular attention paid to the economic Trinity. Hence, Calvin focuses more on the relational aspects rather than the ontological aspects of the image of God as well as his entire theology.

Compared with Bavinck's more ontological point that the image of the triune God is constitutive of human nature, Calvin's primary concern is the relational aspects of the image of God. In keeping with his consistent emphasis on the ontological implications of God and creation, Bavinck is zealous to identify the image of God as the essence of human beings. Bavinck maintains that characteristic human essence as the image of God is firmly grounded in the counsel of the triune God concerning God's ontological immanent trinitarian relations and God's outward economic works, employing the Reformed scholastic distinction between archetype and ectype. In a word, the Trinity makes humanity as an ectypal image of the triune God possible. Bavinck obviously considers the image of God as to be constitutive of human nature. Concerning the essence of human nature, Bavinck declares, "The essence of human nature *is* its being [created in] the image of God."[125] Admittedly, whereas the image of God is inseparable from its essence in human nature in Bavinck's theology, for Calvin, the image of God is not meant to refer to human essence itself in an ontological dimension. Rather, the Image of God emphasizes for Calvin the significance of the human relationship with God and its destiny for the glory of God.

Calvin consistently emphasizes the significance of the relational aspects. In Calvin's mind, the state of being of humanity as the image of God is sustained only in communion with God. Apart from the fellowship of God, human nature by itself cannot bear the integrity of human nature. However, for Calvin, it is undoubtedly true that the concept of the image of God plays an essential role in his understanding of the very existence of humanity, in distinction from other creatures, and serves to explain the uniqueness of personal communion between God and humanity. It is important to note here that, in Calvin's mind, a proper construing of the relationship between God and humanity contributes to the exhaustive comprehension of humanity as the image of God.

Calvin further underscores the fact that human destiny lies in communion with God and is more than a mere reflection of God's image in the ontological dimension. Calvin highlights the point that the relational perspective on the image of God is the key to unraveling the purpose of humanity with human nature as excellent and supreme. The faculties and

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[125] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 531. (Italics are mine).

capacities for fellowship with God are significant characteristics of humanity, which are fundamentally distinct from other creatures. Both humanity and other creatures reflect God's glory, but only the former has a personal relationship with God, reflecting God's attributes as a bright mirror, while the latter merely mirrors his divine glory. In the sense of personal fellowship with God, human beings can know God, respond to His word and give gratitude for His grace, with all one's capacities and all one's relations, whereas it is impossible for all other creatures.[126] Calvin points to the personal communion and fellowship with God as the vital aspect of the image of God, in reflecting His glory.[127]

Specifically, in Calvin's view, the image of God is best expressed with the term 'mirror.'[128] When he speaks of humanity as God's image, it means that human beings bear a resemblance to God and mirror God's image. Calvin stresses that the reflection of God's glory is the final goal of humanity and the image of God was given to humanity to adore and worship God, endowed with God's attributes such as wisdom, righteousness, and holiness.[129] There is a different degree of brightness between humanity and other creatures. While all creatures can reflect God's glory as a theater, the brightness of the divine glory shines forth in humanity.[130] Hence, among the significant features of Calvin's doctrine of the image of God is his emphasis that human beings, created in God's image, is no other than a bright mirror of the divine attributes and excellencies for the glory of God.

To be more specific, Calvin describes the Father-children relationship between God and humanity as an integral part of the image of God.[131] Just as children honor their earthly father, human beings adore their heavenly father as the children of God. In this respect, as will be demonstrated, concerning the restored state of human beings, Calvin takes a keen interest in how human beings receive forgiveness of sins, through Christ's suffering and death, and are adopted into the family of God, through the mystical union with Christ. In this regard, for Calvin, the image of God indicates the identity of human beings as the children of God.

5.2.1.3 The Image of God, Centered on the Soul

To properly understand Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin, it is helpful to note some significant differences concerning the soul and body with regard to the image of God. Calvin maintains that only the soul unequivocally bears the image of God. As will be seen later, Bavinck labors to articulate the ontology of the whole person as the image of God,

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[126] Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*, 25, 29-30.

[127] Shih, *The Development of Calvin's Understanding of the Imago Dei in the Institute of the Christian Religion from 1536 to 1559*, 10.

[128] Calvin, *Commentary on* Col. 3:10. Id., *Commentary on* Eph. 4:24. Cf. Cornelis van der Kooi, *As in a Mirror John Calvin and Karl Barth on Knowing God*: A Diptych (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 58.

[129] Calvin, *Commentary on* Gen. 5:1. Cf. Id., *Sermon on* Gen. 9:3-7.

[130] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 5. 1, 3; 2. 12. 6; Id., *Commentary on* Psalm 8:1.

[131] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 1. ; Id., *Commentary on* Rom. 8:15-17. Id., *Sermon on Gen*. 1:26-28. Cf. Concerning Calvin's stress on the relationship between God as Father and His children and God's dealings with His children, see Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 157-73; Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 32, 118-120.

according to his own trinitarian arguments. Notably, Bavinck cannot base his doctrine of the image of God on an ontological dualism between soul and body. For Bavinck, the image of God entails the soul and the body as one whole person. Namely, Bavinck is convinced that the whole person belongs to the image of God rather than one single human faculty.

Concerning the composition of humanity, given Calvin's anti-speculative elaboration of the doctrine, indeed, Calvin does not go deep into the constitutive elements of the image of God. Calvin writes, "I leave it to the philosophers to discuss these faculties in their subtle way. For the upbuilding of godliness, a simple definition will be enough for us."[132] He believes in closely adhering to biblical language rather than philosophical insights.[133] According to the teaching of Scripture, Calvin maintains that human beings consist of the soul and body. Scripture teaches that God engraved God's own image on the soul above all other human faculties.[134] Since God is Spirit, nothing can bear the image of God, but the entity of spirit can bear it, and the soul can properly reflect God's attributes. In his *Psychopannychia*, Calvin explains that the image of God shines in the soul rather than the body.[135] Calvin upholds the soul as the primary seat of the image of God. In treating of the soul, unlike Bavinck, who regards the whole person as God's image, Calvin explains, "Although the soul is not man, yet it is not absurd for man, in respect of his soul, to be called God's image."[136] From the perspective of attributing the proper seat of the image of God to the soul, Calvin's understanding of the image of God is defined by reference to the similarity between God and humanity with the spiritual qualities. At this point, as will be seen, Calvin emphasizes the redemption of the soul indicates the restoration of the proper place of the soul as the seat of the image of God.

By the same token, Calvin maintains that God's immortality and eternal life can be found in the spiritual component of humanity, precisely in the soul. Calvin defines the soul with various notions, such as spirit, reason, intelligence, intellect, and will.[137] Using the term soul and spirit interchangeably, Calvin regards the soul as "an immortal yet created essence, which is nobler part."[138] For Calvin, the body is far from being able to bear God's image. Although all human faculties, including the body, manifest God's attributes for His glory, the image of God should never be extended to the body because God is not corporeal, besides, it is the soul that provides an underlying rationale to differentiate between humanity and all other creatures.[139] Given that the body was formed out of the dust of the earth, the creation of humanity is similar to that of animals. However, humanity was given the soul, endowed with immortality. Because of this immortality, the human soul is different from the life-spirits

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[132] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 6.

[133] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 14. 1. Cf. John W. Cooper, Body, *Soul & Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2000), 14.

[134] Calvin, *Commentary* on Gen. 2:7.

[135] Calvin, "Psychopannychia," in *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 419-25.

[136] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 3.

[137] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 2, 7; Id., *Sermon on* Gen. 1: 26-28.

[138] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 15. 2.

[139] Calvin, *Commentary on* Gen. 2:7.

found in animals. Calvin closely relates the soul to the image of God, highlighting that human beings adore God through spiritual capabilities.

Notably, Calvin warns against all attempts of the commingling of the divine and creaturely and any notions of infusion of divinity within humanity, so clearly maintaining that human beings do not partake in the essence of God. Specifically, Calvin refutes Andreas Osiander's claim of the commingling of the divine and creaturely.[140] Calvin criticizes Osiander for indiscriminately extending the image of God to the body. Indeed, by expounding on Gen. 1:26, Osiander insists that the whole human person, including soul, spirit, and even body, is the proper seat of the image of God.[141] Osiander accounts for the human body by directly relating it to the body of Christ, but it all goes wrong, in Calvin's estimation, because Osiander fails to draw a line of demarcation between God and creation. For Osiander, since God formed not only the soul but also the body of humanity in the image of God, the image of God within humanity is visible and physical as well as spiritual. Osiander claims that there is a distinction between the term 'image' and 'likeness' in Gen 1:26, in which the former refers to a corporeal image while the latter refers to an incorporeal likeness.[142]

From this point of view, Osiander further expands this view of the image of God regarding the incarnation of Christ. Appealing to Matt 5:8 and John 14:9, Osiander underlines the incarnate Christ with his body.[143] By identifying the body that was destined for Christ as the true exemplar of humanity, Osiander claims that humanity was not created after the image of God, but created in the image of the incarnate Christ.[144] Hence, in Osiander's view, Adam was created after the physical likeness of the pre-incarnate Christ. Furthermore, Osiander rejects the necessity of Christ as Mediator and insists on the possibility of an infusion of the substance of Christ. For Osiander, the essence of the image of God is the indwelling of God in humanity. Osiander maintains that there is the same degree of divine dwelling in both Christ and humanity, yet the only difference between them is how the divine dwelling in Christ is by nature, and God's dwelling in humanity is by grace.[145]

To be sure, Calvin acknowledges that the glory of God is manifested in every part of human beings, such as soul, mind, heart, will, reason, powers, and even in the body. Indeed, Calvin does speak about the reflections of the excellence of human nature in every part of human beings. While Calvin admits that all human faculties, even including the body, can manifest the glory of God, he denies the idea that the image of God extends to the body. Indeed, he does not identify the body and the soul as the contents of the divine image. Calvin shines the spotlight on the soul alone as the proper seat of the image of God. For Calvin, the soul only can be called the image of God. In Calvin's view, the attempts to relate the image of God to the body is nothing more than a commingling of heaven and earth, so the body should

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[140] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 1, 3.

[141] Andreas Osiander, *Gesamtausgabe, Band 9, Schriften Und Briefe 1549 Bis August 1551*, ed., Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebass (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagschaus, 1994), 462-3. Cf. For a detailed analysis of Osiander's view of the image of God, see Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 208-24.

[142] Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 216-19.

[143] Osiander, *Gesamtausgabe*, 9: 464.

[144] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 12. 6, 7.

[145] Osiander, *Gesamtausgabe*, 9: 477.

be ruled out from the image of God. Calvin earnestly defines the content of the image of God by placing a great deal of weight on the soul.

Moreover, Calvin criticizes Michael Servetus' view that the soul is a derivative of the substance of God. For Servetus, the essence of God is implanted within human beings so that they can reflect the likeness of God. The manner in which Servetus articulates this is by asserting that God's breath enters the soul of humanity through the physiological functions of breathing at the beginning of life, and after that, Servetus goes on to argue that humanity retains the spirit of divinity in the soul.[146] Additionally, Servetus focuses upon Christ the Incarnate as the form and appearance of God.[147] In Servetus' argument, Jesus is the Christ, and Jesus Christ is the son of God, and Jesus is God.[148] That is, Christ is not God Himself, yet for Servetus, Christ is the image and copy of God, who possesses his own soul and body. Hence, for Servetus, Adam was created according to the image of Christ the Incarnate, in terms of the soul and body.[149] Considering Servetus' view of the image of God as the commingling between divine and creaturely, Calvin avoids it. Calvin is so zealous to guard against the notion of the implanting of the divine spirit within the soul by regarding the image of God as the divine gifts endowed upon humanity at creation, not as an inflowing of God's essence and not participating in the divine nature.

As regards the relationship of the body and the soul, Calvin notes that both are united in one person, communicating properties with each other, without confusing the one with the other. For Calvin, quite clearly, the soul is distinct from the body, "For the soul is not the body, and the body is not the soul."[150] Calvin acknowledges that the body is material, and the soul is immaterial, substantial and further immortal. It is unquestionable for Calvin that the soul is superior to other faculties in humanity.[151] The body cannot play a significant role in the relationship between God and humanity as the soul does. Calvin considers the body as the abode of the soul, on the one hand, and describes the body as a prison house of the soul, on the other.[152] There is no doubt, therefore, that Calvin locates the image of God in the soul and considers the intellectual or spiritual capacities superior to the corporeal aspects of human nature. For Calvin, the image of God itself is clearly separate from the body, and it cannot be represented by any physicality.

Besides, Calvin holds the view that the divine image is not to be sought outside humanity. While it is true that dominion over the earth is given to humanity in the state of integrity as an earthly calling, Calvin does not relate it to the image of God.[153] Although Calvin concedes that dominion can possibly be a small part of the image of God,[154] he

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[146] Michael Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, trans., Christopher A. Hoffman and Marian Hillar (1553; reprint, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 238-49.

[147] Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 20.

[148] Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 242.

[149] Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 147, 148.

[150] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 14. 1.

[151] Calvin, *Commentary on* 1 Cor. 9:11.

[152] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 15. 1, 2. Cf. Cooper, Body, *Soul & Life Everlasting*, 33.

[153] John Calvin, *Tracts Relating to the Reformation*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 3 (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 423.

[154] Calvin, *Commentary on* Gen. 1:26.

certainly notes, "Nor is there any probability in the opinion of those who locate God's likeness in the dominion given to man…whereas God's image is properly to be sought within him, not outside him."[155] It is evident that Calvin focuses exclusively on the image of God in the soul within humanity.

5.2.1.4 A Christocentric View of the Unity and Diversity of Men and Women

Concerning the relation of the image of God and human gender, Calvin maintains that both men and women share equally in the image of God. In keeping with Scripture, he articulates his views on how the image of God is related to both men and women. Scripture explicitly states that both men and women are created in the image of God, and thus he affirms the same dignity of both of them as the image of God. For Calvin, it is evident that the women possess the image of God in the same manner that the men do.

From a spiritual point of view, on the one hand, given that Calvin's description of the image of God as an inner good of the soul, the image of God in women is the same as that of men. So far as spiritual is concerned, both men and women are equally created. Just as both men and women are created, having the same dignity as the image of God, Calvin maintains that both men and women are equal even after the fall. Both of them became a being, guilty and corrupted, are thus no longer able to do any good work before God. By the same token, God's grace is also necessary for both men and women to restore the corrupted image of God. Regarding all redemptive grace of God, such as divine adoption in Christ as God's children and the heavenly inheritance, Calvin argues the equality of both men and women.[156]

From an earthly point of view, on the other hand, Calvin puts his finger on the discrepancy between men and women concerning their roles within society. Calvin notes that there exists a created order between men and women in terms of diversity as well as unity. Concerning the created order between men and women, Calvin notes that God first gave the command to Adam, and thereafter Eve. Calvin applies the diversity among men and women within the context of discussing the realm of earthly matters, particularly within the social orders or the responsibilities within the family.

Specifically, the way in which Calvin explains his distinction between men and women is Christocentric.[157] By noting the Adam-Christ parallel in 1 Cor. 11:3, Calvin maintains, just as the headship of Christ is God, that the headship of women is men. Likewise, in his commentary on 1 Cor. 11:7, Calvin points out that Scripture indicates that man alone is called the image and glory of God, while woman is the glory of man.[158] When speaking of the headship of the Father over the Son, Calvin accentuates that it cannot be adequately understood apart from Christ's divine and human natures. Calvin holds that the equality of the Son with the Father should be considered in terms of the divine nature and that Christ's humiliation and his subjection to the Father should be carefully considered with his human

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[155] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 4.
[156] Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 102.
[157] Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 120, 264, 265.
[158] Calvin, *Commentary on* 1 Cor. 11:7; Id., *Inst.*, 1. 15. 4. Cf. Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 85, 263.

nature.

From this exposition of the relation of the Son and the Father in line with the personal union of Christ's divine and human natures, Calvin applies to the understanding of the unity and diversity between men and women. Namely, there is a resemblance between Christ and men with respect to the headship and the glory of God. Pointing out the subjection of the Son to the Father, especially in the state of humiliation, Calvin explains that Christ's subjection is not a degradation of the divine, but rather, the brightest kindness for the stake of human salvation. Calvin goes on to maintain that it is apparent that the headship of men over women does not undermine the dignity of women created as the image of God, just like the relationship of the Father and the Son. Women can reflect divine attributes, having the same destiny for God's glory, just as men do.

