



VOLUME THREE



REFORMED ETHICS

CHRISTIAN LIFE IN SOCIETY

EDITED BY JOHN BOLT

HERMAN BAVINCK

❁ VOLUME THREE ❁

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WITH JESSICA JOUSTRA,
NELSON D. KLOOSTERMAN,
ANTOINE THERON, DIRK VAN KEULEN


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❁ BOOK IV ❁

THE LIFE-SPHERES
IN WHICH THE MORAL LIFE
MUST MANIFEST ITSELF

Family and Marriage

Evolutionary theories about human descent along with historical studies have given rise to a fervent interest in the history of the family. Has marriage been a fixed and stable institution from the beginning, or has it developed and changed over time? Has the relationship between men and women improved through the ages? Become more “civilized”?

Social theorists such as John McLennan, Lewis Morgan, John Lubbock, and David Bachofen, among others, argue that permanent, monogamous marriage is a late development in human society. According to Friedrich Hellwald, for example, people initially lived in tribes, not families; hetaerism, when women were the common property of the tribe, was the rule. Hetaerism is endogamous, but the shortage of women in a tribe led to exogamy, where women from other tribes were abducted and, in time, purchased. Eventually, transition from a nomadic life to settled existence established the family.

In his important History of the Family, Julius Lippert contends that family lines, established by blood relationships, were initially matrilinear and then became matriarchal rule. This universal situation changed when the hunter became a herdsman, when the man began to own property and began to rule. Women kept some of their power in the home, especially in connection with family worship. Thus, maternal rights made way for paternal rights; the father became the lord of wife, children, and property.

From a moral perspective there remained much room for improvement: a girl’s inviolability before marriage was poorly protected; polygamy and infanticide were commonly practiced, the latter especially practiced in circumstances of poverty.

The father's role as protector and lord before long became that of progenitor, and the family unity became smaller, the extended family divided into nuclear families with an "archfather" as head of the clan (king). Vestiges of this order remain in nations where a propertied nobility is still influential.

The history of the family as found in Holy Scripture is not at all like this. Created in the image of God, human beings, male and female, were meant to live in committed monogamous communion with each other for mutual love and service. Created first, Adam received Eve as a helper. Consequently, marriage and the family are not gradual developments, nor arbitrary and accidental, but divinely instituted. Scripture notes the fallen state of marriage and family (Cain and Abel) and their deterioration among the pagans, but also the story of revelation and redemption through Abraham's seed, including the reformation of marriage. The family is the root and germ of society, state, and humanity. The family is the nursery of church and commonwealth; in fact, the family is itself a church and commonwealth.

Scripture's foundational teaching on marriage is, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). For Christians, this entails a duty to marry. Although Buddhism, for example, values celibacy as a higher degree of perfection and holiness, and the Roman Catholic Church eventually required its clergy to practice celibacy, Protestants broke the practice, though some, such as the Pietists, showed greater respect for celibacy than for marriage. Some scholars also prized the quiet, celibate life as a condition for better scholarly work.

It is true that the practice of voluntary celibacy has yielded great blessings for the church, and there are circumstances when remaining unmarried for the sake of the kingdom of God is valid (Matt. 19:1; 1 Cor. 7)—for example, in certain missionary contexts.

At the same time, however, there is much to be said in opposition to the practice of celibacy. History has shown that celibacy has led to considerable immorality among the Roman Catholic clergy. No single commandment of Scripture favors the practice of celibacy; it may not be imposed as a demand, as a duty. Furthermore, one cannot presume that God will give the gift of continence. By way of contrast, marriage for Protestant clergy has borne much fruit; upbringing in the parsonage provides great benefit.

It is a great social defect when people want to marry but cannot for valid reasons. Then celibacy must be borne with submission, patience, and accompanied by prayer for God's gift of abstinence. Apart from such special reasons, everyone is duty bound to marry, for two cogent reasons:

- 1. Because "it is not good that the man should be alone," God wills marriage and has instituted it. To marry is a divine command. The idea of a human being was instantiated and embodied neither in the man alone nor in the woman*

alone, but only in both together, in fact in the human race together. Men and women are different and complement each other; each needs the other to be complete.

