

## Hope for the Modern Self: On Bavinck's "Christian Science"

By Cory C. Brock

In 1904, and in the same year as *Christian Worldview*,<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck published a book titled *Christelijke wetenschap* (Christian Science).<sup>2</sup> He had begun teaching at the Vrije Universiteit (Kuyper's Free University), a distinctly Reformed Christian university in Amsterdam, in 1902. He opens the book both from the standpoint of his own experience but also by marking a national and European trend, a movement of late as he put it, to "build science ... on the foundation of the Christian faith."<sup>3</sup> According to Bavinck, due to an ever-increasing dissatisfaction with the state of science in the universities, Christians across the continent had taken up the battle against "unbelieving science" (CS, p. 5). For Bavinck, this endeavor was only a move in a broader and essential Christian movement, listed alongside other critical moments like the church secession of 1834, the *Réveil*, and the more recent fight for the Christian schools. He opines that "however weak it may be, there is a revival of Christian science to behold that fills the heart with hope for the future" (CS, p. 6).

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1. Herman Bavinck, *Christelijke wereldbeschouwing: rede bij de overdracht van het Rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam op 20 October 1904* (Kampen: J.H. Bos, 1904). See H. Bavinck, *Christian Worldview*, trans. Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, James Eglinton, Cory C. Brock (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019). Hereafter *CW*.

2. Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, James Eglinton, and I, Cory Brock, are translating Bavinck's Dutch text *Christelijke Wetenschap* into English in preparation for its forthcoming publication with Crossway Publishing under the title *Christian Scholarship*, expected in 2023.

3. H. Bavinck, *Christelijke Wetenschap* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1904), p. 5. Hereafter CS.

4. For an explanation of these movements, see James Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Baker Academic, 2020).

In anticipation for the English edition of this text, this essay introduces this forthcoming translation in brief by asking and addressing several questions that naturally arise, not only from the reader's perspective, but in the very logic of Bavinck's own argument. First, what is the content and "hope" for the movement to which Bavinck refers at the beginning of this work (and of which the establishment of Christian science was only a part)? And so, what role does Christian science play in this movement? Naturally, what is Christian science? Can there be such a thing? We shall answer these questions under the banners of (1) the hope of Christian science; (2) the definition of Christian science; (3) and the necessity of Christian science.

### 1. THE HOPE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

The movement that Bavinck labels "Christian science" was an alternative to positivism and the scientism it had produced in the nineteenth-century for the hope of an organic renewal of knowledge in the twentieth. Christian science, for Bavinck, was an act of judgment against modernist empiricism "in the name of religion, for the sake of Christian truth, in order to bridge the chasm between school and life, in defense of the confession of the church" (CS, p. 5). If the *Réveil* was an evangelistic movement in the name of Christ that steered the Netherlands toward the necessity of experiential religion in the face of nationalistic religion, and if the Secession was a confessional, ecclesial movement to free the church from the overreach of the State, and if the Anti-revolutionary party was a political movement that championed pre-modern ideals against the tenets of Revolution,<sup>4</sup> then Christian science was a truth movement for the sake of empirical and metaphysical union in the face of radical empiricism. And, accordingly, in Bavinck's new institution, "the Free University of Amsterdam maintained itself for the purpose of the cultivation of science and the

education for a variety of relations in life in accordance with Reformed principles" (CS, p. 6).

Bavinck notes that this was in his day a European-wide movement, not just Dutch. It was not only Reformed either. Rome, under Leo XIII, had established all manner of scientific investigations under the principles of "Thomas," he remarks, in "logic and psychology, metaphysics and theology, history and literature, jurisprudence and sociology, [and these] are practiced in such a way by them that the opponent must reckon with their work" (CS, p. 7). Such a widespread revival, he thinks, fills the heart with hope.