Also, Calvin underlines the fact that there is a distinction in the roles between men and women in realms and roles of society, family, and church. While both men and women are based on the same ontological foundation, sharing in the same human essence, they can manifest the image of God differently. According to Calvin, these different concerns are mainly about earthly, temporal things. Hence, for Calvin, it should be noted that the relationship between men and women are neither opposite distinction nor difference between superior and inferior, but a complementary relationship.

Therefore, concerning Calvin's understanding of women and men in relation to God's image, it is essential to note here that he articulates the unity and diversity between women and men with the notions of headship and glory in the light of Christocentric perspectives. In this sense, Calvin's understanding of the unity and diversity between both men and women appears to be a more positive interpretation rather than a negative perspective. Calvin finds confirmation for his point of view in the relationship between the Father and the Son. Calvin never hesitates to relate the image of God to women and ardently defends the dignity of women equally with men before God, sharing in the image of God. By comparison, Bavinck's way of articulating the unity and diversity between men and women is different from that of Calvin. As will be seen, by grounding his understanding of the similarity and difference between men and women in the unity and diversity within the three persons of the Trinity, Bavinck emphasizes the equality and harmony as well as the difference in its richness and diversity between men and women.

5.2.2 The Corruption of the Image of God

In Calvin's view, Scripture's portrayal of the fallen image of God through Adam's sin is undoubtedly the total depravity of human nature. However, for Calvin this total depravity does not mean that the image of God was completely destroyed. Rather, it means the total corruption of the image. Notably, Calvin's insights can be properly understood in light of his polemic against the two extremes. On the one hand, Michael Servetus claims that the image of God was hardly affected by the fall into sin.

Over against these views, Calvin attempts to define sin's devastating effects more precisely throughout his account of God's image in his entire career. In his earlier writings, Calvin describes the fallen divine image in human nature with the notions of effacement or

obliteration.[159] However, Calvin later elaborates on what the state and faculties of the fallen image of God mean, by qualifying and modifying his language over time cautiously. In his final edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin declares that sin did not utterly eradicate the image of God, but it ruined the image of God. According to Calvin, Gen. 9:6 and James 3:9 obviously assume the ongoing existence of God's image in human nature after the fall. That is to say, the consequence of the fall led to the frightful deformity of the image of God, rather than its eradication. In this regard, Calvin describes the fallen state of humanity as "maggots and rottenness."[160] Dealing with the devastated and corrupted image of God, Calvin argues that nothing exists except "what is confused, mutilated, and disease ridden" within the image of God.[161] There is no doubt that the image of God is neither entirely obliterated nor totally erased. In Calvin's mind, human nature was thoroughly corrupted by sin.

Moreover, when Adam and Eve sinned, in Calvin's argument, the devastating effects of the fall on humanity are about the telos as well as the contents of the image of God. After the fall, human beings are deprived of all divine attributes that Adam and Eve had received as gifts in the state of integrity. The communion and fellowship between God and humanity were also broken by sin, and thus it became totally impossible for humanity to admire God, manifesting the excellent endowments for His glory. For Calvin, the fall not only affected the corruption of God's image but also brought to its destiny of human beings in the wrong direction. Since the telos of human beings is inseparable from the very nature of the image of God, the original telos of the image of God was distorted, along with the corruption of the image of God.

Calvin maintains that the first sin affected the whole human person, including both the soul and body. For Calvin, the description of the whole man is explicitly a reference to the soul and the body. On this basis, as to the claim that the corruption of the body, resting on 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Corinthians 7:1, and Romans 6:13, the body in the process of sanctification also was not excluded.[162] However, the emphasis of Calvin certainly lies in the soul. In his exposition of Ephesians chapter 4 and Colossian chapter 3, Calvin noticeably turns to the redemption of the soul as the restoration of the fallen image of God. It is observed that Calvin pays little attention to the recovery of the body as the restoration of the fallen image of God. Particularly against the claims of the death of the soul, Calvin argues that despite depraved and sinful as it is in its fallen state, the soul is not destroyed at death with a firm conviction of humanity as the image of God. He believes that the soul reflects the

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[159] In his *Épître à tous amateurs de Jésus-Christ* (1535), Calvin writes that the image of God "had become effaced and the gifts of his goodness had been tossed aside." John Calvin, "Épître à tous amateurs de Jésus-Christ," in *La vraie piété: Divers traits de Jean Calvin et Confession de foi de Guillaume Farel*, ed. Irena Backus and Claire Chimelli (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1986), 25. cited from Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 70n32. In addition, in his first edition of *Christinae Religionis Institution* (1536), Calvin describes the condition of the image of God after the fall as follows: "this image of God was canceled and effaced." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1536, ed., trans., Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 16. cited from Van Vliet, *Children of God*, 71.

[160] Calvin, *Sermon on* Job 24:1-6.

[161] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 4.

[162] Calvin, *Commentary on* 1 Thess. 5:23, 2 Cor. 7:1, Rom. 6:13. Cf. Yaroslav Viazovski, *Image and Hope: John Calvin and Karl Barth on Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting* (Pickwick Publications, 2015), 27.

immortality of God.[163] In doing so, Calvin ardently maintains that the soul is not destroyed even after the fall, and thus human beings still remain humans, yet possessing corrupted spiritualities and capacities. When considered as a whole, the remnant of the image of God in humanity after the fall belongs to the realm of earthly things.[164] Even though the remnant does not include heavenly things in the fallen image of God, for Calvin, the dignity of humanity as the image of God still remained, in distinction from other creatures. Hence, on this basis, Calvin stresses that humanity ought to honor and love each other because humanity still retained the image of God after the fall.[165]

More importantly, the emphasis upon the restoration of the fallen image of God as the redemption of the soul is, in Calvin's thought, intimately related to the necessity of Christ as the Mediator between God and fallen humanity. Consequent to the fall of humanity, the human-divine relationship was utterly broken. When considering the relationship between God and humanity is consistently described by Calvin as the Father-child relationship, Calvin pays considerable attention to the relational aspects of the image of God in his discussion of the restoration of the image of God. He emphatically argues that the restoration of the image of God is intimately related to the notion of God's gracious adoption of sinners in Christ. At this point, as will be seen, for Calvin, the restoration of the image of God is possible through the mystical union between Christ and humanity.

5.2.3 The Restoration of the Image of God

In his treatment of human origins, nature, and destiny, Calvin deals with both the ontological and relational aspects of the image of God. When Calvin speaks of the corruption of the image of God, Calvin remarks on the ruined image of God. This means that the fall into sin caused devastating damage to both the ontological and relational aspects of the image of God.

First, concerning the ontological aspects, Calvin highlights the essence of the soul, noting that it is created yet is an immortal character in the state of integrity, and relates the soul with the proper place of the image of God. Considering his emphasis upon the soul, with respect to the ruined image of God, for Calvin, the redemption of the soul by the regeneration of the soul is the restoration of the image of God.[166] Second, in consequence of the fall, for Calvin, not only was human nature entirely ruined, but also the human relationship with God was broken by sin. Fallen human beings were alienated from God, and they can no longer have a relationship with God. Accordingly, humanity cannot achieve the original goal to manifest divine attributes anymore apart from fellowship with God. Given his consistent emphasis more on this relational aspect of the image of God, the reconciliation between God and humanity is the prerequisite for entrance into the restored state of the image of God.[167] If so, according to Calvin, with reference to the image of God in desperate need of restoration,

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[163] Calvin, *Tracts Relating to the Reformation*, 3: 427.
[164] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 2. 14.
[165] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 7. 6.
[166] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 3. 9.
[167] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 11. 11; 2. 16. 3.

how is the recovery of the fallen human nature and human destiny possible?

For Calvin, the focal point for the ruined image of God is to provide God's glorious grace in Christ. Christ is the only one who can restore what sin had ruined. Calvin turns his attention to the recovery of fellowship with God by the grace of Christ the Mediator. Calvin ceaselessly emphasizes the necessity of Christ the Mediator, and the Incarnation of Christ.[168] In Calvin's perspective, the mediatorial work of Christ cannot be understood apart from satisfaction for sin and the sacrifice of perfect obedience.[169] Namely, through his complete obedience to the Father, Christ abolished sin and restored the relationship between God and humanity.[170] By Christ's vicarious satisfaction, the ruined image of God can receive forgiveness of sin.[171] In this regard, the fullness of Christ's satisfaction ensures reconciliation between God and humanity. Christ is revealed as the reconciler of God and humanity. Hence, God's grace was imparted to humanity by the substitution of Christ and this grace restores the image of God.[172] Calvin emphasizes the mystical union with Christ that ensures certainty of faith concerning the reconciliation and communion between God and humanity.[173] Namely, all the benefits for salvation lie prepared in an individual bond of fellowship with Christ. So, humanity can participate in all benefits of salvation in Christ through faith by the power of the Spirit.[174] This union with Christ is the prerequisite for the reflection on the similitude of God in the restoration of the image of God.

Notably, Calvin rejects Osiander's concept of union with Christ. For Calvin, this is precisely the sort of mixing of the essence of Christ and humanity that is inappropriate. Firmly adhering to Chalcedonian orthodoxy and defending both the divine and human natures in Christ, Calvin argues for the union with Christ by participating in the human nature of Christ.[175] In Christ, Calvin notes that the divine and human natures have their union in one person, not by confusion of essence, but by unity of person.[176] Based on this hypostatic union of two natures, Calvin maintains that the union between Christ and humanity should be understood as a union of natures in the person of the Son. Quite to the contrary, in Calvin's view, Osiander wrongly claims the divinization of humanity with the improper notion of the union that the divine essence can flow into humanity. On this basis, Osiander maintains the infusion of Christ's righteousness to the believer. Since the righteousness of God conveys to humanity through the union with Christ in nature the indwelling of the righteous God within the body heals the corrupted human nature.[177] In Osiander's view, God transfuses His righteousness into humanity, and after all, God makes humanity part of himself in Christ. Hence, for Osiander, concerning the coming of Christ as the Mediator, it is not necessary for

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[168] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 12. 1-7.

[169] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 16. 1.

[170] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 16. 5.

[171] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 17. 6.

[172] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 17. 4; 3. 3. 9.

[173] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 2. 24. Cf. According to Bavinck, since Calvin, all the Reformed taught that the union of Christ and elect must have preceded all other benefits of salvation. Bavinck, *Saved by Grace*, 16.

[174] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 2. 35.

[175] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 14. 4-8; 2.16.5.

[176] Calvin, *Inst.*, 2. 14. 1, 2.

[177] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 11. 5.

the restored image of God, since human beings can be righteous through the infusion of the righteousness of Christ, not through the imputation of Christ's righteousness.[178]

By the same token, Calvin criticizes that Servetus wrongly explains the meaning of the restoration of the image of God as the indwelling of God's essence in humanity. From his own Christocentric perspective, Servetus claims that the illumination of Christ can restore the ruined image of God rather than Christ's vicarious suffering by connecting the light with Christ. In Calvin's estimation, Servetus's notion of the restoration of the image of God is obviously at odds with the teaching of Scripture, pointing out this view as a commingling of heaven and earth. For Calvin, it is obvious that Servetus opens up the possibility of the deification of humanity by participating in God's very essence. Servetus tries to raise human beings to a higher level of divinity through the inpouring of the deity of God in Christ.

Calvin maintains that humanity cannot participate in God's eternal essence, while Servetus claims the union with as the indwelling of the deity of Christ in humanity. In Calvin's words, the gospel makes the condition of human nature conformable to God in terms of the quality as the partakers of eternal life and glory, not in terms of the essence as the substantial unity of divinity and humanity.[179] Also, unlike Osiander, Calvin argues that the union with Christ is rightly understood when it is regarded as a personal union, not a communion of natures. Calvin rejects all deification. When Calvin refers to the union with Christ, he means that all believers are united with the human nature of Christ. Therefore, just as the soul was not created from God's essence, but from out of nothing, for Calvin, the restoration of the soul is possible by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ rather than an inpouring of Christ's divine nature or impartment of Christ's righteousness.

Moreover, Calvin wholeheartedly believes the meaning of what it is to be restored in the image of Christ with the concept of adoption as God's children. Calvin closely relates the appearance of God's image in the lives of Christians to the seal of the adoption as God's children.[180] For Calvin, according to God's sovereign grace and the good pleasure of His will, God predestined His own people unto the adoption of children by the union with Christ. The portrait of God as Father is very often found in Calvin's work, emphasizing that God is affectionate and intimate towards His children. For Calvin, God not only admonishes but also guides, provides, and loves His children their entire life. In this respect, when Calvin pictures human beings as the restored image of God, the receptive aspect of the human responsivity to the gospel, together with human teachability, is emphasized.[181] Calvin presents the imitation of Christ, emphasizing the virtues of obedience and docility in terms of the content and telos of the restored image of God.[182]

On this basis, Calvin turns to the renewing image of God as to be conformed to the most perfect image of Christ.[183] For Calvin, the imitation of Christ is the focal point of the restored life of Christians. Namely, the restoration of the image of God in and through Christ

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[178] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 11. 11.
[179] Calvin, *Commentary on* 2 Pet. 1:4.
[180] Calvin, *Commentary on* 1 John 4:17; Cf. Id., *Inst.*, 2. 12. 2.
[181] Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 161.
[182] Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 171. Cf. Ibid., 167-172.
[183] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 4.

is best illumined by focusing on the imitation of Christ.[184] This imitation of Christ is only possible by a living union with the person of Christ since the inner personal renewal of the image of God results in the imitation of Christ. In Calvin's thinking, this imitation of Christ should be understood as communicating with the righteousness of Christ, rather than following the pattern of Christ. From this point of view, Calvin warns against Osiander's claim that "Christ was the exemplar and type of that corporeal figure which was then formed."[185] For Calvin, the imitation of Christ is the goal of sanctification throughout the life of the Christian. This imitation of Christ takes place as the life-long process in the life of the children of God.[186] The image of God in humanity is continually restored in the form of self-denial and cross-bearing as the imitation of the life of Christ.[187]

Therefore, for Calvin, the restoration of the image of God is definitely bound up with restoring God's purpose of human creation in reflecting His glory. In Calvin's view, not only human nature but also human destiny is restored. Calvin draws a close connection between human nature as the image of God and human destiny, focusing on the role of reflecting God's glory as of the living and clear mirror of the divine attributes.[188] There Calvin maintains that the first thing Scripture teaches is that the glory of God is the ultimate goal of creation. In this way, the restored image of God is intimately related to the restoration of God's original purpose of honoring God through the manifestation of the divine attributes.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter explained how humanity as the image of God is examined concerning the origin, essence, and destiny both in Calvin and Bavinck's theology. Concerning the origin of humanity, Calvin's notion of human origins is similar to Bavinck's conviction that God created human beings as the image of God. Firmly resting on the authority of Scripture, they believe God's creation of humanity is in relation to the image of God.

Concerning the essence of human nature, at the same time, as will be analyzed in the next chapter in detail, there are significant differences between them in terms of the relationship between the essence of human nature and the image of God. The crucial point to grasp is that Bavinck grounds his doctrine of the image of God in the trinitarian being of God more than Calvin. For the most part, Calvin and Bavinck deal with both the ontological and relational aspects of the image of God similarly. However, there is a fundamental difference to be noted between them concerning the starting point of the understanding of the essence of human nature. For Calvin, God is the starting point of the definition of the image of God. Since God is an all-surpassing excellent God, humanity bears the image of God as the perfect excellence of human nature. Since God is spirit, the image of God is described by Calvin as the inner good of the soul. However, in his treatment of the essence of human nature, God is

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[184] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 6. 1.

[185] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 3.

[186] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 3. 9; Id., *Commentary on* 2 Cor. 3:18; Randall C. Zachman, *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 409.

[187] Calvin, *Inst.*, 3. 7-8; Ibid., 4. 12. 14-21.