2. The second reason for the duty of marriage is occasioned by sin: to avoid fornication (1 Cor. 7:21). The apostle Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 7 does not indicate that he had a carnal, sensual view of marriage. Elsewhere he points to a much higher purpose than mere "moderation of intemperance"; marriage, he tells us, represents the "mystery" of Christ and his church (Eph. 5:32). Nonetheless, Paul is a realist about human nature and not given to false idealism and spiritualism. That marriage is a buffer against sexual sin has been historically demonstrated. Without marriage, human sexuality deteriorates; prostitution and every imaginable and unimaginable sexual perversion exist in our large cities. The church has a responsibility to combat these evils in word and in deed; a lost and perishing world beckons.

§50. HISTORY OF THE FAMILY¹

The history of the family has become very important as a result of historical studies and Darwin's theory of human descent and has been treated with the fervor of first love. John F. McLennan, in his *Primitive Marriage* (1886), was one of the first to write about it.² McLennan believed that marriage customs still in use in civilized nations can lead to the knowledge of former circumstances. What are now symbols were formerly reality. Among the Romans, for example, marriage was entered through a symbolic robbery; similarly

1. Ed. note: The following titles were listed in the margins: Koenen, *Het recht in den kring van het gezin*; Tönnies, review of *Die primitive Familie*, by C. N. Starcke; Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, chap. 1, "The Origin of Human Marriage" (pp. 8–24). Bav. note: Westermarck teaches the Darwinian theory of the descent of man, yet believes there never was a time without marriage and also combats gynocracy; cf. Westermarck, "Kritik von Lubbocks Urwildheitshypothese"; also see the anonymous review of Westermarck's *History of Marriage* in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*. Wallace and J. B. Tyler say the same. Ed. note: Wallace is Alfred Russell Wallace (1823–1913), the British naturalist who conceived the theory of evolution through natural selection independently of Charles Darwin; we could not find a J. B. Tyler, but Bavinck possibly had in mind Edward Burnett Tylor, author of *Anthropology: An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization*; see esp. pp. 401–5 on early forms of society. Bav. note: W. Robertson Smith also speaks of matriarchy in his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 52: "It was the mother's, not the father's, blood which formed the original bond of kinship among the Semites as among other early peoples."

2. McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History*; before him: Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht*. Ed. note: Parts of this work were published in 1968 in Bachofen, *Myth, Religion, and Mother Right*; the complete work is available in a five-volume English translation, published by Edwin Mellen Press (2003–7); see bibliography for details.

among other peoples. This points back to a time when there were no states yet, when wives were chosen from other tribes and groups and were simply abducted. This was the oldest situation (exogamy): the males of one tribe would steal women from another tribe, and those women then became common property. Marriage as such did not exist. That exogamy developed into endogamy (marrying women from one's own tribe), perhaps because men began to feel too proud to go and steal foreign women.

Lewis Morgan did research into the progress of human social development from "savagery through barbarism to civilization."³ He is of the view that progress was propelled by the power of intelligence manifest in inventions, discoveries, and so forth, the history of which is truly the history of humanity. Morgan distinguishes the systems of consanguinity or blood relationships into five forms of the family:

1. The consanguine family:⁴ siblings cohabiting in a group, endogamy.
2. The punaluan family (the name is borrowed from a Native American tribe), the marriage of sisters with men who are not brothers.
3. The syndyasmian family (σύνδυο), one man with one woman, but not permanent.
4. The patriarchal family: one man with many women (harem).
5. The monogamian family: monogamous bond.⁵

Sir John Lubbock also assumes communal marriage, which at first was the rule but which gave rise to monogamy as a result of war and the application of the law of war.⁶ Lubbock adopts the research of McLennan but explains it differently. The practice of abduction, he argues, already presupposes monogamy.

3. DO: *de gang der ontwikkeling van wild door barbaars tot beschaafd*. See Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity*; Morgan, *Ancient Society*. After Westermarck, McLennan, and Morgan came Lubbock, Giraud-Teulon, Fison and Howitt, Post, and Professor G. A. Wilken, "Over de verwantschap en het huwelijks- en erfrecht bij de volken van het Maleische ras." Ed. note: In the margins Bavinck refers to the following: Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*; cf. Lubbock, *De oorsprong der beschaving*; Giraud-Teulon, *La mère chez certains peuples*; Giraud-Teulon, *Les origines de la famille*; Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*; and Post, *Die Geschlechts-genossenschaft der Urzeit*.