Before defining Christian science more precisely, we must situate this movement more resolutely in the "hope" to which Bavinck referred. What is its hope (a hope which Bavinck saw as the unified goal of ecclesial, political, and scientific reform)? He hints at such in several remarks: "After the thirst for facts is initially quenched, comes the hunger after the knowledge of the origin and goal, the cause and essence of the things above" (CS, pp. 7–8). He notes that the twentieth-century person is returning to the child-like longing for things unseen, life behind the curtain, not with respect to the direction of childish immaturity, but proper wonder. One might mark the maturation timeline of the modern person in the nineteenth-century as follows: "Just as, according to sociological law, a human being is a theologian in infancy and a metaphysician in youth, and then a physicist in adulthood, so humanity has passed through these three periods in science" (CS, p. 23). But now she returns, climbing back up the ladder to the things above, which is, for Bavinck, a necessary ascent because the investigatory instinct of humanity toward facts never remains without the desire for unification by way of causation and value.

Bavinck had spelled out his hope in the same year he wrote this text, *Christian science* (CS), in his *Christian Worldview* (CW), where he first dismantles the very same problem of positivism, noting how it undermines the instinctive life of the human consciousness that not only seeks metaphysical answers, but is basically religious. And in CS, he argues that "those who praise contemporary science cannot close their eyes to the religious character of this movement" (CS, p. 5) (the movement of Christian science). Believers, Bavinck remarks, were jolted awake from their slumbers at the end of the previous century by the extent of the power of positivism, and once again, are taking their place in that which was formerly neglected. And why so? Supremely, Bavinck's concern, and his "hope," is that "the banner of the Gospel must be displayed too in the

world of science" (CS, p. 6) like had been the hope in the Secession and the political work of the free-church movements up to that point. But, if one set aside for a moment, the end of the Gospel itself, CW and CS both note the thirst of human nature for holism as a response to the fractured self, manufactured by empiricism. Again, there is a hunger after knowledge of the origin and goal, after the essence of things. The child-like desire for unity of the self in a unified existence proves inescapable and even necessary.

If Kant had undermined the confidence of the nineteenth-century mind in the existence and knowledge of God, immortality, and the soul while replacing knowledge of such with an existential label of necessary illusion, then "modern culture" and its science, wielded by minds like Renan and Darwin, abolished even the need for the illusion in the hopes of progressivism, whatever that might mean for the modern individual. In CW, Bavinck argues that while scientific materialism had a moment of dominance, the youth of Zarathustra had failed in that religion had not died and the transvaluation of values was seemingly ignored by the populace. Yet, the nineteenth-century bred confusion: "Before all else, what strikes us in the modern age is the internal discord that consumes the self" (CW, 24). He spoke of the denial, or more accurately, the suppression of the internal religious consciousness, as a sickness of soul, producing a "disharmony in between our thinking and feeling, between our willing and acting . . . between science and life" (CW, 22). Wherein "worldview" is an inductive enterprise that describes the totality of the endeavor of the human consciousness to put philosophy and science within the boundaries of a map outlined by religion (with particular focus on epistemology and ethics), *Christian Science* focuses on the relation between religion and the empirical sciences in particular, between facts and metaphysics, and issues a call for their partnership.

The most obvious hope of "Christian science" then is the existential satisfaction brought about in the unity of metaphysics and observed facts. For "the metaphysical need lies too deep in human nature, than that it could become silenced in the long run" (CS, p. 8). In the early twentieth-century, the resurgence to old and new religions was proof enough of this fact. Bavinck notes the rise in former materialists as converts to spiritism, theosophy, Buddhism, and Islam. But above all, "humanity is tired of doubt and uncertainty" and thus the return to positive Christianity is a return to dogmatics and church, history and liturgy. Christian science has arisen of late, Bavinck argues, so that the mind and heart may live together in peace, so that a foundation of truth may

be established, and so places like the university can be whole once again. He suggests that in the emergence of the Christian religion and its love for science “Christianity was the true philosophy, and the Christian was the real philosopher, who recognized the truth, who knew who God was, and who now, equipped with this knowledge, also had a different and better insight into the essence of the world, of nature and history” (CS, p. 12).