[188] Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 15. 1.

not the starting point for Bavinck. The confession of the triune God is not only the starting point but also the main point. In Bavinck's more emphatic discussion about the triune God as the archetype for humanity, the doctrine of the Trinity makes humanity as the image of God known as humanity as the image of the triune God. Since, more than Calvin, Bavinck's starting point is much deeper: Calvin starts from God, Bavinck starts from the triune God, particularly the immanent triune God.

This leads to the differences in the definition of the essence of human nature and human destiny: 1) For Bavinck, humanity is the image of the triune God. For Calvin, humanity is the image of God; 2) For Bavinck, the ontological aspects of the image of God are emphasized based on the unity and diversity of the immanent Trinity. For Calvin, the relational aspects of the image of God are emphasized in communion with God; 3) For Bavinck, the whole person, including the body, is the image of the triune God. For Calvin, the soul is the proper seat of the image of God; 4) For Bavinck, the unity and diversity of men, women, and humanity as a whole, rests on the triune God. For Calvin, the unity and diversity of men and women rest on the harmony and distinction of Christocentric manner. 5) For Bavinck, human destiny is the glory of God's being, by manifesting God's attributes and participating in God's works, through the exercise of the threefold office. For Calvin, human destiny is the glory of God manifesting God's attributes. In this regard, for human destiny, Bavinck's elaboration is much further described than that of Calvin.

Concerning the devastating effects of the fall into sin upon human nature, and particularly the image of God, there is widespread agreement between Calvin and Bavinck on how the image of God was corrupted. Both theologians acknowledge the total depravity and the universal sinfulness of humankind. The total corruption of the image of God in terms of human nature itself and the broken communion with God leads to the distorted telos of the image of God. To be specific, Bavinck articulates the process of the act of sinning in the *whole human person.* Hence, the enmity against God is found in the whole person, including all faculties. Moreover, Bavinck declares that sin made humanity totally corrupted in terms of humankind as a whole as well as the whole person. Bavinck stresses that the essence of sin can be conceived properly when one calls attention to the whole realm of sin in humankind rather than merely a single sin or the sins of an individual.

Concerning the restoration of the image of God, basically, there is much that Calvin and Bavinck hold in common. They both discuss the restoration of the image of God in terms of content and destiny. They share a common viewpoint of the image of God after the fall: the total corruption and the universality of sin. When they speak about the restored image of God, they mean the total renewal and restoration of human nature. In order to reconcile the relationship between God and fallen humanity, Christ alone is sufficient. Calvin describes the restoration of the image of God as the regeneration of the soul because of his emphasis upon the soul in relation to the image of God. The Father-child relationship is highlighted by both theologians. Believers are considered God's adopted children. Then, according to Calvin, how can the image of God be restored?

Both Calvin and Bavinck emphasizes the necessity of Christ's satisfaction for human sin. The fullness of Christ's vicarious satisfaction for sin ensures reconciliation between God and humanity. God's grace in Christ restores what sin had ruined. Calvin emphasizes the recovery

of the fellowship with God by the grace of Christ the Mediator. Apart from the satisfaction for sin and sacrifice of perfect obedience, the mediatorial work of Christ cannot be understood. Christ abolished sin and restored the broken relationship between God and humanity through his complete obedience to the Father. Calvin stresses the adoption of sinners through the union with Christ. Hence, all the benefits of salvation lie prepared in the person of Christ. In Calvin's thinking, it is through communion with the righteousness of Christ that this relationship of Father and children can be achieved. The mystical union with Christ serves as the foundation of the doctrine of the imitation of Christ. For Calvin, the imitation of the perfect image of Christ takes place as a life-long process and as an ongoing and progressive imitation throughout the Christian's entire life.

In keeping with the purpose and destiny of humanity, for Bavinck, with the restoration of the image of God, what is of utmost importance is the threefold office. For Bavinck, the unfolding of the image of God is intimately related to the exercising the threefold offices of prophet, priest, and king. Bavinck maintains the original ordained purpose of the image of God with particular reference to Christ's threefold office, declaring that "the three offices with Christ was commissioned are a reference to the original calling and purpose of man."[189] The Son, the second person of the Trinity, was anointed by the Father with the Spirit from eternity, bearing the name of Messiah, Christ. This ordination to the threefold office is God's will. Bavinck clearly notes the scriptural emphasis that it is only by God's eternal counsel that Christ was appointed exactly to the threefold office. Bavinck declares, "The doctrine of the threefold offices lays a firm connection between nature and grace, creation and redemption, Adam and Christ."[190]

Through the mystic union with Christ, Bavinck maintains that human beings can participate in the prophetic, priestly, and royal office again. It means that human beings can exhibit the true image of God. The union with the person and work of Christ leads Bavinck to insist that humanity achieves its vocation and destiny to be an imitator of Christ. To be specific, Bavinck's doctrine of the restored image of God is related to the imitation of Christ. For Bavinck, humanity can reach the final destiny through the imitation of Christ. Bavinck manifests particular care in his discussion of the imitation of Christ by connecting his doctrine of the threefold office of Christ with respect to the divine attributes. The restored image of God can participate in the communicable attributes of God. The life of Christ is a model and an example for Christians, particularly in relation to the virtues of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. For Bavinck, the exercise of the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king is the key to understanding the imitation of Christ. Hence, by exercising the threefold office, humanity can manifest God's attributes and virtues, such as knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. In this way, when humanity reflects the immanent relations of the three persons of the Godhead in the form of divine attributes and virtues, the triune God is glorified.

Both Calvin and Bavinck treat the restoration of the image of God with reference to the glorification of God. Calvin draws a close connection between the final human destiny and

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[189] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 334.

[190] Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 334.

the reflection of the divine attributes. Humanity as the image of God serves as an instrument to display his attributes and virtues. Through the restoration of the image of God, human beings reveal the glory of God. For Bavinck, the exercise of Christ's threefold office is grounded on God's will to restore human nature and human destiny. The union with Christ opens the way for humanity to participate in the prophetic, priestly, and royal offices. The ultimate human destiny lies in the imitation of Christ. The restored image of God can exercise the threefold office, which sheds light on a manifestation of the immanent Trinity for God's glory. By deploying the distinction between the archetypal God and the ectypal humanity, the whole human person, including body and soul, with all one's capabilities and properties, manifests divine attributes and virtues analogically. Not only men but also women reflect God's attributes and virtues as a splendid mirror for the glorification of God. Humanity as a whole, in space and time, illustrate the divine attributes, through the exercise of the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.

Chapter 6. Comparison between Bavinck and Calvin

The present study discusses the central question, "w*hat are the similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God?*" When considering that the primary purpose of this research is to compare Bavinck and Calvin in their doctrine about the Trinity and the image of God, first, it is essential to confirm Bavinck's theological identity before analyzing the theologies of Bavinck and Calvin. In chapter two, the examination of the two Bavincks hypothesis and the recent criticisms by Bavinck scholars directly demonstrates Bavinck's theological identity as an orthodox Calvinist yet modern theologian. Then, a historical overview of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth-century theological tendencies in the Netherlands and particularly the background of neo-Calvinism was examined with a systematic account in chapter three. For Bavinck, Calvin's theology can serve as a basic theological rationale for his vision as a neo-Calvinist. Bavinck esteems Calvin's life as an exemplary of Christian life. To delve deeper into the comparison between Bavinck and Calvin, the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God were addressed in the previous chapters four and five. Although there are similarities between Bavinck's and Calvin's views of the triune God and the image of God, more importantly, Calvin's anti-speculative approach to the doctrine of the Trinity is substantially different from Bavinck's thorough trinitarian thoughts.

Therefore, the next step in this chapter is an analysis and assessment by examining the similarities and differences of the theologies between Bavinck and Calvin. An analysis of their doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God needs to be undertaken mainly employing a comparative study. After the analysis, based on the results of the analysis through a comprehensive comparison of their theological points, a systematic-theological assessment has been undertaken to answer the central question of this present study. This assessment reflects Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin and illuminates the distinctiveness of Bavinck's theology in comparison with that of Calvin.

6.1 Bavinck and Calvin on the Trinity

Bavinck and Calvin try to offer a considerable articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity to answer the questions raised in their day. Needless to say, the theological context is indispensable to note the similarities and differences between doctrines of the Trinity in Bavinck and Calvin. On the one hand, Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity was formulated in the context of his polemic with Pierre Caroli's suspicions of heresy (1537), the anti-trinitarianism of Michael Servetus (1546), and Giovanni Valentino Gentile (1558) in the mid-sixteenth century. On the other hand, Bavinck affirms the traditional arguments for the Trinity and presents his argument for the doctrine of the Trinity against anti-Christian alternatives and anti-trinitarianism in the nineteenth century. Against these backgrounds, the similarities and differences are respectively discussed in this section. The observations was arranged thematically. What are the differences between Bavinck's and Calvin's trinitarian thoughts? Are these differences substantial or peripheral? What does Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity

contribute to the doctrine of the image of God, particularly with his emphasis on humanity as the image of the triune God? The answers to these questions are addressed in the present section, which would lead to the conclusion of the central question of Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin.

Hence, the setup of this section is as follows: First, Bavinck's and Calvin's exegetical examination for the doctrine is discussed (6.1.1). Then second, the legitimacy, limit, and necessity of the trinitarian terminology in which both theologians keep in mind are scrutinized (6.1.2). Third, Bavinck's and Calvin's views concerning the vestiges of the Trinity concerning analogical metaphor are examined (6.1.3). Fourth, the theological epistemology of Bavinck and Calvin is described by a comparison between Bavinck's trinitarian emphasis and Calvin's Christocentric focus (6.1.4). Fifth, the theological hallmarks of Bavinck's and Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity are demonstrated (6.1.5).

6.1.1 Exegetical Approach and Theological Hermeneutics

Bavinck and Calvin agree that Scripture is not the sole but the final authority to offer a solid foundation for the doctrine of the Trinity. Meanwhile, there exist some crucial differences concerning the exegetical approach and strategy between them. It should be noted beforehand that, given the exegetical issues and their own trinitarian arguments, there are certainly differences between them in terms of not so much what they teach about the doctrine itself, but where they place it for their establishing doctrine.

Calvin devotes considerable attention to simplification and clarification of the exegesis of the text to provide an assurance of salvation and a firm knowledge of the triune God to the believer. Namely, Calvin states the doctrine of the Trinity in its simplest and clearest form, providing a declarative statement on the triune God, emphasizing the consubstantiality of the divine persons.[1] For Calvin, careful attention to the point of a clear demonstration of the deity of the Son and the Spirit is of utmost importance in understanding the doctrine of the Trinity. This emphasis on the deity of both leads to the foundational account of the trinitarian nature of the works of salvation for humanity. By comparison, Bavinck gives more attention to the elaboration of the doctrine of the Trinity concerning the immanent Trinity, with particular focus on the unity and diversity within the Godhead and the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, based on his own organic motif.

Specifically, Calvin contributes to the clarification of the exegetical foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity by finding support for the doctrine in historical exegesis and by denying allegorical explanations of the previous tradition. Calvin establishes more explicit biblical foundations for the doctrine of the Trinity, upholding the meaning of the text of Scripture in the simple, actual, and literal sense. Calvin seeks to give an account of God based on direct declarations of Scripture or concept drawn from the text itself. Notably, by presenting his own qualifications on the trinitarian terms and the traditional exegesis, he outlines the biblical grounds of the doctrine in far greater detail than the previous ages. Moreover, Calvin not only puts forth considerable exegetical effort to support the doctrine

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[1] See section 4.2.1, 3.

but also points out the weakness in the previous exegesis. Calvin warns against a slavish attitude towards the trinitarian terms received from the patristic and medieval scholastics. Indeed, Calvin was cautious about using incorrect formulae of the doctrine of the early church and poor exegetical foundation. Not surprisingly, Calvin discards some proofs of the doctrine, because he thinks these proofs rest on a skewed exegesis of Scripture. Calvin refuses to distort Scripture toward a clearer understanding and a more precise conceptualization of the meaning of the Trinity. Calvin's alternative exegesis of the Trinity with his preference for the historical exegesis over allegorical interpretations and his attempts to discard the improper exegesis on the Trinity can be found abundantly in his writings. The reformulation of the doctrine of the Trinity through clarifying the exegesis of the text stands out as central to Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity.

By comparison, Bavinck seldom engages in discussions of the clarification of the trinitarian exegesis that Calvin does. The various religious thoughts in the Netherlands and the fierce battle between Christianity and the spirit of modernity, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century make Bavinck enthusiastically embrace the doctrine of the Trinity as an antidote and chief weapon in this battle. Exegesis is not the most important thing to that end. As a neo-Calvinist, Bavinck wants to equip Christians for battle by providing a Christian worldview, which he promotes as uniquely, grounded in the triune God. Indeed, the doctrine of the Trinity plays a crucial and central role in Bavinck's entire theology: first, in defending the doctrines of God and creation, against atheism as represented by Nietzsche's radical atheist critique of Christianity and evolutionism as represented by Darwin's mechanical and anti-teleological principle;[2] second, in resurrecting the doctrine of the triune God and the understanding of the unity and diversity in the cosmos against Scholten's monistic understanding of God and the uniformity and multiformity of monism;[3] third, in examining God's decree with reference to the relationship between God and creation against mechanical determinism of monism, rationalistic view of deism, pantheistic confusion between God and the world;[4] fourth, in defending the theological epistemology concerning the certainty of faith and knowledge of God, preserving both incomprehensibility and knowability of God against anti-revelation tendency of his days, namely, agnosticism, German idealism's stress on human reason, deism's doubts on the authenticity of revelation and its stress on the autonomy of human reason, pantheism's accounts for humanity as the epistemic source and standard of truth, pragmatism's emphasis upon satisfactoriness of mind, and the rise of the historical-critical approach to the text by Kuenen;[5] fifth, in serving to provide a more rounded and fuller understanding of origin, nature, and destiny of humanity as the image of the triune God, particularly as a means of conceiving how God works in creation, salvation, sanctification, and glorification of humanity from eternity to the time and space.

In light of this, for the doctrine of the Trinity, Bavinck aims at elaboration rather than clarification, as Calvin does. Moreover, without hesitation, Bavinck formulates the doctrine

[2] See section 4.1.1.
[3] See section 4.1.2.
[4] See section 4.1.3.
[5] See section 4.1.4.

of the immanent Trinity. In contrast with Calvin's sparse use of scriptural proofs and his reluctance to speculate on the immanent Trinity, Bavinck devotes more space in his exposition of the intra-trinitarian relations. Bavinck underlines that a threefold divine principle, namely, a self-differentiation within the immanent Trinity, was reflected in the divine works of creation and providence in the Old Testament. Bavinck deals with divine diversity employing the vast array of divine names and underscores that the threefold distinction within the immanent Trinity was clearly revealed in the New Testament with the divine names of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. By emphasizing the non-numerical paradigm of the unity and diversity of the Trinity, Bavinck passionately articulates the immanent Trinity. Given his emphasis on the divine fecundity and divine communicability of the immanent Trinity, the explication of the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, and his trinitarian analogies with human nature, it is remarkable that Bavinck's exegetical approach to theological reflection decidedly differs from that of Calvin.

6.1.2 Trinitarian Terminology

Bavinck and Calvin agree to the legitimacy and necessity of using traditional trinitarian terminology. They concur that when the divine being is described, trinitarian terms are justified by their utility in discourse and their necessity against anti-trinitarian heresies. Besides, Bavinck shares with Calvin's teaching the idea that extra-biblical terminology must be kept within Scripture, namely on the condition of the limits set by the Word of God. Nevertheless, there are some differences.