4. LO: *familia consanguinea*.

5. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, 401–97. Ed. note: These five types are the titles of chaps. 2–5 in part III of Morgan's *Ancient Society*. Between the lines Bavinck added a reference to Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 231; ET: *Races of Man*, 222–23. Bavinck cited the fifth edition of *Völkerkunde*; we are using the sixth because it is easily available online (at HathiTrust.org). The English translation we cite was made from the second German edition. We will cite it along with *Völkerkunde* when it includes the relevant material.

6. Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*.

This subject is also dealt with by Staniland Wake⁷ and Bachofen⁸ and is excerpted by A. Giraud-Teulon.⁹

Friedrich von Hellwald believes that absolute communism of women still exists in a few regions of New Zealand, South America, on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (this is questionable,¹⁰ without further evidence, and is disputed by others).¹¹ He believes that human beings first lived together in tribes, not families. Children belonged to the tribe, not to the father or the mother. Within the tribe there was complete promiscuity. Hetaerism was the premise of all human organization.¹² Adultery and incest could therefore not exist, brothers cohabited with sisters, and so on. Higher stages were polyandry (one woman with many men) and polygyny (polygamy). (However, the facts on which all these theories are based are suspect. For example, Hellwald wrongly claims that in our Dutch province of Zeeland a girl does not find a husband until she has already had a child.)¹³ Hetaerism is endogamous, later followed by exogamy, and with it the concepts of “family line”¹⁴ and consanguinity. Exogamy arose because of a shortage of women and led to the abduction and later the purchase of women, which then evolved into the practice of a fiduciary fictitious purchase of a bride. In ancient times relationships were very different from today. There were only fathers and sons; designations like uncles, nephews, aunts, and nieces did not exist. Affinity was first reckoned via the mother, later via the father. The transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a settled existence established the family. Paternal love did not exist at first—there was only paternal right and paternal authority—and it did not arise until people settled, acquired property, and increasingly began to live together.

7. Wake, *Evolution of Morality*. Ed. note: Between the lines Bavinck added a reference to Post, *Die Geschlechts-genossenschaft der Urzeit*.

8. Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht*.

9. Giraud-Teulon, *La mère chez certains peuples*; Giraud-Teulon, *Les origines de la famille*. Ed. note: In the margin Bavinck added a reference to Post, *Studien zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Familienrechts*. He also added a reference to von Hellwald, *Die menschliche Familie*, and a reference to a review of this work by Leiden professor S. R. Steinmetz.

10. DO: ? *zonder bewijs en door anderen bestreden*.

11. Von Hellwald, *Kulturgeschichte*, 1:79–91. Ed. note: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are twin archipelagos in the northeastern Indian Ocean separated by a 150 km channel; politically, they are together a distinct Union Territory of India. Source: Wikipedia, s.v. “Andaman and Nicobar Islands,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andaman_and_Nicobar_Islands.

12. Ed. note: Hetaerism (or “hetaerism” or “hetarism”; from the Greek ἑταῖρα, “female companion”): “A theoretical early state of human society (as postulated by 19th-century anthropologists) which was characterized by the absence of the institution of marriage in any form, and where women were the common property of their tribe, and the children never knew their fathers.” Source: Wiktionary, s.v. “hetaerism,” <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/hetaerism>.

13. Von Hellwald, *Kulturgeschichte*, 1:82n.

14. DO: *geslacht*.

According to Oscar Peschel polygamy was and still is common throughout Africa.¹⁵ Polyandry is less common, though it is found among Eskimos, Aleuts, the Konyaks, the Kolosh, and elsewhere.¹⁶ According to Peschel,