## 2. THE DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Several problems arise at the moment one considers the possibility of Christian science. First, the ambiguity of the genitive in the conceptual relation between “Christian” and “science” cries out for explanation. Is Christian science the science of Christianity as one might understand the social sciences, for example, perhaps as a discipline title within the broad territory of religious studies? Or, rather, is it speaking of when scientific determination of any sort is disciplined by Christian religion in some manner? For Bavinck, the former is no unworthy endeavor but occupied by other names such as the history of Christianity. The latter is undoubtedly included in his concept of Christian science, a reference to the boundary markers Christianity draws for development of a worldview, disallowing scientific conclusion to transgress the borders. And yet, for Bavinck there is more to the idea. Christian science is a mode of operation, a habitus, which also attempts to capture how a Christian ought to be scientific. To understand his reasoning, one must first say a little more about the problem he addresses and then define science itself.

Mention has already been made of the problem: positivism. The philosophies of Victor Cousin, August Comte, and John Stuart Mill, for example, “put both feet on the empirical standpoint” where “all over the world, this conception of science was gradually being proclaimed as the only true one” (CS, pp. 22–23). Bavinck regards the most common characteristic of positivism and as the “demand for absolute presuppositionlessness” (CS, p. 23). Humanity has now matured, so the narrative goes, into the phase of science where metaphysical “knowledge” is out of the question. The realm of knowledge cannot ascend beyond the empirical investigations using the inductive approach of the scientific method. This means that God, the soul, immortality, being, ethics, and causation are all expressions of subjectivity.

Bavinck makes use of the concept science, *wetenschap*, in a similar way that the term *Wissenschaft* operates in premodern German. The old way of science is nearly the opposite of positivism, as captured in the concept

of *Wissenschaft*: “research into the being and causes of things” where one seeks to understand the relationships among all creatures and their associated final causes (CS, p. 23). This science requires ascending into the invisible domain and that means the activity of science must include metaphysical claims. The older concept of science stands opposed to positivism as does the classical relation between faith and science: So Bavinck: “Believing and unbelieving, Christian and positivistic views of science stand diametrically opposed to each other. Compromise here is not possible, but [there is] a duty to make a definite choice” (CS, p. 9). Under the reign of Comte, religion is nothing more than a private matter. But what is gained, so they say, is “certainty.” If science only occupies itself with the empirical, the argument goes, it can be certain of its determinations and “predict the future from the present with indubitable certainty” (CS, p. 24). Now, in the age of positivism, the guild will replace both State and religion with “science.”

Therefore, Bavinck’s main criticism of positivism, which is a theory of science that disregards the universal reality of faith-knowledge in all acts of knowing, is its overestimation of the possibility of presuppositionlessness. There is no regard to the “epistemology to which they are committed.” It is enough, Bavinck notes, for the modern scientist to fight against prejudices in the search for truth, which allows one to go wherever the research takes them. But prejudice and presupposition are distinct. Even prejudice is not so easy to shake because the human mind is no “purely logical machine and can never escape the influence of its affective and volitional life” (CS, p. 26). And yet distinct from this human problem, presuppositions are more like assumptions “which first make the study possible” (CS, p. 26). While one might shake off prejudices, they cannot do so with prior judgments. To suppose so is an alternative type of dogmatism to religious dogmatism, one of naïveté. We shall return to this critique in the next section, but all in all, in a second critique that Bavinck briefly offers, one can know the truth of positivism by its fruit: it has produced the same thought-world as before, where “men of science are constantly mistaken, always in conflict with one another, and constantly revising the results of their research” (CS, p. 27).

Third, Bavinck also notes the importance of understanding that positivist definitions of science are just one option among many, which is to say that one needs a capacious acknowledgement of the differences of opinion on display, a charitable disposition and understanding that positivism is unwilling to accept thereby creating its intolerant and dogmatist approach (which is the very

critique positivism often shouts at religion). This standpoint breeds the confusing militancy of positivism, where positivism officially leaves religion to be a mere subjective determination and in theory cares not for what a person believes in their own personal life but in practice produces a rabid distaste and war-like stance against religion. Again, "it is precisely the so-called 'presuppositionless' science, which bans any other view, claims for itself sole dominion and places state power and state funds in its service" (CS, p. 34). Yet, this definition of presuppositionless science is not derived from science, but philosophy. It is entirely unaware of itself.