Calvin's moderate use of trinitarian terminology is a particular facet of his doctrine of the Trinity, whereas one cannot find any hesitance to use the trinitarian terminology in Bavinck's treatment. Calvin is consistent in his sparse, or at least his minimum degree of, use of these terms from the very beginning to even in later phases of his career. Calvin's abstemious attitude is most evident in his earlier writings until the end of the 1530s, namely, in his first edition of the 1536 *Institutes* and the *Confession of Faith* issued in 1537. Even though Calvin admits the legitimacy and necessity of using trinitarian language, he has a careful attitude toward the trinitarian terms in a debate with Caroli and Servetus. By the same token, Calvin barely mentions the trinitarian terminologies in his first catechism of 1537 and other catechetical writings as well as all his sermons, with the partial exception of the prefatory epistle to the 1536 and 1538 catechism and a few words in Geneva Catechism of 1542.[6] His reason for sparsely using trinitarian terms here should be understood in the light of his pastoral perspective.[7]

Calvin's hesitance regarding trinitarian terms and his refusal to subscribe to the Athanasian Creed provide the reason to be suspected of heterodoxy by Chapponeau, Courtois, and Caroli. However, this does not mean that he denies the doctrine of the Trinity *per se*, nor does it imply that he depreciates or derogates the ancient Creeds, including the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381). In his later writings, unlike his initial hesitancy, Calvin

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[6] Baars, *Om Gods Verhevenheid en Zijn nabijheid*, 344, 344nn8, 9. Cf. Ibid., 102.
[7] See note 431 of 4.2.2 of this study.

articulates the doctrine of the Trinity by using a more balanced definition. For the question of whether Calvin approves the terminology of the early Councils, indeed, he clearly concedes the ancient Creeds in his last edition of the 1559 *Institutes*.[8] So, proceeding from what has been discussed above and addressed in chapter four, it should be kept in mind that Calvin is circumspect about treating the trinitarian terminology from his emphasis on the priority of Scripture over any normative doctrines of tradition and any formulae of trinitarian terms itself.

By comparison, Bavinck is more open and receptive to using trinitarian terminology than Calvin throughout the discussion of the trinitarian doctrine. In his *Reformed Dogmatics*, before embarking on an explication of the doctrine of the Trinity, Bavinck fully considers and addresses the recurring disputes over the legitimacy and the necessity of using extra-biblical terminology in the history of dogmatic controversies. Bavinck affirms that the use of trinitarian language is indispensable in line with the Reformed tradition. Not only the exact words of Scripture, but also the inferences are legitimately drawn from Scripture and have binding authority.

Bavinck's conviction that Scripture is the foundational source of theology, neither a book of statutes nor a dogmatic textbook leads to his view that argues that reflection on the truth of Scripture and theology related to it is impossible, without using extra-biblical terminology. At the same time, Bavinck acknowledges that since these terms are of human origin, namely not the words drawn from the Bible; there are certainly limits to signify the truth of Scripture. Nevertheless, in Bavinck's words, not because of its accuracy in every respect, but because no other and better manner was to be found, these terms have been used consistently throughout church history. Hence, for Bavinck, it is indispensable to use the trinitarian terms, in giving a precise expression to the truth of the triune God and making the meaning of Scripture clear against misunderstanding.

In sum, concerning the use of the trinitarian terms, Bavinck places more emphasis on the use of extra-biblical terminology without hesitation in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity throughout his theological work than Calvin does. Calvin's attitude towards the trinitarian terminology can be characterized that even though he admits the legitimacy of these terms, nonetheless, he urges caution in forming and developing the doctrine of the Trinity by excessive use of them. Concerning the legitimacy and limits of the trinitarian terms, Bavinck stands in continuity with Calvin's thoughts. Namely, if these terms are used devoutly in accordance with Scripture, that is, are kept in faithful subordination to the truth of Scripture, both theologians admit the use of the trinitarian terms for a proper understanding of the triune God. However, concerning the necessity of the trinitarian terms, while both affirms the use of these terms, Bavinck is more extensive for using it in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity than Calvin.

6.1.3 Analogical Metaphor

Both Bavinck and Calvin concede the concept of the vestiges of the Trinity in creation. Namely, both theologians maintain that all creatures exhibit the vestiges of the Trinity for

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[8] Baars, "The Trinity," 245.

God's glory. The entire creation has the trinitarian imprint as a mirror of God. However, regarding the trinitarian analogical approach, there is a difference with varying degrees of receptivity between Bavinck and Calvin. While on the one hand, while Calvin takes a passive attitude toward trinitarian analogies with human affairs, on the other, Bavinck enthusiastically allows room for an analogical approach to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Calvin accepts the view of the vestiges of the Trinity in creation, but he evinces no great eagerness on analogical language and proofs from nature and human reason for understanding the Trinity. This is because Calvin fundamentally avoids analogical metaphors or speculative arguments to describe the triune God. Calvin distances himself from allegorical, typological, or pre-critical exegesis of the medieval exegetical tradition, favoring literal exegesis.[9] Although Calvin follows Augustine's trinitarian theology and his trinitarian theology on the mutual relations of the divine persons in general, he sharply criticizes the Augustinian psychological metaphors of the Trinity in relation to human nature. Calvin considers Augustine's analogies drawn from human affairs as excessive speculation concerning the triune God. For this reason, the trinitarian analogies for the understanding of the Trinity never became significant elements in Calvin's expositions of the doctrine.

By comparison, Bavinck advances a step further to employ the trinitarian analogical metaphor to formulate his doctrine of the Trinity.[10] Based on the archetypal and ectypal relationship between God and humanity, he maintains that the whole person reveals the archetypal attributes of God as the image of the triune God analogically.[11] For Bavinck, the immanent Trinity provides the ontological and epistemological foundation. In other words, the notion that the immanent Trinity establishes the architecture of creation contributes to Bavinck's view of an ontological Creator-creation distinction. Besides, on the basis of this metaphysical Creator-creation distinction, he attempts to give a satisfactory answer to an epistemological understanding of the incomprehensibility and knowability of God. Despite an absolute ontological distance between God and creation, Bavinck argues that all creatures reveal the immanent Trinity based on his conviction that the economic Trinity mirrors the immanent Trinity. From this point of view, unlike Calvin, Bavinck not only admits Augustine's trinitarian analogy that the vestiges of the Trinity can be found in human nature but further accounts for humanity as the image of the triune God, in terms of the whole human being as well as the whole of humankind. For Bavinck, when considering both one single human person and the whole human race as a whole, the unity and diversity of humanity as an organism can be properly understood. This intimate connection between the triune imprints and the essence of human nature sheds light on Bavinck's distinctive trinitarian understanding of the image of God.

Considering the points mentioned above, one of the chief characteristics of Bavinck's theology is his relentless deployment of analogical metaphor in comparison to Calvin's attitude towards analogical language. What needs to be noted here is that Calvin not only expresses an antagonism to speculation on formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity but

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[9] See section 4.2.1.

[10] See section 4.1.4.

[11] See section 5.1.1.4.

further avoids analogical language for understanding the triune God. Bavinck favors the trinitarian metaphor and, besides, the archetype and ectype distinction of the Reformed Scholasticism. Although the distance between God and human beings is the ontological gulf between the infinite and the finite as well as the epistemological gap between the incomprehensibility and knowability of God, for Bavinck, the knowledge of God is true and ectypal. Here, we encounter the significance of analogical metaphor and the archetype and ectype distinction in Bavinck's theology. Despite the ontological difference between God and us, Bavinck declares the argument that the knowledge of God is true and ectypal in terms of a concept of the analogy of divine knowledge beyond the limitation of human knowledge of God. In conjunction with the doctrine of the image of God, this consideration leads to Bavinck's own definition that human beings are the image of the triune God ontologically, manifesting the immanent Trinity analogically. In this regard, his deployment of analogical metaphor and distinction between archetype and ectype made an essential contribution to formulating the doctrine of the Trinity and applying it to the doctrine of the image of God. It is a distinctive feature of Bavinck's theology and a crucial point of differentiation between Bavinck and Calvin.

6.1.4 Trinitarian Epistemology

Concerning the theological epistemology, there is a general agreement between Bavinck and Calvin on how humanity can know God. They share the conviction that God is fundamentally incomprehensible ontological being, at the same time, upholding God's knowability. They maintain that humanity cannot approach God, and the only way in which they can get the knowledge of God is His revelation. Nonetheless, and significantly so, some significant differences concerning the epistemology come to the fore.

First of all, among other points that could be made here, one of the points to be noted is that Bavinck devotes some six hundred pages of exposition in the first volume of his *Reformed Dogmatics* and his entire monograph on *The Certainty of Faith*. Whereas Calvin does not feel any obligation to defend theological epistemology with reference to the precision and certainty of knowledge of God, Bavinck attempts to answer the certainty question of the knowledge of God. In order to accommodate new academic, philosophical, and polemical issues of his days, Bavinck provides a sophisticated trinitarian epistemology by adapting and expanding the Reformed tradition. The rise of a more critical approach to theological epistemology, associated with what has been classified as atheism, agnosticism, and anti-revelation tendency, leads Bavinck to verify further and develop the knowledge of God and its certainty, grounded in the doctrine of the Trinity. Moreover, considering Bavinck's beginning with the Prolegomena of Dogmatics to lay the trinitarian epistemological foundation, which was not universal among Reformed dogmatic theologians of his days, Bavinck's trinitarian epistemology is remarkable and noteworthy, in comparison with Calvin.[12]

Second, concerning God's essence, Calvin is not primarily interested in the precise

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[12] Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 91n39.

definition of God's essence. From the anti-speculative perspective, Calvin refrains from dwelling on who God is in essence but instead prefers to point out what God is like towards us concerning the divine attributes.[13] God's exaltedness and His incomprehensibility, associated with a slight capacity of sinful humanity, lead Calvin to avoid to delve deeper into God's essence. With respect to the knowability of God's essence, Calvin prefers divine accommodation rather than His essence, considering it as the more proper subject for theological epistemology. By contrast, Bavinck devotes ample attention to God's essence, particularly in relation to the immanent Trinity. Unlike Calvin's reticence about God's essence, Bavinck remarkably articulates the immanent Trinity. Bavinck considers God's ontological unity in essence and diversity of persons as the very core of his entire theology. Namely, whereas for Calvin the interrelatedness between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves is the starting point and foundation of epistemology, the confession of the immanent Trinity is for Bavinck the starting point not only in giving an account of the relationship between God and creation but further in providing a foundational account of epistemology. Bavinck forms the link between ontology and epistemology by laying emphasis upon the immanent Trinity.

Third, concerning the theological epistemology, Calvin consistently seeks to defend God's exaltedness and His nearness via divine accommodation.[14] For Calvin, the key to understanding all biblical languages with reference to the knowledge of God is to consider divine accommodation in relation to God's essence. Divine accommodation is particularly crucial to examine God's essence, not at the expense of both God's exaltedness and His nearness. Calvin states that God presents Himself in and through His word, employing human language. This emphasis upon divine accommodation uniquely highlights for Calvin the significance of Christ the Mediator. Calvin examines divine accommodation, particularly with the terminology of light.[15] Thus, Calvin elaborates that the human knowledge of God is possible only through Christ the Mediator as the access to approach inaccessible light that God dwells in. Calvin undergirds the true knowledge of God via accommodated revelation, in the way of faith in Christ. According to Calvin, humanity can approach God in his emphasis on God's Word and Christ the Mediator as the only entrance to God, who dwells in unapproachable light.

In comparison with Calvin's approach to epistemological discussion focused on divine accommodation by faith in Christ, Bavinck's theological epistemology has its presupposition and foundation in the triune God rather than Christ the Mediator. While Bavinck acknowledges that Christ is certainly the centre and main focus of God's revelation, expressly stating that "The center of that revelation is the person of Christ,"[16] he does not consider the person of Christ as the foundation and the starting point of theological epistemology.[17] Bavinck grounds theological epistemology in the doctrine of the Trinity. Namely, all human

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[13] Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.2.1; 1.10.2.

[14] Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 264-71.

[15] Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.1. Cf. For a detailed analysis, see Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 282-88, 308-16.

[16] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 380.

[17] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 110.

knowledge has a trinitarian characteristic. So, the mediation between God and humans does not turn on the incarnate Christ, but on the trinitarian structure of human epistemology. Bavinck suggests that the doctrine of the Trinity is nothing less than the essential foundation (*the principium essendi*), existence (*the principium existendi*), and knowledge (*the principium congoscendi*).[18] At this point, Bavinck uniquely defines the *principium cognoscendi externum* as the works of the Son and the *principium cognoscendi internum* as the works of the Holy Spirit, derived from his doctrine of the Trinity.[19] Based on these three principles of epistemology, Bavinck gives his answer to obtain the certainty of faith. Moreover, uniquely Bavinck further expands this concept of *principia* concerning the distinction of archetypal and ectypal theology of the Reformed tradition. Although humanity can have the true knowledge of God, all knowledge of God is analogical.

By comparison with Calvin, Bavinck's distinct contribution is that he offers a considerable advance in theological epistemology with respect to the Reformed scholasticism, deploying the principia of theology and the distinction between archetype and ectype. When Bavinck is formulating the structure of principium *externum* and *internum* in his epistemology, he places more emphasis on faith than Calvin by discussing faith in his prolegomena and identifying it with the *principium internum* of human knowledge. While Bavinck locates faith as a foundational element of the prolegomena, at the same time, he affirms divine revelation in Christ and Scripture as the objective foundation of human knowledge. Notably, the doctrine of the testimony of the Holy Spirit is of importance to understanding Bavinck's reception of Calvin with respect to the theological epistemology.[20]

6.1.5 The Deity of the Son and the Spirit

One of the most significant arguments for the doctrine of the Trinity in the thought of Calvin is to demonstrate the deity of the Son and the Spirit. In the rising tides of the radical oneness of God and trinitarian subordinationism, Calvin's impassioned promotion of the deity of the Son and the Spirit and his emphasis on the aseity of the Son is the characteristic feature of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity. In contrast, Bavinck relates the concept of the aseity of God with the absoluteness of God.

By adhering to the authority of Scripture as the final norm for Christian doctrine, Calvin states that Scripture teaches the truth of the intrinsic consubstantiality of the triune God concerning divine unity in essence as well as divine diversity of the divine persons. Hence, following the so-called Reformed maxim that Scripture is its own interpreter, namely that God reveals His essence to us in accommodated revelation, from the anti-speculative approach, Calvin emphasizes the deity of the Son and the Spirit rather than other issues. In this regard, when confronted with the trinitarian heresies of his days, Calvin endeavors to answer the challenge concerning the knowledge of God in relation to the salvation of

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[18] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 211. Cf. Id., *De wetenschap der Heilige Godgeleerdheid* ,12.

[19] Van Den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 284-95.

[20] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1: 583, 584n60. Cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, 1. 7. Calvin, *Commentary on Tim.* 3:16; Van Den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology*, 277, 278.

humanity rather than contributes to a comprehensive codification of doctrine. Calvin mounts his arguments for the deity and distinct person of both the Son and the Spirit, following out his own hermeneutic of a direct declaration of Scripture and of drawing from the considerable biblical exegesis of such details as the divine names, the divine attributes, and the divine works and miracles, in evincing the deity of the Son and the Spirit.[21] Particularly in answering a series of the challenges of anti-trinitarianism, namely, Servetus's claim for the radical oneness of the triune God both in essence and in person, Gentiles's insistence on a radical monotheism of the Father, arguing that the Father is the only one true God, Calvin consistently demonstrates the deity of the Son and the Spirit.[22]

Concerning the doctrine of the aseity of the Son, there is much that Calvin and Bavinck hold in common in its connection. They both are convinced that Scripture speaks of an independent, self-existent God. With reference to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, the way in which Bavinck develops his teaching about the aseity of God differs from that of Calvin. Significantly, Calvin points directly to the aseity of the Son as the decisive attribute for further evidence of the deity of the Son. He considers the aseity of God as a fundamental premise of the doctrine of God and mainly labors to articulate the deity of Christ, coupled with the aseity of the Son. It is no exaggeration to say that Calvin's main arguments for the doctrine of the Trinity lay in his emphasis upon the consubstantiality of the three persons, particularly by presenting the divine attributes of the aseity of the divine persons.

By comparison, Bavinck consistently maintains the aseity of God, associated with the absoluteness of God concerning a fullness of life, productivity, absolute relationship, and activity. For Bavinck, the notion of absoluteness rests on the infinite fullness of life, which is fully capable of expansion and communication, namely on the absolutely infinite and independent being of God, i.e., the trinitarian ontological being of God. Bavinck's affirmation of the aseity of God directly and intimately points to God's ontological immanent trinitarian relationship. Moreover, while both Calvin and Bavinck describe God's essence by explaining His name, the manner in which both theologians do it differs from each other. Calvin underscores the aseity of the Son to emphasizes the deity of the Son, by mentioning that Christ is called divine names such as 'Elohim,' 'Jehovah,' and 'the Lord of Hosts.' By contrast, Bavinck underlines the absoluteness of God as the one true and living God, who contains the infinite fullness of life and the absolute diversity, by noting the name 'Elohim.'