- a. It is uncertain which came first: endogamy or exogamy. To infer facts from symbols won't do. One must not overgeneralize.
- b. Incest was abhorred, even among the most primitive peoples,¹⁷ especially marriages between brothers and sisters, yet the Incas of Peru, the pharaoh of Egypt, had to do it; it was also permitted in ancient Persia, among other places.¹⁸ Among many nations the woman was abducted: "among the extinct Tasmanians, among the Papuans of New Guinea, the Fiji Islands, the Aino on the Kurile Islands, and among the Fuegians" (Tierra del Fuego); compare the rape of the Sabines.¹⁹ Later it became a custom in connection with weddings. Or the woman was also bought, among the Bantu tribes, in Iceland, Norway, among the Romans—namely, the plebeian *coemptio*.²⁰ Lubbock believes the earliest situation was hetaerism, but the grounds for that opinion are weak, relying on inaccurate observation.²¹
- c. We find strict mating even among apes, beasts of prey, ruminants, song-birds, and raptors.²² Darwin, too, disputed the probability of female communities among prehistoric people.²³
- d. Morgan, too, holds the same, and claims on the basis of the languages that blood relatives were named quite differently than with us, and

15. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 225–47; ET: *Races of Man*, 218–37. Ed. note: This section is "Marriage and Paternal Authority" ("Ehe und väterliche Gewalt").

16. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 229–31; ET: *Races of Man*, 222–23. Ed. note: The Konyaks are a major ethnic group of the Naga people living in northeastern India and northwestern Myanmar. Source: Wikipedia, s.v. "Konyak Naga," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konyak_Naga; Wikipedia, s.v. "Naga People," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naga_people. The Kolosh (spelled "Kolush" by Peschel and Bavinck), also known as Tlingit, are a Native American people living in the southeastern and coastal islands of Alaska. Source: "Tlingit Indians," Indians.org, <https://indians.org/articles/tlingit-indians.html>. See also chap. 23, n. 135, below.

17. E.g., among Australians, Samoans, in America (Hurons and Iroquois), Khoekhoe, Bantu. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 234; ET: *Races of Man*, 224–25.

18. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 233; ET: *Races of Man*, 224–25.

19. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 234–35; ET: *Races of Man*, 226. Ed. note: We have provided a direct quotation from Peschel to fill in Bavinck's summary and concluding "etc."

20. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 235; ET: *Races of Man*, 228. Ed. note: Peschel describes this as follows: "It is a long-known fact that in ancient Rome the ceremonial form of a marriage contract (*confarreatio*) was customary only among patricians, while the plebeians effected their marriages by a merely formal purchase (*coemptio*)."

21. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 237–38; ET: *Races of Man*, 228–29.

22. The opposite view is found in von Hellwald, *Kulturgeschichte*, 1:79–80.

23. Since male mammals are very jealous and fight with weapons; C. Darwin, *Descent of Man*, 210–11.

interprets this as a remnant of a prehistoric age without marriage.²⁴ The Hebrews had the duty of levirate, in India a number of brothers will sometimes marry a number of sisters; the Polynesians used to have the custom that brothers shared their wives, and sisters their husbands. But these are isolated cases²⁵ and not necessarily preliminary to marriage. Hetaerism is not proved from the fact that every son of one's father and of one's father's brother and all grandchildren are called brother, that all his own children and his brother's children and all grandchildren of the father's brother are called sons, whereas the children of one's sister are called nephews and nieces, and one's own mother and her sisters are all called mothers, and so forth.²⁶ Incest is greatly abhorred especially among very primitive peoples. Today it is the father who gives the name and the social status to the children; formerly the mother, on the Gold Coast, in Australia, on the Fiji Islands, among Maoris, Micronesians, and so on.²⁷ The Jesuit Lafitau called this "gynecocracy."²⁸

- e. Bachofen is even of the opinion, on the basis of statements in the myths, that formerly women were the heads of families. This is exaggerated, but the ties to the mother are stronger, so that in some places there are also rights of inheritance for cousins: her sister's children are favored over the mother's own children.²⁹ Kissing is not a custom among Maoris, Tahitians, Papuans, Australians, Eskimos, the people of Tierra del Fuego, and among all peoples who pierce the lips with rings.³⁰

We now turn to the views of Julius Lippert.³¹ Affinity was formerly reckoned according to blood,³² in which resided the soul, life. Brothers are brothers because the same blood courses through them; people can become brothers

24. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 239; ET: *Races of Man*, 230.

25. Which can also be explained differently.

26. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 240; ET: *Races of Man*, 230–31. Yet family levels [DO/GO: *geslachts Stufen*] counted more, blood relationship less.

27. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 242; ET: *Races of Man*, 235.

28. Ed. note: Bavinck is referring to the Jesuit missiologist and ethnographer Joseph-François Lafitau (1681–1746). Peschel (*Races of Man*, 236n111) provides a reference: "Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages*, Charlevoix, Nouvelle France." This work has been translated into English: Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*.

29. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 244; ET: *Races of Man*, 235–36.

30. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 247; ET: *Races of Man*, 236–37.

31. Lippert, *Die Geschichte der Familie*. Ed. note: Bavinck's numerous references to this work will be placed in square brackets [] in the text rather than in footnotes. There is no English translation of this work, but Lippert's *Evolution of Culture* (GO: *Die Kulturgeschichte in einzelnen Hauptstücken*) (1885–86) includes four chapters on the family (chaps. 6–9 [pp. 201–377]). When appropriate, we will add footnote references to *Evolution of Culture*.

32. LO: *consanguinitas*.

by mixing or drinking each other's blood (East Africa, Madagascar). Therefore the mother determines affinity; her brother and her uncle are immediate relatives.³³ The inheritance does not pass from father to son, but to the son of the father's sister, the nephew (inheritance rights of nephews). In Egypt the son used to be named after the mother [14]. All this is called *matrilinearity*³⁴ [16]. To be born of the same mother constituted affinity.³⁵ Abraham was married to his father's daughter (Gen. 12).³⁶ The book of Chronicles always mentions the mother of the kings; not husband and wife but mother and child are the oldest, primary bonds [20]; maternal love is the oldest: mothers sometimes breastfed their child for a very long time (among the Siamese three to four years) because animal milk was not used, causing the child to attach to the mother [23]. But as long as the mother was breastfeeding there would be no intercourse between the man and the woman, and thus no enduring marriage [25]. Here, a marriage was not established until a man and a woman had children together and then decided to raise them together [26–27].

Matrilinearity changed into *matriarchy* or *gynecocracy* [30].³⁷ The wife stays at home, she rules; the husband goes out to work, to hunt; the son-in-law comes to live in the home of his wife; the husband follows the wife, not vice versa. Matrilinearity³⁸ and matriarchy³⁹ were once universal [38]. This changed when the hunter became a herdsman, when he too owned property, began to rule, no longer went to his wife, no longer follows the wife, but abducts her, buys her, obtains her, because the right of the girl's mother has to be reconciled, satisfied: son-in-law and mother-in-law are now adversaries [39–46]. To marry a girl is to infringe on the rights of the mother [47]. (In this way the father also acquires power over the children, but there is no fatherly love [50].) Men and women eat separately, each at their own table, with their own food [52]. At first the man boarded with the woman, but thereafter the

33. Ed. note: See Lippert, *Evolution of Culture*, 201.

34. GO: *Mutterfolge*.

35. Homer, *Iliad* XXI.95. Ed. note: Bavinck borrows the reference to the *Iliad* from Lippert, *Die Geschichte der Familie*, 18.

36. Ed. note: Gen. 12 does not state that Sarah was the daughter of Abraham's father. Bavinck seems to have in mind Gen. 20:12: "She is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife."

37. Ed. note: Bavinck uses Lippert's three terms *Mutterfolge*, *Mutterrecht*, and *Mutterherrschaft* in sequence, but the first term is also spoken of in the German language as *Matrilinearität* (tracing kinship through the female line), and the latter two terms are variations of what is usually referred in English as "matriarchy" (social systems in which females hold the primary power positions). Therefore, we reduced Bavinck's three terms to two. See Lippert, *Evolution of Culture*, 223–73 (chap. 7: "Mother-Right").

38. GO: *Mutterfolge*.

39. GO: *Mutterherrschaft*.

two were separated [54–55]. However, in the home the woman keeps some of her power, especially in connection with family worship [55–57], and retains also her own possessions [59–68]. In this way, husbands gradually take *possession* of their wives [69–70]. Echoes of all this are found in myths and sagas [71–94]: Demeter, Isis, heroines, Amazons, saga in Augustine, Orestes, Heracles.