Bavinck offers then an alternative presentation of science to that of positivism, that neither rejects the centrality of the empirical, nor makes little of the metaphysical assumptions with which all humans proceed into research. And yet, this for Bavinck ought also be an act of *Christian science*. What does the adjective Christian mean for the scientific pursuit? First, let us consider the basics of science, its essence and goal. Science begins with "normal empirical knowing" (CS, p. 44). The foundation upon which all science stands is the assumption of the unity of subject and object in normal empirical knowing (which positivism fails to reckon with). And within normal knowing, there are degrees of certainty. While we may refer to many different propositions as objects of knowledge, we also know the implicit differences in knowing, believing, and assuming, all of which for Bavinck are aspects of knowledge. For example, "believing stands beneath knowing [*weten*] not in subjective assurance, but in objective obviousness" (CS, p. 45). Believing is so important, Bavinck argues, at least because most of what we know in life is not the product of objective obviousness. Rather, we receive much of our "knowledge" by way of trusted authority. The next move in the development of science, is that when human beings arrive at a place where the daily needs are met, they desire to move beyond normal empirical knowing, into methodological knowing—a product of careful, controlled, systematic research and reflection on what is. But, again, humans are not satisfied with a systematic presentation of what is (only according to the senses) either. Such endeavors do require seeking out causes and natures, but the human also wants to know "why." Perhaps certain investigations produce some immediate, obvious answers to the questions like "for what purpose" but empirical knowing is inadequate to tie together the truth into the realm of the ideal, to posit final causes.

For this reason, science and philosophy are bound together as "physics" and "meta-physics." From such desire and necessity, institutions arise like the University.

Bavinck explains this relation in this lengthy, yet helpful, quote:

What now belongs under the rubric of scientific research, and as such, that has a right to the name "science", is not decided by us *a priori*, but is rather provided in the passage of history [*historie*] and produced by its events [*geschiedenis*]. Slowly, investigation, the remit of science, the extent of the university, stretches out. Scientific thinking began in Greece with the question of the final ground of things, and from there, all the problems that present themselves to the human mind [*geest*] were developed in good order. The universities were not set up artificially in the middle ages, according to a previously established schema, but were rather first planted as a small spring, from which they grew like a living organism. In the present day, the technical subjects gradually elevate themselves to the highest point of the university's sciences, and these are constantly subject to a powerful evolution. In one word, there has been a development of science in the events of history [*geschiedenis*] that does not happen outside of human thinking and willing, but that also cannot be explained from these, and that points back to a driving idea, to an organized thought (CS, p. 48).

There is a difference then in normal knowing and scientific knowing but they exist in the order of a continuum: "empirical knowing [*weten*] knows [*kent*] the particular, independent phenomena, but scientific knowing [*weten*] seeks the universal, the law, that masters them all, the idea that animates them all" (CS, p. 49). And if science seeks the universal, the idea, then it is quite possible to speak of "Christian science." What is Bavinck trying to accomplish by the use of this adjective? As he puts it, "the end goal of science can be no other than the knowledge [*kennis*] of the truth, of the full, pure truth" (CS, p. 58).

If one has found the full, pure truth by faith, then it is impossible and even wrong, he supposes, for this ideal to be disallowed in the laboratory. Further, in the unity of self-consciousness, the agreement and organism that is soul and body together, in which intellect, will, and feeling co-operate as the one person, the needs of the heart cannot be arbitrability separated from the insights of the intellect. For if every person, in developing a world-and-life-view takes on philosophical and religious boundary-identifying ideas which become presuppositions, then it is not just or possible to shed such metaphysical truth-claims in the act of inductive investigation. So then, if one is a Christian and scientist,

they must allow science the freedom it needs to discover without neglecting the authority of God's speech in God's world. This is the case "because all science is the translation of the thoughts that God has laid down in his works" (CS, p. 58). While, "pseudoscience can lead away from Him, true science leads back to Him. In Him alone, who is the truth itself, do we find rest, as much for our understanding [*verstand*] as for our heart" (CS, p. 58). There are a number of ways of speaking about Christian science that follow.