6.1.6 The Unity and Diversity in the Trinity

Calvin and Bavinck agree that the unity of God lies in the divine essence, and thus the distinction of the three persons in God's being is not a distinction of the essence. On the one hand, mainly in reaction against the modalism of Servetus and the subordinationism of the Italian anti-trinitarians, Calvin focuses on the unity in essence and the distinctiveness of the three persons. By emphasizing the full essential equality of the deity of the Son and the Spirit,

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[21] See notes 689-99 of 4.2.3.
[22] See notes 703-06 of 4.2.3.

Calvin provides the legitimacy of the unity of the three persons in God.[23] Notably, for Calvin, the aseity of the persons is the key to maintaining all discussions of divine oneness in essence and the personal threeness of the Godhead. By means of words such as 'simplicity' (simplicitas), 'unity' (unitas), and 'being undivided' in his theological work, Calvin underscores the unity of Godhead.[24] To be specific, in proving from Scripture the unity of the divine being, Calvin demonstrates the oneness of faith and baptism in Eph. 4:5 through a close connection with the oneness of the name into which we are baptized in Matt. 28:19. Baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for Calvin, is the place to witness the unity and the diversity of God.[25]

On the other hand, the absolute unity in diversity and the diversity in unity is a central point of Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity. From the writings of Bavinck, it becomes evident that several of his key convictions were formulated in the forge of his enthusiastic polemic with the challenges of his days. Particularly in the face of all monistic accounts of reality with the notions of uniformity and multiformity, by the aid of natural science and speculative reason, the unity and diversity in the immanent Trinity provide a primary theological rationale for the Christian worldview of organic unity and diversity, according to Bavinck. In a word, only the immanent trinitarian being of God makes the harmony of the unity in diversity of the reality possible. This conviction of the absolute and abundant unity and diversity of *ad intra* is for Bavinck not only the primary and most fundamental to his doctrine of the Trinity *per se*, it is also the foundational principle as a distinctly trinitarian worldview that presents a convincing answer to metaphysical and epistemological questions, including the knowledge of ontology and teleology, protology and eschatology.

For Bavinck, there exists God's absolute unity of essence, and this eternal unity is an archetype for unity in all creatures. At the same time, Bavinck highlights that there exists absolute diversity in unity in the divine infinite fullness of life. Within the triune being of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct subjects in the same divine nature and perfections. By emphasizing that the unity and diversity in the immanent Trinity denote abundant diversity and a supreme unity, Bavinck further argues that this immanent Trinity is displayed in the economic Trinity. That is, in Bavinck's view, the trinitarian worldview that enables the world to be described as an organism, manifesting the ectypal unity and diversity. Bavinck's reference to the unity and diversity based on the immanent Trinity is a significant step forward in the economic Trinity, particularly with respect to origin, nature, and destiny of humanity, considering humanity as the image of the triune God, in comparison with those of Calvin.

6.1.7 The Immanent and Economic Trinity

When comparing Bavinck's formulation of the trinitarian doctrine with that of Calvin, it is essential to bear in mind the difference concerning the immanent and economic Trinity.

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[23] Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.13.2.

[24] Calvin, *Commentary on Joh.* 5:19 (1553); Id., *Institutes*, 1.13.2, 6, 20, 22, 23.

[25] Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.13.16.

Bavinck places more emphasis on the immanent Trinity than Calvin does. Bavinck distinguishes the doctrine of the Trinity into the works of God *ad intra* and *ad extra* in order to articulate his understanding of the relationship between God's triune ontological existence and God's outward economic works. On the contrary, Calvin pays more attention to the economic Trinity with reference to the soteriological focus by adhering to the principle of *sola scriptura* and avoiding the speculative approach.

To be specific, for Calvin, it is true that the immanent Trinity has received comparatively little treatment in comparison with the economic Trinity, except for a few writings on the *filioque*. Calvin concedes the order within the three persons of God, speaking of the Father as the beginning of activity and the Son as the Son derives from the Father, and the Spirit as the Spirit derives from the Son and the Father. Concerning the eternal interrelations of the divine three persons, Calvin adopts the fundamental position of the Western trinitarian tradition concerning the essential equality of the divine persons. However, Calvin does not further explain the generation of the son nor, and the procession of the Spirit in more detail. Rather than the immanent Trinity concerning the issues of the trinitarian terms or intra-trinitarian relationships, namely, the eternal generation of the Son and eternal procession of the Spirit, Calvin gives a detailed account of the economic Trinity both in his commentaries and sermons. Calvin rejects any essential subordinationist doctrine of the Son and the Spirit.

This is not surprising, given Calvin's anti-speculative tenor of the doctrine and his adherence to the *sola scriptura* principle. Calvin is concerned, first and foremost, to clarify the doctrine of the Trinity, in accordance with the teachings of Scripture. Indeed, Calvin's primary purpose is to establish the doctrine of the Trinity properly grounded in a direct declaration of Scripture, warning against speculative forms of theology. In this regard, while Calvin pays little attention to the concept of *perichoresis* concerning the relations of the divine persons, rather Calvin stresses the aseity of the Son and the Spirit for affirming the same divine essence among the divine persons. Moreover, in this purpose, hence, his emphasis upon the economic Trinity comes to the fore more than the immanent Trinity.[26]

Accordingly, and remarkably so, one of the characteristic features of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity is a specific soteriological focus in terms of its purpose and contents.[27] For Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity is the essential foundation of the whole doctrine of redemption in the view of the human quest for the certainty of the salvation of his days. The most important reason for his emphasis on the fullness of the salvation history with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity is intimately related to his intention to provide a firm assurance of salvation for the believers. In seeking to a substantial certainty of the salvation of the believer, Calvin approaches the triune God's work of salvation, from the perspectives of *sola scriptura* with reference to *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, and *sola Christus*.[28] Calvin demonstrates the deity of the Son as the second person of the Trinity, emphasizing the saving knowledge of the Trinity, with a considerable body of Scriptural proofs.[29] Hence, Calvin's soteriological interest and

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[26] See section 4.2.4.

[27] Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 195; George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 201; Butin, *Reformed Ecclesiology*, 6; Murphy, *The Fountain of Life,* 200. Baars, *Om Gods Verhevenheid,* 271.

[28] Huijgen, "Alone Together: *Sola* Scriptura and the Other Solas of the Reformation," 83-99.

[29] See section 4.2.4.

his emphasis on the certainty of salvation by faith in Christ are clearly evidenced in his doctrine of the Trinity.

By comparison, Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity is more concerned about a doctrine of God that provides not only the knowledge of the immanent God but further a fundamental account of reality on the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. Unlike Calvin, it is evident that Bavinck does not hesitate to discuss God's essence behind God's activity in his doctrine of the Trinity. Bavinck does not hesitate to go deep into God's essential attributes, identifying God's essence as His attributes. In Bavinck's view, divine attributes are not distinguished from the divine essence, and on the other hand, add nothing to the divine essence. However, Calvin pays more attention to God's accommodated revelation rather than God's essence. Calvin does not engage in a *priori* discussion of the divine in essence or a question concerning the relationship of the divine attributes, but he seeks a *posteriori* knowledge of the divine essence and attributes, via God's works *ad extra*.

Bavinck believes that the immanent Trinity alone properly construes the economic Trinity. Bavinck states that all of God's works *ad extra*, including creation and redemption, ultimately shed light on an infinite fullness of life and absolute divine communicability of God's being *ad intra*. Namely, without the eternal generation and communication within the divine being, creation and revelation cannot exist. For Bavinck, this *ad extra* work of God is the finger of God to lead humanity to a consideration of the trinitarian being of God *ad intra*. It is therefore clear that in Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity, there is a belief of the primacy of the immanent Trinity more than the economic Trinity.

On this emphasis on the immanent Trinity, more deeply than Calvin does, Bavinck delves into the knowledge of God concerning the inner life and relationship of the three persons within the divine being. Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity makes its unique contribution this way that God's essence is the foundation and first principle for the essence of Christianity, particularly shedding light on divine fullness and divine communicability within the immanent Trinity as the ontological foundation and epistemic prerequisite for all creatures. However, based on his conviction that God's works offer us more about the knowledge of God than God's essence *per se*, Calvin pictures God's essence behind the accommodated revelation. Mainly by emphasizing the deity of the Son and the Spirit, Calvin underlines the equality of the persons sharing in the same essence within God's being rather than God's essence. In order to prove the deity of Christ, for Calvin, it is more important to emphasize the aseity of Christ as God with reference to the immanent Trinity.

With much more detail than Calvin does, Bavinck labors to extensively articulate the relationship between immanent and economic Trinity.[30] For Bavinck, the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity is the key to providing the ontological foundation between God and creation. The divine productivity and the divine absolute communicability within the immanent Trinity make possible all works of God *ad extra*. At the same time, Bavinck maintains that the economic Trinity is the epistemological foundation for the immanent Trinity. Bavinck applies the doctrine of the Trinity, with particular focus on how the unity and diversity of the immanent Trinity can be analogically manifested in all

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[30] See section 4.1.6.

creatures and especially in humanity as a whole. Notably, the *pactum salutis* sheds light on the life and inner relationships of the divine persons as an excellent example of the undertaking of the three persons in which all cooperate, and each has a distinct role and special task. Within the immanent Trinity, there is only one will of God among three divine persons, the absolute self-consciousness, the greatest freedom, and the most perfect agreement. Through the *pactum salutis*, Bavinck emphatically maintains that God's being is glorified by God's works in the manifestation of God's attributes.

By contrast, Calvin does not distinguish the works of God into immanent and economic Trinity. It seems that for Calvin, there is no need to make a sharp distinction between these two in a sophisticated conceptual sense since it is enough to refer to God's essence as the background of God's activity. In Calvin's thoughts, it is obvious that the economic Trinity is much more in the foreground than the immanent Trinity, and most important here is that the economic Trinity, divine accommodated revelation, provides the knowledge of God's essence concerning the immanent Trinity.

6.2 Bavinck and Calvin on the Image of God

Does Bavinck provide an understanding of the image of God that is substantially different from Calvin or distinguished from Calvin in degree, not in essence? Does Bavinck bring the doctrine of the image of God in line with Scripture to defend the status quo or to propose a revision of the traditional formulation of the image of God by refining it based on his thought? This study suggests that Bavinck makes a significant contribution to his attention to humanity as the image of God in relation to the doctrines of the Trinity and the threefold office.

As has already been noted in chapter five, Bavinck and Calvin approach the doctrine of the image of God from different starting points. A central argument of this study is that the doctrine of the Trinity as the focal point sheds much light on Bavinck's distinctiveness and development of the image of God, compared to Calvin. The difference fundamentally lies in their definition of the image of God. It will be demonstrated that Bavinck's definition of the very essence of human nature is different from that of Calvin. After clarifying the difference between Bavinck's and Calvin's theological standpoints from the definition of the image of God, Bavinck's distinctively characteristic features are mainly discussed in the following subsections rather than a comprehensive discussion between them. First, the present section deals with the divine origin of humanity (6.2.1). Then, the essence of human nature is discussed in terms of the ontological and relational aspects (6.2.2). Then, the gender and the image of God will be examined. (6.2.3). Bavinck's notion of the whole person as the image of the triune God is also discussed and explicated (6.2.4). Bavinck's emphasis on the unity and diversity of humankind will be focused on (6.2.5). The corruption of the image of God will be examined (6.2.6). Then, the restoration of the image of God will be addressed (6.2.7).

6.2.1 The Divine Origin of Humanity

When we examine the doctrine of the image of God in Calvin and Bavinck, it is undisputed that the divine origin of humanity as the image of God is of particular importance to the

essence and destiny of humanity. There are no significant differences in the content of the origin of humanity between them. Both Bavinck and Calvin commence their descriptions on the nature of humanity, based on the theocentric description of the human creation in God's image. Both declare that human beings were created in God's image and likeness, based on the teachings of Scripture. They maintain that the notions of image and likeness can be understood interchangeably. Concerning the divine origin of humanity as the image of God, there is no place for doubt concerning God's creation of humanity in both theologians.

Calvin does not wade into the debate on the divine origin of humanity since, for him, the main point at issue is not the question of God's creation of humanity itself. By contrast, in the context of defending and promoting the doctrine of creation over against the views of human origin which arose from the pantheism, materialism, and evolutionism of his time, Bavinck is devoted to guarding the divine origin of humanity [31]

Bavinck's conviction of the certainty of human creation by God is intimately related to the triune God. He attempts to provide a theological ground for his appropriation of the divine origin of humanity. In the background of his argument, the doctrine of the Trinity is deeply entrenched in a rational demonstration concerning human creation from nothing. First, when Bavinck deals with the existence of creation, he begins by paying keen attention to the self-existence of God, who has a free, independent life of his own as distinct from all creatures. He surely maintains that the attribute of God's aseity is the presupposition for the ontological existence of creation. Then, Bavinck calls attention to God's trinitarian *ad intra* relationships, since his conviction is that the divine fullness of life and divine communication within the immanent relations of the three persons of God make creation possible. Notably, given how the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity provides Bavinck with the conviction that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity, he manifestly believes that the possibility of human creation is only given with the immanent Trinity, namely, the eternal generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. While both Calvin and Bavinck share the certainty of the divine origin of humanity according to Scripture, Bavinck articulates his view on the divine origin of humanity, from more trinitarian perspectives, focusing on the immanent Trinity as well as the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, in comparison with Calvin.

6.2.2 The Ontological and Relational Aspects

When compared to Calvin's view of the essence of human nature, the similarities and dissimilarities respectively are found in Bavinck's writings. Bavinck and Calvin both stand in continuity with the Reformed theology that the essence of human beings is incorporated in the image of God. Both Bavinck and Calvin attempt to defend the biblical doctrine of the image of God with reference to both the ontological and relational aspects.

First, concerning the ontological aspects of the image of God, in keeping with his consistent emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity, Bavinck underscores the ontological

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[31] See section 5.1.1.1, and 5.2.1.1.

construal of humanity as the image of the triune God.[32] It is apparent for Bavinck and Calvin that the image of God at creation provides humanity with an ontological condition to occupy a unique place among all creatures. In Calvin's view, the soul is the distinguishing feature of humanity, in distinction from other creatures. Calvin not only regards the soul as the proper seat of the image of God but further points out the immortality of the soul as the distinctive ontological feature of the image of God. Bavinck fundamentally agrees with Calvin that humanity as the image of God occupies a prominent place. At this point, Bavinck pursues the argument a significant step deeper than Calvin. The triune God's being and His work are intrinsically related to the ontological understanding of human beings. While Calvin starts his argument from the doctrine of God, Bavinck starts from the doctrine of the triune God. This difference in starting point leads them to a different understanding of the essence of human nature. Given Bavinck's emphasis upon the doctrine of the Trinity that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity, human beings are ontologically the image of the triune God, manifesting the immanent Trinity.

Moreover, for Bavinck, the distinction between archetypal and ectypal provides the framework of his understanding of the relationship between the essence of human nature and the image of God. Bavinck explicitly states that "a human being does not *bear* or *have* the image of God that he or she *is* the image of God."[33] This definition that Bavinck presents is in essence different from Calvin's argumentation that human beings bear the image of God. It is remarkable that Bavinck opts for the term "is" rather than "bear or have." By doing so, Bavinck directs his attention to considering "the essence of human nature" *per se* as the image of God more than Calvin. Since God, as an archetype, created humanity as an ectype, the essence of human nature is the image of God in Bavinck's theology. Analogically, human beings can manifest divine attributes and virtues as the image of God. On this basis, Bavinck declares that the whole human person, including all capacities, abilities, and properties of the essence of humanity, is the image of the whole deity.[34] Furthermore, from his organic perspective, Bavinck maintains that not only the whole human person but further the whole human race are the image of the triune God. For Bavinck, it is also essential to understand that in human beings, we can see the unity in diversity of the immanent Trinity as a faint analogy. In this way, Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity enables the ontological understanding of human beings as the image of the triune God.