In this way maternal rights made way for paternal rights; that is to say, the father became the lord of wife, children, and property [95–117].⁴⁰ The father gained two titles: on the one hand, *papa*, *atta*, *tata*, and on the other, father = lord, head of the family (i.e., the family is subject to him), but still, children are a different sort of possession than servants, so they are called “free”⁴¹ [98]. The wife now becomes the possession of the husband and enters the service of the husband; he ceremonially buys her, abducts her, gives her a ceremonial slap, eats the marriage cake⁴² with her, shares a toast, leads her around the hearth and then to the altar [102–8]. The purchase price, however, gradually becomes an honorary gift [108], abduction is replaced by a purchase by means of service (Jacob; cf. Exod. 22:16–17; Deut. 24:1; 1 Sam. 18:23–25) [108–10]. The *Iliad* sets the bride price in terms of cattle (for freemen).⁴³ The price gradually becomes a gift [116].

The home: the man takes the woman to beget children and lets her go when she has given him enough children or passes her off to others to have children for them (levirate marriage); this is practiced in India [118–20]. The father received children, including his own children; only then were they his [124]. If he did not receive them, he sent them away—very common in the past—or the mother killed the child [125; cf. 128, 181, 189]. If the father dies, the eldest of the family or the eldest son assumes the authority [127–30].

With paternal right, polyandry is no longer possible, but polygamy is [130]; in reality it is always limited by poverty. Each man had as many wives as he could afford. One woman is always *the* wife, the others are concubines [134]. Family quarrels were settled before the deity at the door of the house (Exod.

40. Ed. note: See Lippert, *Evolution of Culture*, 274–344 (chap. 8: “Man-Rule and Father-Right”).

41. LO: *liberi*.

42. LO: *confarreatio*. Ed. note: The Latin word *confarreatio* (past participle of *confarreare* = to unite in marriage by a ceremony) refers to a traditional patrician Roman form of marriage ceremony that involved the bride and bridegroom sharing a cake of emmer (Latin *far* or *panis farreus*). This explanation is given by Merriam-Webster (s.v. “confarreation”) as well as Wikipedia, s.v. “Confarreatio,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confarreatio>.

43. *Iliad* 1.279–80 (VI.236). Ed. note: Bavinck’s source is Lippert, *Die Geschichte der Familie*, 113n4. Lippert writes: “I think the word ‘court’ [GO: *freit*] may originally have been a reference to the forced labor to which the woman was made subject or would be made subject; hence it is not the woman who ‘courts,’ but only the man” [115]; cf. Lippert, *Evolution of Culture*, 312–13.

21:6) [136]. Adultery was punished [138–39]. Over time, however, polygamy gradually led to monogamy [139]. “The right of the first night”⁴⁴ is legend [141]. To the degree that more women and slaves (male and female) were incorporated in the household, the distance between the head wife and the others increased [142–50]. She became the authority figure in the home when the husband tilled the land, went to war, was involved in community government. Woman and wife⁴⁵ became distinct; the wife becomes the mistress of the house [144]. She was keeper of the hearth, which was the altar for the family god (always a goddess, Hestia); she kept the fire going [145–46]. Christianity did not demand absolute monogamy or the abolition of slavery; it made the woman a subordinate [147].

A girl’s inviolability before marriage was poorly protected. Moral purity was not prized very highly [149]. Gradually, punishments were assigned for forbidden intercourse, for adultery; the woman came to be more protected as woman [151–68]. This protection was the case already among cannibals and in China and Japan; it can be seen also in the shaving of hair or wearing the bonnet among the German tribes [156]. Dishonored girls were given to poor men or were sent back [160–61], which led to the protection of virgin purity (cf. Deut. 22:13–21). Paternal rights had a moral effect, as is evident in the practice of buying wives, in excluding all marriages from one’s tribe and family [165]. Girls, once mature, were put on exhibit, given in exchange for gifts [169–80]. Remnants of this were still present in temple prostitution among Armenians and Egyptians [173] (cf. Deut. 23:18; 2 Kings 17:30).⁴⁶ Think of our Mahl wedding [174].⁴⁷ Then, after the “first night”⁴⁸ the bride received a morning gift from husband and guests [174]. The “first night” was also

44. LO: *jus primae noctis*. Ed. note: Also known as *droit du seigneur* (the right of the lord).

45. DO/GO: *vrouw en wijf*/Frau und Weib. Ed. note: Bavinck’s statement here is potentially misleading because, among other reasons, the German word *Frau* and the Dutch word *vrouw* have the double meaning of “woman” and “wife.” After describing a development in households where one woman takes charge of all females—the “first woman” (*erste Frau*) or “head-woman” (*Hauptfrau*)—Lippert concludes: “‘Woman’ and ‘wife’ now become well-distinguished terms” (“*Frau*” und “*Weib*” werden nun wohl unterscheidene Begriffe).