First, Bavinck states that "science is determined by the Gospel through the reality of an eternal, incorruptible truth" (CS, p. 96). Truth is not a mere subjective idea but objective in God. Christianity supports science by rejecting skepticism in this regard. Further, it provides the presuppositions of both religion and science, namely, the creation of the world by the Godhead. Second, Christian science then is a habitus of knowing that proceeds from the faith-knowledge of special revelation. It is science that "accepts special revelation: "if God has communicated knowledge of himself in a special way, it goes without saying that science must reckon with it, and that failing to do so is guilty of disobedience and error" (CS, p. 28). The acceptance of which is not a question of science but religion, he argues. That means that Christian science proceeds on the basis of a world-and-life-view whose boundaries are drawn by religion. Science then, for Bavinck, is either biased against God or for God, depending on its stance toward religion. And for one who believes in the revelation of God and in the creation by God's hand, it would be sinful to remove such faith from the judgments of scientific determination.

Third, science informed by Christianity understands that "religion and science ... purity of heart and clarity of head ... immoral life and ungodly doctrine are indubitably connected to one another" (CS, p. 31). The connection between religion and science is very close. For this reason, Christianity preserves both the religious and scientific personality of humanity and unifies the act of knowing. Fourth, Christianity saves the sciences from positivism. It preserves the scientific nature of "literature, history, law, religion, and morality, which together form the highest goods of humanity" (CS, p. 102). Therein, the logic of the university is also preserved as a domain of organic knowledge.

Fifth, Christian science has the power to make explicit not only the fact that science proceeds on metaphysical assumptions but to do so with precise claims about the metaphysics itself: "recall but once that all science, also that of nature, rests upon metaphysical

presuppositions, and proceeds from general, self-establishing truths ... the reliability of the senses, the objective existence of the world, the truth of the laws of thinking, and the logical, ideal content of perceptible phenomena" (CS, p. 60). Bavinck, like elsewhere, explains that for the Christian, the Logos is the ground of certainty in any act of scientific research. Sixth, "Christian science" allows one to move beyond description in the humanities, to treat them as science, with objects to know, and to be prescriptive: "Everyone expects of these sciences that they will say what should count as religion, ethics, law, for every person" (CS, pp. 67–8). Positivism is a destructive force for ethics as science, for example, necessarily reducing it to all manner of subjective constructs or a mere history without precept.

Finally, Christian science includes all the sciences, and treats theology in particular as science. "Christianity is science" (CS, p. 98), as he puts it. In a field where science is defined exclusively by the empirical method, dogmatics is disallowed its scientific character. Yet, "a God who in no sense can be known is the same as a God who does not exist" (CS, p. 77). If God cannot be known, then God cannot be served. Bavinck contends that those who have embraced the modernist definition of science and treat religion and theology as a merely historical or literary subject often assume that which they are disallowed to know, the existence of God. Further, like in his criticisms of positivism above, it is foolish for the modern scientist to suppose that theologians are dogmatic and proceed on the grounds of faith while science is scientific and proceeds on the ground of evidence. Both, rather, are dogmatic, and proceed from convictions. Bavinck makes an existential appeal on this front, that the religious man who says "who have I in heaven but you" cannot say "I will give up faith because science declares God unknowable." "None who value religion, and find their highest blessedness in fellowship with God can be neutral and objective regarding all that science is pleased to declare" (CS, p. 79). Rather, he writes, "in response to the science that is fashionable today, I call upon the science that has endured through the ages" (CS, p. 79). For Bavinck then, Christian science assumes that the religious person who believes in the knowability of God must strive to unify head and heart, "faith and science."

It is important here too to distinguish the possibility of Christian science from religious science. Christianity does not view religions as mere gradations of the same revelation, but claims to be independent from all other religions. It claims knowledge of the Triune God, of Christ as God and man, as the messianic hope of the world, of the resurrected Christ in space and time, and

so the Christian religion stands and falls on the confession of this special revelation. This particularity draws some boundaries for knowing. "If each religion brings with itself, as it does, a certain view of the world and humanity, of nature and history, then it binds the whole of human life and also undoubtedly that of science" (CS, p. 91). There can be no "double-truth" for the believer. Science and religion cannot walk side-by-side without touching. All faith, and positivism also includes faith, brings religious ideas to bear on scientific conclusions. For the Christian, it is *Christian* godliness that is profitable for all things.