Second, concerning the relational aspects of the image of God, for Calvin, the relational aspects of the image of God are vital for a proper understanding of the creation, corruption, and restoration of humanity as the image of God.[35] From the redemptive-historical perspective, Calvin prefers to examine God's glorious grace in the plan and work of the triune God. Hence, Calvin emphasizes the significance of human communion with God in terms of human nature as well as human destiny. For Calvin, since God is all-surpassing God, he describes the image of God as the whole of excellence. Since God is spirit, the image of God

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[32] See section 5.1.1.2.

[33] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 554. Emphasis original. Cf. Ibid., 530, 533, 556.

[34] See section 5.1.1.2, 3.

[35] See section 5.2.1.2.

is described as an inner good of the soul. Apart from the fellowship of God, human nature by itself cannot bear the integrity of human nature. Only human beings can have a personal relationship with God, in distinction from other creatures. Calvin emphasizes the personal communion with God as the vital aspect of the image of God, in reflecting His glory. Specifically, in this respect, Calvin describes human nature as the term 'mirror.' For Calvin, human beings *bear* the image of God, endowed with divine attributes and capacities for the glory of God, by manifesting an attributive similarity such as wisdom, righteousness, and holiness. In other words, it is only a proper relationship with God that enables humanity to manifest divine attributes through the human nature par excellence, reflecting the likeness of God. To be more specific, Calvin describes humanity as the Father-children relationship between God and humanity. Namely, human beings reflect the glory of the heavenly Father in gratitude for His grace as the children of God.

All in all, concerning the relational aspects of humanity as the image of God, there is more consensus than discrepancy between Calvin and Bavinck. Like Calvin, Bavinck certainly speaks of humanity as the image of God in terms of the relationship with God. Bavinck fundamentally agrees with Calvin, who points to the relationship with God as the foundation of the essence of humanity. For Bavinck, there is not a true human being apart from a relationship with God. Thus, humanity's relationship with God provides the ground for understanding the nature and destiny of human beings. In accordance with Calvin's view, Bavinck also describes a God-human relationship as the childlike relationship of humanity to God, the heavenly Father.

6.2.3 Men and Women and the Image of God

Concerning the matter of gender and the image of God, Bavinck and Calvin acknowledge that both male and female have the same dignity as the image of God, from a spiritual point of view, and different roles in family, church, and society, from an earthly point of view. However, there are variations in explanation and rationale between them. While Calvin explicitly calls attention to the approach based on the analogy between God and Christ in treating the foundation of the understanding of the dignity and role among the men and women, Bavinck examines the unity and diversity of the man and woman concerning their dignity and roles, grounded in the doctrine of the Trinity.

To be specific, on the one hand, Calvin attempts to examine the difference between man and woman in the light of Christocentric perspectives.[36] Particularly by citing Adam-Christ parallel in 1 Cor. 11, Calvin comments that the headship of women is men, just as the headship of Christ is God. Calvin further adds from this that a woman is the glory of men, just as a man is the image and glory of God. In Calvin's argument, to be more specific, the equality of the Son with the Father can be maintained in relation to the divine nature. At the same time, Christ's humiliation and his subjection to the Father can be understood in relation to human nature. Calvin likewise believes that the headship of God over Christ does not undermine the divine nature, he does argue that the headship of men over women does not

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[36] See section 5.2.1.4.

diminish the dignity of women created as the divine image.

On the other hand, with respect to the role and dignity of men and women, to be sure, there is a substantial consensus between both two theologians. However, the way in which Bavinck seeks to articulate the similarities and differences between men and women is different from that of Calvin. By comparison with a Christocentric rationale for Calvin's argument, Bavinck believes that a proper understanding of the relationship of the Creator as the triune God and human being as the image of the Trinity, in conjunction with the notion of unity and diversity, far better articulates the similarity and difference between men and women.[37] By grounding his understanding of the similarity and difference between men and women in the unity and diversity within the three persons of the Trinity, Bavinck emphasizes the equality and unity between men and women, at the same time, and attempts to explain the difference in its richness and diversity.

6.2.4 The Whole Person as the Image of God

Bavinck's own description of human nature that "the whole human person is the image of the whole Deity" leads to the following distinct emphasis upon the extension of the image of God to the whole person.[38] In Bavinck's affirmation of the whole person as the image of God, the following three remarks can be considered with respect to Calvin's views on the essence of human nature.

First, while Calvin asserts that a human being bears the image of God only in the soul, Bavinck maintains that not only a human being is in essence the image of God, but further the divine image is firmly placed on the whole human being. Whereas for Calvin, since God is not physical, the body is so far from being able to bear the image of God, for Bavinck, the triune God makes the human being as a whole possible to be the image of God. Bavinck argues that the triune God is the archetype for human beings, and thus human beings created in God's image as the ectype display the archetype of the triune God. His view of human beings as the ectype, grounded in the ontological distinction between God and humanity, allows Bavinck a distinct affirmation of analogical perspective on the whole human person as the divine image.

At this point, the concept of analogy makes possible his insistence on the whole person as the image of God. By grounding his understanding of the whole person in this archetypal and ectypal relationship between God and creatures, Bavinck maintains that humanity manifests God's attributes and His perfections as an analogical image of God. In light of Bavinck's emphasis upon the essence of human nature as the whole person, the careful observer can see that he consistently considers the whole person as the divine image rather than certain faculties, capacities, or virtues in humanity. By the same token, when Calvin focuses the seed of religion solely in the human heart, Bavinck consistently maintains that religion embraces the entire human faculties rather than one single human faculty. For

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[37] See section 5.1.1.3.

[38] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 533. See section 5.1.1.4 for a broader discussion on this element in Bavinck's thought.

Bavinck, religion is the distinctive relationship of the whole person to God, rests on his use of the archetypal and ectypal scheme. This is since human beings do not merely bear or have God's image in part or any conditions, but they are in essence the image of God. Once again, even though it is a finite ectypal creaturely analogy of the infinite archetypal divine being, for Bavinck, the whole human being was created as the image of God. While Calvin is not interested in using the analogical language for accounting for human nature with reference to the image of God, one can find a specified commitment to Bavinck's deployment of analogical epistemology more with respect to the whole person as the divine image.

Second, on this foundation, concerning the key components of humanity, while for Calvin the soul alone is always the center of attention, with reference to the image of God, Bavinck argues that the image of God ontologically embraces the whole human being, namely, that the soul, the faculties, the virtues, and the body are part of God's image. That is to say, whereas, for Calvin, the image of God is clearly limited to the soul, for Bavinck not only the spiritual aspects but also the physical aspects constitute the image of God. So far as Calvin was concerned, any idea of the divine image in the direction of the body is the attempt to infuse divinity into humanity. Hence, Calvin emphasizes that only the soul explicitly bears the image of God.[39] Fundamentally, Bavinck agrees with Calvin's polemic against any commingling of the divine and human natures as well as the confusion between the soul and body. However, there are certainly differences between Calvin's view of the body and that of Bavinck, regarding the image of God. So, in stark contrast to Calvin, Bavinck gives attention to the body as well as the soul concerning the image of God.

Third, as regards the relationship between the body and soul, Calvin and Bavinck agree that human beings consist of the union of the soul and body in a single personality. At the same time, they explain that every part of humanity, even the human body, reflect the divine attributes for God's glory. However, it should be noted, in Calvin's thought, that it is unquestionable that not only the soul is superior to the body but also the spiritual capacities superior to the physical aspects of human nature. For the extension of the image of God to the whole person, given his criticisms of Servetus' and Osiander's views, Calvin rejects identifying the image of God and the essence of the whole person.

When comparing Bavinck's view of the body with that of Calvin, particularly from the perspective of anti-dualist polemic, Bavinck is more affirmative concerning the whole person as the image of God. Like Calvin, Bavinck concedes that the heart has a certain organizational priority over other faculties. That is, he describes that the intellectual faculties of the mind and the emotional faculties of the will have a priority over the body in terms of the order within all faculties. However, it should be noted here that any ontological dualisms are ruled out by Bavinck's account of the whole human being as the image of God. To be specific, Bavinck denies all dualistic distinctions of human nature between natural and supernatural, between intellectual, spiritual and corporeal, and physical. Bavinck opposes dualistic views of the relationship between the soul and body within humanity. Primarily through his emphasis upon synthesis that grace restores nature, he refutes the ontological nature-grace dualism of Roman Catholicism regarding the *donum superaddium*, which claims

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[39] See section 5.2.1.2.

the elevation of nature by grace. Bavinck also rejects a natural-supernatural metaphysical hierarchy between God and humanity.

Nevertheless, Bavinck's rejection of all forms of dualism does not mean that there is no created order or creational diversity. In Bavinck's view, although there is no ontological hierarchical dualism between higher and lower, there are an organizational hierarchy, richness, and diversity within human parts, faculties, and capabilities. That is, Bavinck concedes that the image of God is revealed more clearly in the soul than the body, more in the ethical virtues than the physical aspects. It is not enough for him to merely deny dualism on the ontological level. Bavinck maintains that the whole human person is constitutes the image of God, emphasizing ontological equality, unity, and harmony as well as acknowledging the creational diversity, abundance, and richness. Yet, it should be noted here that his opposition to dualism is different from any pantheistic ontological monism. Undoubtedly, Bavinck rules out all univocal dualism between a spiritual and a material realm as well as all pantheistic monism. If so, what is the fundamental theological rationale for Bavinck's construal of the whole human person as the image of God?

This is confirmed when paying attention to Bavinck's fundamental affirmation about the ontological distinction between God and creature, his analogical epistemological relationship between the triune God and humanity as the image of God, and his consistent treatment of his organic emphasis upon unity and diversity, grounded in the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. Bavinck's trinitarian theology, more closely focused on the immanent triune God, enables him to rationally articulate the argument that it is the whole person that constitutes the image of God.

Furthermore, concerning the dominion over the earth in relation to the image of God, Both of them deny that dominion over the earth is the image of God. For Calvin, the image of God can be seen within the human being alone. Calvin always rejects the extension of the image of God to dominion over the earth or animals. While Bavinck emphasizes the expanding dominion over the earth in close relation to the unfolding of the image of God intimately, like Calvin, Bavinck also argues that dominion over the earth is not constitutive of the image of God. So, although there is not a considerable difference between Bavinck and Calvin concerning dominion over the earth in relation to the image of God, more than Calvin, Bavinck relates dominion over the earth with the image of God, in terms of manifesting the glory of God.

6.2.5 The Unity and the Diversity of Humanity

The underpinning of Bavinck's view of the unity and diversity of humanity is undoubtedly his doctrine of the Trinity. If so, to be more specific, how and what grounds does Bavinck enthusiastically argue for the unity and diversity of humanity in his doctrine of the image of God? What is the very rationale for Bavinck's insight that the unity and diversity of humanity cannot be properly understood without considering humankind as a whole?

Bavinck's understanding of the unity and diversity of the triune God sets the overall architecture of his doctrine of the image of God and provides the foundation on which he

develops the unique concept of humanity as an organism.[40] While Calvin focuses on the communion between God and humanity, more deeper than Calvin does, Bavinck consistently emphasizes that it is the immanent Trinity, alongside his understanding of the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, that leads to an affirmation of the unity in diversity of humanity. Particularly given his repeated deploying of the archetypal and ectypal distinction between the triune God and humanity, in Bavinck's thought, what is of utmost importance is the immanent Trinity. From this perspective, Bavinck notably emphasizes that the unity and diversity in the triune God is a basis for all the unity and diversity in humankind. Hence, when Bavinck comes to articulate the doctrine of the image of God, that he emphasizes the issue of the unity and diversity of the triune God is not surprising since the discussion of unity in diversity is an essential characteristic of the immanent Trinity.

Notably, Bavinck's distinctive understanding of the unity and diversity of humanity as a whole cannot be comprehended properly without his strong affirmation of trinitarian theology, namely, the relationship between the immanent Trinity and economic Trinity, particularly grounded in his organic motif. From the grounds of his trinitarian ontology, Bavinck maintains that human beings manifest the unity and diversity of the immanent Trinity as an organism. Bavinck states that the image of God cannot be properly and fully understood without considering every single human person and, at the same time, the entire human race as the image of God together. For Bavinck, just as all parts of human beings have an organic connection manifesting the unity and diversity within each person, there is, in his emphasis on a full picture of all humankind, clearly a deep connection in the human race as a whole, unfolding the unity, but not at the expense of the diversity. Bavinck emphasizes the entirety of the human race that, namely, rather than a single person, one household can manifest the unity and diversity of the triune God. In this way, Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God demonstrates and leads to his doctrine of the Trinity.

More specifically, a truly outstanding application of Bavinck's thoughts on the principle of unity in diversity can be found in the family. In explaining the family in terms of its vocation and purpose, one can find the maturation of Bavinck's thought, assiduously applying his doctrine of the Trinity to the doctrine of the image of God. For instance, Bavinck depicts the family as follows: "The two-in-oneness of husband and wife expands with a child into a three-in-oneness. Father, mother, and child are one soul and one flesh, expanding and unfolding the one image of God, united within threefold diversity and diverse within harmonic unity."[41] It is evident from his writings that Bavinck advances his emphasis on the unity and diversity in human beings in several distinctive aspects as he works with the doctrine of the image of God. In exploring this unity-in-diversity theme, it is possible to assess Bavinck's distinctive application of the doctrine of the Trinity with some points.

In the first place, Bavinck has recourse to the Reformed scholastics and fully applied the archetype and ectype scheme in his formulation. In other words, when Bavinck describes the three-in-oneness of relationships and functions of the family, Bavinck is indebted to the tradition of Reformed Scholasticism, deploying the archetypal and ectypal distinction. As has

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[40] See section 5.1.1.3.
[41] Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, 8.

been stated, Bavinck expounds that God's archetypal unity-in-diversity and diversity-in-unity provide the foundations for the ectypal unity and diversity evident in humanity. In comparison with Calvin, Bavinck's concept that the unity and diversity within the Godhead plays a vital role as the archetype of humanity greatly contributes to the doctrine of the image of God.

Secondly, Bavinck's use of analogical metaphor in human beings makes possible on account of the attributes of the archetypal God. In distinction from Calvin, Bavinck deploys analogy to articulate the relationship between the triune God *ad intra* and His works *ad extra*, more specifically, based on his conviction that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity. Remarkably, in his *The Christian Family*, Bavinck elaborates that human beings can manifest divine attributes analogically. In his words, Bavinck writes, "The authority of the Father, the love of the mother, and the obedience of the child form in their unity the threefold cord that binds together and sustains all relationships within human society."[42]

In the third place, Bavinck maintains that the unity and diversity of the Trinity should be reflected in the restoration of the image of God both ontologically and teleologically. Ontologically, on the one hand, for Bavinck, human beings were created as the image of the Triune God in order to manifest his archetypal attributes and perfections as well as the unity and diversity of the Trinity for the glory of God. In his *Our Reasonable Faith*, Bavinck maintains, "The unity and diversity in the works of God proceeds from and returns to the unity and diversity which exist in the Divine Being." [43] On the other hand, teleologically, human beings were intended to achieve the promise of eternal life in obedience to the law, from generation to generation, in space and time, for the glory of God. In other words, by imitating Christ based on the mystic union with Christ, by the obedience of God's law for a vision of the Christian life, by exercising the threefold offices of prophet, priest, and king, the humankind as the image of God, can reach the destiny to manifest God's attributes and virtues such as knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. In this way, God is glorified by humanity, who reflects all of his virtues and attributes of God, that is, the immanent Trinity. For Bavinck, the intratrinitarian relations provide the archetypal possibility for the creation of the image of God as God's works *ad extra*. Conversely, it is the image of God as God's works, who manifest the immanent relations of the three persons of Godhead, namely his attributes and virtues. In doing so, this study reveals that in Bavinck's thought, human beings as the image of the triune God reflect the unity and diversity within divine being and manifest His archetypal attributes and perfections in terms of both ontological and teleological senses.

In the light of these considerations, Bavinck advances a step further than Calvin in emphasizing that human beings are created to be the image of the triune God, reflecting divine attributes and perfections, particularly in relation to the unity and diversity in the Trinity, in an analogical sense.

6.2.6 The Corruption of the Image of God

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[42] Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, 8.

[43] Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, trans. Henry Zylstra (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1956), 144.