### 3. THE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Finally, because faith aims toward knowledge, because faith seeks understanding, the emergence of Christian science is not a mere response to modernist positivism but a historic Christian practice, a necessity of life in a fallen world. Without sin, there need not be Christian science at all. There would be no breach in the consciousness, between religion and knowledge, apart from the rupture-induced act of denying the Word of God in the egocentricity of becoming like God in knowing good and evil. Sin damaged the self to the extent that knowledge of a fact no longer coincides with knowledge of God. For this reason Bavinck offers the reader an argument for the necessity of faith in science as well as a narrative of the emergence of Christian science in Christian history.

With regard to the emergence of Christian science in Christian history, Bavinck makes the magisterial claim that the apostles of Christ "planted the banner of truth in a world of unbelief and superstition" (CS, p. 10). He suggests that the in the first-century skepticism and mysticism had displaced the former highly ordered orientation towards systematic investigation (one would imagine he is thinking of Aristotle). But what Christianity offered the world in its unparalleled sweep of the Roman Empire was a religion of "truth." While Christianity was so highly attractive because of the grace on offer (not to mention the claim of a resurrected Messiah), he proclaims the striking point that Christianity is a religion of grace because it is first a commitment to truth. If the one God is truth, and his revelation in Jesus Christ is the unveiling of the truth, then all God does and says is truth. Christianity seeks not to merely to unveil truth but to make the first-order claim that God defines all truths, because God is truth and the author of essences. Thus, by the Spirit, "whoever takes hold of his faithful Gospel is from the truth, becomes reborn, sanctified, and freed by the truth. They are in the truth and the truth is in them" (CS, p. 11).

Bavinck then offers a narrative where the focus on truth breaks through a culture of superstition in the "world of the gentiles." The patristic fathers proved, as quoted above, that "Christianity was the true philosophy and the Christian was the real philosopher, who recognized the truth, who knew who God was, and who now, equipped with this knowledge also had a different and better insight into the essence of the world, of nature and history" (CS, p. 12). Eventually, a positive approach had to be found with respect to the knowledge produced by the schools of the time, one that stood on neither the extreme of Tertullian's denial of the good of pagan philosophy nor the Alexandrian exaltation of pagan philosophy. The temptation of Christians throughout history, he notes, has always been to one or the other, "world-worship and world-flight, cultural idolatry and cultural contempt, Enlightenment and pietism" (CS, p. 14). Yet, the emergent wisdom was clear and is that same wisdom which Bavinck promotes here and throughout his corpus: neither wholesale rejection or acceptance of pagan insight.

And so, the third thing is the Augustinian way—an unsurprising answer to one familiar with Bavinck's corpus—which is not to adopt Augustine wholesale either but to appropriate his general insight that truth is made known by the coherence of authority and reason within a framework of faith. For "science can only teach so little, and that only to a few. It does not know the way to truth, for it does not know Christ, and thus often it leads to labyrinths" (CS, p. 15). The Augustinian insight (while Bavinck does regard Augustine's pairing of authority and reason to be at time dualistic) is that faith is a "gift of God" necessary for all knowledge, for all science. This claim leads to the second point regarding the necessity of the emergence of Christian science.

Bavinck also refers to the necessity of Christian science through the logic of the necessity of faith as it relates to the possibility of knowledge. He explains the whole in this brief remark:

faith aims toward knowledge (*kennis*) and is a means for understanding (*weten*). That is already the case in the mundane sciences, which, like the whole of human society, is built on faith and thereupon must proceed from it. But this applies in particular in relation to that science which has the knowledge of God as its content. For this is the ground-rule given in the word of the prophet: If you have not believed, you will not understand. We believe the truth of God precisely because we do not understand it, but by faith we are enabled to understand. Faith and science (*Geloof en wetenschap*) thus stand next to one another in the relation of conception

and birth, as fruit and tree, as work and wage; knowledge (*het weten*) is the fruit and wages of faith (CS, p. 13).

While faith is critical to theology as science, faith is a requirement even in mundane sciences like history, whose “facts” are dependent upon belief in human testimony, which is then a domain of knowledge that positivism logically excludes. All claims of knowledge depend upon philosophical determinations of the nature of knowledge. Epistemological consciousness is necessary for thoughtful science but “it is not even possible to provide an epistemology without metaphysics and philosophy” (CS, p. 35). While positivism stands on the presupposition that all knowledge is nothing but the determinations of sense perception, it fails to provide a rationale for the reliability of the senses and “the objectivity of the perceivable world.” These assumptions, Bavinck argues, are not provable. So Bavinck, “We now merely point out that all scientific research assumes in advance and without proof the reliability of the senses and the objectivity of the perceivable world” (CS, p. 35). He even argues that the “reality of the world fixed outside of us is through faith” (CS, p. 35). Those who doubt such things cannot be refuted by any arguments. When one faces them honestly, they can either be driven toward some form of skepticism or towards a faith-position, that all knowledge is preceded by trust in that which science cannot prove: perception, objectivity, and the possibility of knowledge itself. There is a necessity, Bavinck believes, in faith that precedes science because the outside world is a given by way of consciousness, not in itself. One cannot ever take the God’s eye-view and perceive the phenomenal apart from personal consciousness.

Further, all manner of metaphysical assumptions are made in the act of scientific investigation: “concepts such as thing, property, cause, effect, law, condition, time, space, truth, falsehood, etc.” (CS, p. 37), are assumed as realities despite their invisibility. Thus, faith is required to maintain objectivity. And, this faith takes form and shape at its best in Christian reason, a claim that requires treatment elsewhere in texts such as CW. Nevertheless, the assumption of objectivity includes faith in the deepest ground of truthfulness in God.

For this reason, it is appropriate to say that theology is both queen and servant of the sciences. But, at the same time, it is necessary to protect the freedom of the other sciences from the over-intrusion of theology with some boundaries. Theology as queen offers the map of the terrain in which the sciences can move about freely. The “misuse of power” has been applied inappropriately in both directions throughout history,

Bavinck argues, wherein both theology and the other sciences overpower and attempt to give answers for which they are not qualified (CS, p. 18). At times rationality gave way to empiricism and at others the empirical to rationalism, until the late nineteenth-century surrendered thinking to radical empiricism, ignoring the basics of philosophical insight, not to mention theology. *Sed contra*, Bavinck argues that every researcher brings all manner of “religious, moral, and philosophical convictions and is controlled by them to a greater or lesser degree” (CS, p. 30). This is even true of the radical positivists, whose conviction about the impossibility of metaphysical dogma is a dogmatic religious assertion in itself. It is actually the case that each party proceeds on the implicit belief that that the other party’s prior judgments are wrong; it is not that research just carries on without such judgments.

Bavinck’s claim is that every person must honestly death with the assumed faith necessary even in the sensory and knowledge processes themselves. Facing this reality leads directly to the necessary relationship between metaphysics and science. One needs faith as a habitus, Bavinck supposes, because it is the means of disciplining reason lest it fall by way of the pride of life. “Faith is an activity of the intellect, an act of thinking with consent, a deed of submission, of humility and lowliness, and as such it stands directly over against the pride and haughtiness of reason” (CS, p. 15). So Bavinck: “on earth, we never go beyond the standpoint of faith” (CS, pp. 16–17).

#### CONCLUSION

In 1904, Bavinck saw the surfacing needs of the modern self, a fractured self, longing for an organic unity which, he claims, arises in the consciousness of all human beings. And so, he issued a call and set forth an argument for the developing movement of “Christian science” in the European landscape to take shape all the more. All in all, he argues that the choice between science and religion is untenable. And Christian science, which allows the metaphysics of supernatural revelation to speak to the causes and natures of things discovered as facts, seeks not to disallow the freedom of the empirical sciences but to acknowledge the unity of the self in the activity of science and to let the holistic needs of human beings inform the boundaries and goal of the sciences. Christian science provides a ground for the objectivity of sense perception, for the reality of truth, includes the claims of special revelation, and re-establishes a place for theology among the sciences, in addition to the other humanities. ■