Concerning the effects of the fall on the image of God, both Bavinck and Calvin maintain that the image of God was totally corrupted by sin. It is undoubtedly true for both theologians that Scripture's description of the fallen image of God is not only the total depravity of humanity but also the universality of sin. Without question, this is the affirmation of the teaching of Scripture for Bavinck and Calvin.

On the one hand, Calvin's definition of the fallen image of God is that the divine image was ruined by sin.[44] However, as has previously been noted in chapter five, it should be noted that Calvin begins his explanation of the fallen image of God with the notions of effacement in his earlier writings. After describing the condition of God's image after the fall into sin as the obliteration of the image of God, Calvin seems to feel keenly the necessity of describing the devastating effects of the fall more precisely, against two extreme claims, namely, the radical reformers' rejection of original sin and Roman Catholic Church's emphasis on the *homo naturalis* and the *donum superadditum*. In his later writings, thus, Calvin elaborates on why sin did not utterly eradicate the image of God but ruined the image of God. When Calvin begins modifying his *Institutes* in the 1550s, it is no less dubious to say that hardly anything of significance is in essence changed in his argument of the fallen state of the image of God, as he concedes in his earlier writings. However, concerning the image of God after the fall into sin, Calvin explicitly adjusts his language from the eradication or effacement to the ruin of the image of God in his later writings. Thus, most prominent in Calvin's description is that the image of God is ruined by sin, but it is not totally eradicated, and it still remains God's image.

On the other hand, Bavinck stands in line with Calvin, mainly criticizing Pelagianism and the Roman Catholic Church, which misunderstand the sinful nature of fallen humanity. Indicating his full agreement with Calvin's position, Bavinck further develops the total depravity of humanity in terms of the content and its direction, namely not only the whole person but also the whole human race.[45] In comparison with Calvin, Bavinck articulates how the entire human faculties, as it were, spirit, soul, consciousness, feeling, will, and body, participate in the process of the sinful act in more detail. Besides, Bavinck makes a unique contribution to offers a detailed examination concerning the process of the act of sinning in human beings. Concerning the universality of sin, Bavinck and Calvin share that sin had entered the whole human race. And on top of that, Bavinck highlights that there exists not only individual sins and guilt but also universal, social sins and guilt since the whole of humanity had been born under the guilt and punishment of sin.

Notably, when examining the corrupted image of God in Bavinck's theology, one finds Bavinck responding to a concept of inequality in society. By putting Jean-Jacque Rousseau (1712-1778) on a par with John Calvin, to prevent any misunderstanding, Bavinck examines the total depravity of humanity and the universality of sin. Comparing Calvin's thoughts with Rousseau's thoughts on human nature after the fall, the root cause of all misery, in his "On Inequality," Bavinck accepts Calvin's position and affirms the universality of sin and the total

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[44] See section 5.1.2.
[45] See section 5.2.2.

depravity of humanity.[46] Bavinck's comparison here reaches its fundamental difference between Calvin and Rousseau. While Rousseau sought the transformation of social inequality in terms of "a breaking with all culture and a return to the instinctiveness of nature," according to Bavinck, Calvin approached the question of equality in a religious than political or social sense regarding human nature as totally corrupted by sin.[47] Rousseau was passionate about arguing that human nature was good and beautiful without any corruption before it was contaminated by the culture. By contrast, the cause of all human problems and misery given by Calvin, according to Bavinck, is "sin which was a personal act consisting of disobedience of God's law."[48]

Bavinck expresses his overall agreement with Calvin's thought on original sin and the corrupted image of God and carries this position a step further, in answering the questions about the fundamental cause of all the differences and inequalities. Concerning Calvin's thought on "the good pleasure of God, his sovereign and omnipotent free will" as "the ultimate and deepest cause," Bavinck offers a fundamentally similar perspective on God's preordaining as the most profound cause of all differences.[49] To be sure, Bavinck concurs with the thought of Calvin that God's almighty, holy and gracious will, therefore, may be absolutely sovereign and to be acknowledged as "an inexhaustible fountain of comfort, and the strong anchor of a firm and solid hope."[50] Accordingly, in the eyes of Bavinck, this will of God is nothing less than the grace that saves sinners and leads them from the darkness to the light and from death to eternal life. When the spotlight is shone on Calvin's teaching concerning antithesis of sin and grace, Bavinck emphasizes that it is a significant subject, particularly against its theological background of overcoming the dualism of Roman Catholic thought. Against Rome's dualism, Bavinck with Calvin consistently maintains the grace restoring nature motif that grace is not added to nature and does not abolish nature, but renews and restores it.[51] Indeed, based on Bavinck's polemic against dualism of nature and grace, grace was emphasized as the opposite of sin, not of nature, that "grace can repair all things; the blood of Christ purifies from all sin."[52]

In comparison to Calvin, Bavinck expands his discussion of the consequence of sin, placing the inequality in society within the problem of the unity and diversity, oneness and multiplicity, by questioning that "What accounts for such infinite variety and endless diversity in this one, vast universe? Might it be possible that this endless variety can be reduced to, or is derived from, one single source that might quiet our souls?"[53] Although there exists sin's devastating effect on human nature, human faculty, and the image of God,

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[46] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 147-63.
[47] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 155. Cf. Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 228.
[48] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 155.
[49] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 156; Id., "Calvin and Common Grace," 449, 464.
[50] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 157.
[51] Cf. Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck's Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi*, 163; Heideman, *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck*, 196, 200.
[52] Heideman, *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck*, 192.
[53] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 145.

God's common grace restrains the stain and abuse of sin. Bavinck's emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity is found in what he explains the differences and inequalities even in the corrupted image of God. According to Bavinck, indeed, there have been two main streams to reconcile the problem of unity and multiformity; the pantheistic or monistic systems and the pluralistic systems.[54] We have already seen that Bavinck finds the resolution in his own organic understanding of the unity and diversity of the triune God and its organic relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. Namely, for Bavinck, the differences and inequalities are not a consequence of sin but are based upon the doctrine of the triune God, namely, the will of the triune God.[55] It is no great surprise that as he elaborates further on the archetypal unity and diversity within the Godhead, he connects it to the image of God, even at the corrupted status. When the teachings of Calvin and Bavinck are placed side-by-side, one thing is certain: Bavinck pays more attention to the unity and diversity in the Godhead and in the image of God than Calvin, considering the inequality in human beings as a whole.

6.2.7 The Restoration of the Image of God

When compared to Calvin, for the most part, Bavinck holds a similar position concerning the restoration of the image of God. Both Calvin and Bavinck discuss the restoration of the image of God in relation to the content and the telos of the image of God. After the fall into sin, humanity was not only corrupted, but also they alienated themselves from God. For Calvin, the restoration of the image of God indicates mainly the regeneration of the soul since the soul is intimately related to the image of God.[56] When human beings are restored by grace in Christ, both Calvin and Bavinck maintain that the reconciliation between God and humanity is the prerequisite for entrance into the restored state of the image of God, since after the fall, human beings alienated themselves from God. In Calvin's theology of the restoration of the image of God, there is a striking connection between redemption and adoption. According to Calvin, the restoration of the image of God is understood as God's gracious adoption of sinners by the union with Christ. Then, according to Calvin, how can the image of God be restored?

The fallen image of God can be restored by only God's grace in Christ. Calvin consistently emphasizes the necessity of Christ the Mediator and the Incarnation of Christ for the restoration of the image of God. Apart from Christ's vicarious satisfaction for sin and sacrifice of perfect obedience, the reconciliation between God and humanity is impossible. Notably, Calvin highlights the mystic union with Christ that ensures the certainty of faith with respect to the reconciliation and communion between God and humanity. Namely, all benefits of salvation are closely related to the union with Christ. In this sense, for Calvin, union with Christ is the prerequisite for the restoration of the image of God. Against Osiander's divinization through the infusion of Christ's righteousness and Servetus'

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[54] Bavinck, "On Inequality," 146.

[55] Bavinck, "General Biblical Principles and the Relevance of Concrete Mosaic Law for the Social Question Today (1891),"445; Id., "On Inequality," 145; Id., *The Christian Family*, 5.

[56] See section 5.1.3.

inpouring of the deity of God in Christ rather than Christ's vicarious suffering, Calvin underlines that the union with Christ points to a personal union, participating in the human nature of Christ. Only by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ can the soul be restored. Ultimately, the restoration of the image of God is definitely bound up with restoring God's purpose of human creation in reflecting His glory. In Calvin's view, not only human nature but also human destiny is restored. Therefore, the restored image of God can achieve the original purpose of honoring God by manifesting the divine attributes.

When both Calvin and Bavinck deal with human destiny by considering the manifestation of the attributes and perfections of God, Bavinck distinctively makes a connection between the divine attributes of God and the exercise of the threefold offices of prophet, priest, and king, as the norm for the Christian life of sanctification. In this sense, this also means that Calvin and Bavinck differ in their views on the final human destiny, particularly in the emphasis that leads to it. By comparison to Calvin, while Bavinck shares the thoughts on the glorious human destiny is must splendidly described as the reflection of the divine attributes, he goes further than Calvin by treating these divine virtues as communicable attributes of God, with recourse to his foundational principle that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity, and by turning his attention to the exercise of the threefold office of prophet, king, priest, in relation to human destiny.

Calvin develops the doctrine of the threefold office of Christ the mediator. Bavinck also speaks of this threefold office of Christ the mediator, but he further he links this doctrine with human nature and human destiny. At this point, Bavinck's thought that "the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity" in connection to his doctrine of the image of God comes into focus.[57] Bavinck's unique contribution is his proposal that human beings have been created and recreated as the image of the triune God. Namely, the exercise of the threefold office, grounded in the union with the person and the work of Christ, provides the foundation for the understanding of the eschatological human destiny, that is, how humankind can manifest God's attributes and virtues, such as knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. For Bavinck, it is the exercise of the threefold office that reflects the immanent Trinity.

By deploying analogical metaphor in human beings and the archetypal-ectypal distinction between God and creation, Bavinck relates the doctrine of the Trinity to the doctrine of the image of God. Humanity can manifest the attributes of the archetypal God analogically. Considered in this framework, with reference to humanity as the image of the triune God, Bavinck maintains the ultimate human destiny is indeed intimately related to the imitation of Christ, who is the true image of God.[58] By attending to his doctrine of the mystic union with Christ, Bavinck emphasizes that the concept of the imitation of Christ provides ample room for human beings to glorify God. By grounding his concept of analogy in the triune God *ad intra* and His works *ad extra*, that is, based on his conviction that the immanent Trinity is mirrored in the economic Trinity, Bavinck elaborates that analogically human beings can manifest divine attributes such as knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, by exercising the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.

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[57] See section 5.2.1.5.
[58] See section 5.2.3.

In Bavinck's theology, there is the infinite ontological gulf between God and the creature. Namely, that distance between God and cosmos gulf between the infinite and the finite, between being and becoming. However, it is important to remember that for Bavinck, the creation of human beings and the incarnation of Jesus Christ is significant exceptions where being and becoming meets. In his discussion of the destiny of humanity, Bavinck actually considers the human destiny not only in a vertical or ontological sense and but also a horizontal or historical sense in this regard as follows: "It proceeds from creation through redemption to sanctification and glorification. The end returns to the beginning and yet is at the same time the apex which is exalted high above the point of origin. The deeds of God form a circle which strives upward like a spiral; they represent a harmony of the horizontal and the vertical line; they move forward and upward at the same time."[59]

As already noted above, firstly, Bavinck insists that the triune God is archetypal for unity and diversity in all creatures ontologically. There exists a unity in diversity in all created things as a faint analogy of God. Among all creation, a human being is the most clearly evident display of the vestiges of the Trinity and particularly profound analogy of God, since human beings are the image of God. Humanity bears the hallmarks of the creatures, such as mutability. However, as the image of God, human beings can manifest God's attributes and perfections such as immutability, yet analogically. Besides, as one complete organism, humanity as a whole can be a more fully finished image of God, as "the most telling and striking likeness of God."[60] As Eglinton brilliantly penetrates Bavinck's thoughts that "As a race, humans transcend the moment. Individuals come and go but the race continues. Collectively, humanity assigns meaning to the present in relation to an understood past and a hoped-for future," in Bavinck's eyes, a human being not only transcends the ontological limitation of humanity but also mirrors God's attributes and perfection in an analogical sense.[61] The transcendence of human limitation out to be understood, bearing in mind that Bavinck never intended the divinization of humanity. The redemptive grace restores the nature of humanity. It does not elevate human nature above or divinize human nature in an ontological sense. Bavinck clearly writes, "The human is not the divine self but is nevertheless a finite creaturely impression of the divine." Moreover, he continues that "All that is in God - his spiritual essence, his virtues and perfections, his immanent self-distinction, his self-communication and self-revelation in creation - finds its admittedly finite and limited analogy and likeness in humanity."[62] When all creatures are "embodiments of divine thoughts," Bavinck does draw attention to the image of God as "a micro-divine-being (*mikrotheos*)" as well as "a recapitulation of the whole of nature."[63]

For Bavinck, the mystic union with Christ makes possible the exercise of the threefold office prophet, priest, and king. Via the union with the person and work of Christ, human beings as the restored image of God can manifest knowledge in mind, righteousness in the will, holiness in the heart. Hence, the mystic union with Christ provides a foundational

[59] Bavinck, *Our reasonable Faith*, 144.
[60] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 577.
[61] Eglinton, "To Be or to Become - That Is the Question," 115.
[62] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 561.
[63] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2: 561.

ground of humanity's destiny as the restored image of God that ultimately serves to glorify God. Christ stands as the organic center and meeting place of the divine and human nature. On this basis, Bavinck points out that the imitation of Christ is the heart of Christian life as the restored image of God. The imitation of Christ takes place in the realms of the ethical with the manifestation of divine attributes and divine virtues. From the beginning of creation and continuing after the restoration, human destiny and its ultimate goal is to glorify God by manifesting and conforming to God's attributes. For Bavinck, the doctrine of the Trinity provides a foundational account of the reality that ultimately the immanent Trinity as God's being is mirrored in the economic Trinity, particularly in the creation and re-creation of humanity, via the exercise of the threefold office, manifesting God's attributes and virtues for God's glory. In other words, based on the union with the person and work of Christ, through the imitation of Christ, participating in the threefold office of Christ, human beings glorify God in the manifestation of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

In sum, considering that God's attributes coincide with God's being, Bavinck says, God's attributes are manifested in God's works. In other words, God's works *ad intra* are mirrored in God's works *ad extra*. For from God's works *ad intra*, and through God's works *ad extra*, and to God's being are human beings. Bavinck's thoughts with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity and the image of God can be captured and expressed with these verses: "To God himself be the glory from eternity to eternity (Rom. 11:36)," and "To God be glory in humanity as the restored image of the triune God, united with Christ, throughout all generations, forever and ever (Eph. 4:21)."

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This study has sought to explore the similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin concerning the two selected doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God. On the basis of the findings of the analysis in the previous chapters, the central question of the similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God was answered. Indeed, there are pronounced differences in the way Bavinck and Calvin approach the doctrine of the Trinity and apply it to the doctrine of the image of God. Before embarking on a comparative study of Bavinck and Calvin, this study attempted to answer the questions concerning Bavinck's theological identity. Did Bavinck's theological identity change from Reformed theologian to modern theologian? Was Bavinck a faithful Reformed theologian? Was he a modern theologian? Or can we consider him as both?

Concerning Bavinck's theological position, the examination of the two Bavincks hypothesis and the recent criticisms by Bavinck scholars directly demonstrates that Bavinck's theological identity is in doubt a Reformed theologian. Throughout his life, Bavinck passionately defended and promoted Reformed theology. Given his life-long labors involved in answering the challenges of atheism and evolutionism, a monistic account of reality, mechanical determinism, deistic and pantheistic worldviews, agnosticism, and anti-revelation tendencies with reference to the stress on the autonomy of human reason and the rise of the historical-critical approach, it must be remembered that Bavinck bravely fought with no other weapon than Reformed theology.

Particularly in opposition to the two Bavincks hypothesis, as has been suggested in chapter two, when one looks at Bavinck's theology it is important to bear in mind the various aspects of his thought and career provided by Bavinck scholars; (1) the inherent problems of the hypothesis, (2) the synthetic nature of his theology, (3) the vision of catholicity, (4) the coherent and balanced thought, (5) the devotion to ethics at the Kampen theological school, (6) the use of the organic motif, and (7) his thoroughgoing trinitarian theology. These observations concern Bavinck's theological identity in chapter two denote that Bavinck is a faithful successor, dedicated to inheriting and developing theology in his own Reformed orthodox tradition.

However, Bavinck's theology is not a mere repristination of Reformed scholastic tradition in content and method. Bavinck's theology is birthed in his Reformed orthodox, but simultaneously we ought to remember that he is a child of his own time. Bavinck sought an adequate answer under the conditions of his Reformed orthodox tradition. In this sense, Bavinck's theology ought to be understood as an effort to draw on the classical Reformed thoughts for the sake of establishing a theological perspective suitable both to the altered theological context and to the needs of the engagement with modern theology. One must carefully examine Bavinck's theology and life through the lens of the development of his own neo-Calvinism. Throughout his lifetime, Bavinck consistently attempted to restore the whole domain of human existence in the context of modern European culture, according to his Calvinistic views on Christianity with a catholic Christian faith. Bavinck was convinced that Christianity and modern culture are inseparable. To respond to the challenges, Bavinck

made a great effort to provide public apologetics for Christianity carefully. As an orthodox Calvinist participant, Bavinck emphasized the importance of Christianity in modern culture and tried to offer the foundation for his later defense of the catholicity of Christianity as a modern theologian. However, it is undeniable that Bavinck was a modern man and his critical adoption of the modern philosophical-theological grammars is found in his works. Namely, Bavinck sought to appropriate modernity within the Reformed orthodox tradition and advocate the orthodoxy of neo-Calvinism as a modern orthodox theologian. Therefore, rather than interpreting Bavinck's theological identity as two Bavincks, it is fair to conclude that Bavinck was an orthodox Calvinist and simultaneously a modern European man of science.

What is more, this study sought to articulate Bavinck's Calvin. By grounding Bavinck's reading of Calvin's theology and life, this study raised the pointed question: How does Bavinck offer an assessment of Calvin and what place does Calvin's theology and life have in Bavinck's theology?

Indeed, for Bavinck Calvin's theology was of great significance. Bavinck's interpretation of Calvin's theology and life were founded on his conviction that the Calvinistic Reformation stands out in terms of the standpoint of the Christian principles and its noble motives. On the one hand, like Kuyper, Bavinck draws Christian principles from Calvin's theological insights and highlights its distinctive characteristic as universal and catholic. Bavinck esteemed Calvin's theology as the powerful, pure, and consistent theological view of the world and humanity among the Reformers. Specifically, Bavinck concurred with Calvin's stress upon the sovereignty of God. For Bavinck, Calvin's theology grounded in divine sovereignty is a viable, profound theological resource to provide the worldview of Christianity in the past, the present, and the future. On this basis, it evidently serves as a basic theological rationale for Bavinck's vision as a neo-Calvinist.

On the other hand, the life of Calvin and its noble character deserve special attention, for in Bavinck's assessment of Calvin it is singled out as an application of Christian principles, which is more in line with the so-called second generation of neo-Calvinists after the early 1900's. In comparison with Kuyper's evaluation of Calvin, Bavinck took a different stand on Calvin. As has already been described, one can discern Calvin's role and place in Bavinck's theology somewhere around the first and second-generation of neo-Calvinism. Added to this, it should not be overlooked that Bavinck presented Calvin's personal life as a positive role model and as an exemplary Christian life with his emphasis on the certainty of faith and the obedience of God's will in Calvin's life.

Bavinck's own assessment of Calvin's theology and life leads directly to the central question of this study concerning his theological relationship with Calvin. At this point one can raise the question this way: Was Bavinck a simple follower of Calvin's theology? What do the similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin mean, and how should we evaluate the difference between Bavinck and Calvin?

In seeking a detailed account of Bavinck's theological relationship with Calvin, this study endeavored to analyze the two selected theological themes, namely the doctrines of the Trinity and the image of God. When pulling together the discoveries in the fourth and fifth chapters, these doctrines are the ideal places to analyze the similarities and differences between Bavinck and Calvin and provide the foundational rationale for the assessment of

their theological relationship. The analysis of the similarity and difference between them implies the various aspects of their theological relationship as follows.

Bavinck formulated his theology in line with Calvin's theology inherited from the Reformed tradition, but his theology is more trinitarian than that of Calvin. Granted, as is generally acknowledged, Calvin's theology has a trinitarian character, but this study confirms that it is a hallmark of Bavinck's theology. Bavinck always sought the ontological and epistemological examinations from the doctrine of the Trinity. For him, the doctrine of Trinity was a spring of water, like an ever-flowing stream. In this regard, while one cannot assume the solidification of Calvin's theology around central dogma and view his theology as resting on the doctrine of the Trinity, it is no exaggeration for say that Bavinck considered that the doctrine of the Trinity is the center of all Christian theology and life. As was demonstrated in chapter four, Bavinck found in the doctrine of the Trinity the antidote against various challenges of his own time. Hence, it is paramount for Bavinck to put the doctrine of the Trinity in a proper place in his entire theology. The doctrine of the Trinity serves a significant role in establishing Bavinck's entire theology, particularly with his emphasis on the immanent Trinity and its relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. On this basis, arguably, Bavinck offered the distinctive trinitarian account of humanity as the image of the triune God as well as reality with its cultural and ethical implications as a neo-Calvinist. Accordingly, the doctrine of the Trinity is the cornerstone, keystone, and capstone in Bavinck's thought.

Moreover, the different appreciation of the doctrine of the Trinity between Bavinck and Calvin leads to the different exegeses and articulation of their theology as a whole. By far the larger part of the doctrine of the Trinity of Calvin's theology is exegetical, rather, Bavinck brought with the doctrine with a significant elaboration of doctrinal points by deploying of the analogical metaphors and the archetypal-ectypal distinction. In this regard, Bavinck's approach to the doctrine of the Trinity is highly distinctive with its extensive and cogent speculation. It is evident, for instance, that Bavinck followed Calvin in placing a great deal of emphasis on the sovereignty of God. While Bavinck's view of God's sovereignty still agrees Calvin's underlying idea, based on rigorous exegetical consideration of the text of Scripture, Bavinck further developed divine sovereignty in a trinitarian sense. Namely, for Bavinck, the sovereignty of God is explained this way: the unity in the *ad intra* works of the three persons of the Godhead provides the archetypal rationale and foundation for God's creation and government *ad extra*. In this regard, when expounding the verse "For from him and through him and to him are all things" (Romans 11:36), Calvin affirms the divine origin of humanity (*ex nihilo*), God's sovereignty, and human destiny to the glory of God. This is clearly in line with Bavinck's theology. In addition to this, he traces the origin of humanity deeper and shows the destiny of humanity much further in a trinitarian sense. Within the framework of Bavinck's trinitarian thought, this verse is explained with reference to humanity as follows: As an analogical image of the triune God, human beings glorify God, manifesting the triune God's infinite essence, via the finite manifestation of God's attributes and virtues.

Given Bavinck's adherence to the Reformed tradition and his impassioned defense of Christian theology, he fleshed out a Reformed theology. Among the Reformers, Bavinck regarded Calvin's theology as the first and foremost theology. From a purely doctrinal

perspective, however, Bavinck is not merely a follower of Calvin's theology. Bavinck developed his own theology on the foundation of Calvin's thought, paying closer attention to the doctrine of the Trinity and its creative application to the doctrine of the image of God. For Bavinck, the knowledge of the triune God is intimately related to the knowledge of humanity as the image of the triune God. Bavinck's doctrine of the Trinity sets forth what the immanent Trinity is and how the economic Trinity operates for humanity. Besides, Bavinck's doctrine of the image of God sets forth what humanity as the image of the triune God is and how it glorifies God.

These observations lead this study to conclude that Bavinck leveraged Calvin's theology with his innovative trinitarian insights against his own era. Namely, Bavinck succeeded in Calvin's theology and respected his life as an exemplary form of the Christian life. While Bavinck, along with Calvin, was equipped to accept the challenge of how Christianity ought to be defined and how the relationship between Christianity and modernism should be understood, his own recourse to the doctrine of the Trinity and innovative application to the doctrine of the image of God was a distinctive mark of Bavinck's theology.

Furthermore, this study advances a step further with reference to the understanding of the triune God and its implication for anthropology, in order to suggest a viable way to have the best of Bavinck's and Calvin's theology. This study shall propose some reflections on how Calvin's anti-speculative approach to the doctrine of the Trinity and Bavinck's distinctive trinitarian theology can be understood as a viable theological interpretation of God's being *ad intra* and His work *ad extra* and its application to humanity as the image of the triune God.

On the one hand, Calvin's steadfast anti-speculative tenor of the doctrine of the Trinity should be properly understood and be highlighted. For Calvin, the reading and exposition of Scripture is the fundamental foundation of all Christian doctrine. Calvin emphasized the divine origin of Scripture in the instruction of the Spirit. As God's word, Scripture is self-authenticating and sealed by the Spirit. Because of his conviction of Scripture as revealing God's Word, with respect to the soteriological focus, Calvin highlighted the triune God's *ad extra* work of redemption and the knowledge of God's essence via faith in Christ. Of course, Calvin offered a little speculative distinction between God *in se* and God *quoad nos*. However, for Calvin, since the divine essence itself has not been revealed in and through Scripture and could not be comprehensible for human beings ontologically, Calvin did not pay attention to the question of the essence of God is and of the relation between God *in se* and God *quoad nos*. Rather, Calvin underlines God's nature as the accommodated form of God's essence according to the principle of *sola scriptura*. Calvin's thought that Scripture, as God's Word, speaks to the needs of His people, clearly provides a foundation for the formulation of Christian doctrine. Therefore, Calvin's anti-speculative approach to the doctrine of the Trinity leads to a practical doctrine relevant to the voice of God, offering an entrance to the true knowledge of God rather than a speculative one.

Moreover, Calvin's steadfast adherence to the *sola scriptura* principle offers a fundamental rationale as well as a fresh perspective on systematic or dogmatic theological issues. Calvin mainly concentrated on clarifying the exegetical foundation, through the *dicta probantia* method for the doctrine of the Trinity, especially in relation to direct declarations of

Scripture. When necessary, Calvin discarded the skewed or allegorical exegesis of Scripture and offered alternative exegesis of the Trinity with his preference for historical exegesis. On this basis, Calvin passionately promoted the deity of the Son and the Spirit, particularly with his emphasis on the aseity of the Son. For Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity was much more than a speculative abstract doctrine. Instead, it was an essential foundation for Calvin's soteriological focus. Thus, Calvin paid more attention to the economic Trinity, fundamentally from the perspectives of *sola scriptura* with reference to *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, and *sola Christus*. Underlining the saving knowledge of the Trinity, Calvin tried to demonstrate the consubstantiality of the three persons of the Trinity, adducing a battery of Scriptural proofs that illustrate and augment his arguments. With special reference to the divinity of Christ, Calvin offered divine names given to Christ, notably Elohim and Jehovah, various attributes assigned to Christ, and the divine work performed by Christ. For Calvin, the clarification of the exegesis of the text is intimately related to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Hence, Calvin's fidelity to Scripture as a theological method and his adherence to the principle of *sola scriptura* ought to be construed as imposing perspective on the doctrine of the Trinity in this way. By holding to the principle of *sola scriptura* and avoiding the speculative approach, along with Calvin, we can listen to and understand God's word from God Himself and open ourselves to being taught. Calvin consistently describes this position and attitude of Christians as the position of Child and pupil.[1] In this way, Scripture would play a formative role in establishing systematic theology as the final authority, the touchstone for any and all discussions of the doctrine.[2] It is important to keep in mind that humanity is placed in a position of reception to find the meaning of the text of Scripture and follow the hermeneutic of interpreting Scripture in and through Scripture. When clarifying obscure and uncertain Scriptural passages, a Christocentric focus would crystallize the meaning of the text of Scripture and contribute to a better understanding of the text. In this regard, Christ is crucial for Calvin's theological approach as it provides him with a bridge from God to humanity. Like Calvin, when affirming the authority of Scriptural truths, God Himself speaks to humanity through Scripture, just as the darkness of life will give away when the light of God's word penetrates the human mind by the illumination of the Spirit.

On the other hand, Bavinck's theology can offer a distinctive and significant contribution to the exegetical dimension of the doctrine of the Trinity as well as the doctrine itself, despite Calvin's anti-speculative theological method with his emphasis on the principle of *sola Scriptura* is an obvious and necessary condition for the doctrine of the Trinity. According to Bavinck, the purpose of theology is to explain Scripture's testimony about God, the world, and the status of human beings. The theologian's responsibility is to help those who already believe in understanding Scripture to seek coherent unity of thought. Bavinck's trinitarian epistemology centered on God the Father as the essential foundation (*principium essendi*), God the Son as the external cognitive foundation (*principium cognoscendi externum*), and God the Spirit as the internal principle of knowing (*principium cognoscendi internum*), provides a hermeneutical framework. Bavinck's thorough trinitarian theology also

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[1] Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology*, 166-73.
[2] Huijgen, "Alone Together," 83-99.

helps to sharpen theological discussions, presenting the hermeneutical perspective with regard to the immanent and economic dimensions of the Trinity. Bavinck's metaphysical presupposition concerning the ontological God's being *ad intra* and His *ad extra* works, and his epistemic *principia* as being rooted in the triune God, with the Reformed distinction between archetypal and ectypal and the use of analogical metaphor, can provide an essential role in understanding Scripture more thoroughly and adequately.

Hence, when Calvin's anti-speculative approach and his constant adherence to God's word, and Bavinck's treatment of the various theological aspects of the triune God meet each other, the similarities and differences in their theologies are at root complementary, each serving to discern a clear meaning of the text of Scripture with theological insight and supplement the other to enrich theological themes in the light of God's word. For Calvin, in order to support the doctrine of the Trinity, the center of gravity does not lie in the elaboration of the doctrine of the Trinity but the clarification of the historical exegesis of the text. From the principle of *sola Scriptura*, Calvin's method contributes to the support for the doctrine of the Trinity and assurance of salvation and a firm knowledge of the triune God to the believer, in accordance with the direct declarations of Scripture. Besides, this study notes the immanent Trinity as Bavinck's theological interest as well as the central point for examining the relationship between God and the world. Bavinck's emphasis on the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity not only provides the theological grounds for a trinitarian hermeneutic of Scripture but further leads to the knowledge of the triune God reflected in the world through reasonable inferences from biblical truth.

Finally, this study summarizes and concludes that one should notice further that there are several advantages to Bavinck's trinitarian view, compared to Calvin, in terms of exploring the implications for humanity as the image of the triune God. Bavinck's trinitarian account of the image of God deals with the origin, essence, and destiny of humanity profoundly. 1) Bavinck traced the origin of humanity more deeply than Calvin, starting from God's immanent trinitarian relationships. According to Bavinck, an infinite fullness of life as fecund productivity and an absolute divine communication among the three persons of the Godhead is the precondition for the creation of humanity. 2) Bavinck seeks the identity of humanity more richly than Calvin. Bavinck applies his doctrine of the Trinity to the understanding of human essence as the image of the triune God. In light of this, one finds Bavinck defines the whole human person as the image of the whole deity, declaring that a human body belongs integrally to the image of God with human faculties and human virtues. 3) Bavinck extends the image of God to every human being more widely than Calvin. With his emphasis on the implication of the unity and diversity of the Trinity for humanity, Bavinck maintains that the image of God is only fully unfolded in humanity as a whole. 4) Ultimately, Bavinck describes human destiny more fully than Calvin. A human being is created after the image of the triune God ontologically. His destiny, given its divine origin (*ex nihilo*) and divine essence as the image of the triune God, inherently manifests God's attributes and virtues for the glory of God. Hence, human destiny is further defined as the manifestation of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, by exercising the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, for God's glory. In the mind of Bavinck, from God's works *ad intra*, and through God's works *ad extra*, and to God's being are human beings truly human. Viewed in this light, this study

proposes that Bavinck's trinitarian theology deserves attention as a satisfactory account of applying the doctrine of the Trinity to the Christian life.

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