46. Ed. note: 2 Kings 17:30 does not make explicit mention of cultic prostitution, but there is a tradition of interpretation, which Bavinck as a Semitic scholar is likely to have known, that takes סִכּוֹת בָּנוֹת (*sukkoth benoth*) as “daughters’ booths” and thus as referring to “tents for prostitution.” See Keil, *Books of the Kings*, 424. Keil does not share this view because he is convinced the context suggests idolatry. Whatever judgment Bavinck may have made about this, he had available to him a tradition of interpretation that makes his citing of 2 Kings 17:30 plausible.

47. Lippert writes: “Our word *vermählen* [to marry] still shows that once upon a time a marriage took place at the ‘Mahle,’ i.e., on the old ‘Mahlstatt’ [meeting place], which once represented both church and legal court” [174].

48. LO: *prima nox*.

attended by others [177], all of whom were associated with the giving of the house, of the *Saal* (among the Salian Franks⁴⁹ [179–80]).

The killing of children was common, as a result of distress, poverty, and hunger [181–82]. Among some African people groups, the elderly were also killed, so that there would be food, that their souls could be appropriated [183–85]. Remnants of this were still also present among the Greeks and Romans and among the Germanic Franks [187]⁵⁰ (cf. 2 Sam. 5:8). But there was also infanticide; the father had an absolute right: on islands, in the case of Ishmael, with orphans (Plato), and in Sparta [190–92]. It was better in Egypt and Israel [194]. Children were also eaten, or sacrificed (cf. Israel, Mexico, Florida, Peru; Tantalus, Thyestes, Iphigenia; Passover, Abraham’s sacrifice, etc.) [196–202].⁵¹

At first, the father’s legal title was based only on power (in Egypt procreation counted as well [194, 205]), but sons eventually entered the rank of men by means of a second birth, a solemn ceremony, marking of the skin: tattoos, circumcision, pierced ears (cf. Exod. 21:6), earrings (Gen. 35:4), branding on the skin (Lev. 19:28); a belt, phylacteries [208–12]. Couvade⁵² was something akin to what David did (2 Sam. 12:16): fasting, lying down in order to keep

49. Ed. note: The Salian Franks (or Salians) were a northwestern subgroup of the Franks who lived in the lowlands of the lower Rhine River (today’s Netherlands and Belgium) during the period of the Roman Empire. Source: Wikipedia, s.v. “Salian Franks,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salian_Franks.

50. Ed. note: From Lippert, *Die Geschichte der Familie*, 186–87. Bavinck supplies examples using three words: “*deportani*, Philoctetes, slaves.” Here is Lippert’s explanation:

Here again we find the classical nations in their infancy at the bottom of all nature peoples. Festus and Cicero may trace those “*deportani*” (the sixty-year-old graybeards who used to be pushed off the Tiber bridge in Rome) to various factors; nevertheless, it remains valid to recognize in that fact-turned-saga a vestige of inhuman elimination of the elderly. The expulsion or liquidation of sick slaves still had to be explicitly forbidden by Emperor Claudius, as reported by Suetonius. The ancient Greeks, too, once knew no other measure against infirmity and old age. Philoctetes, who was suffering from a snakebite, was put on a deserted island by his travel companions and abandoned without mercy to a sure death. [186]

51. Ed. note: Bavinck follows Lippert with these three figures from Greek mythology. Tantalus was the son of Zeus who sacrificed his son Pelops, cut him into pieces, and cooked him in a banquet for the gods; Thyestes was the brother of Atreus who unknowingly ate the flesh of his own sons when it was served to him by Atreus; Iphigenia was the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra who was to be sacrificed to ensure a wind that would take the Greek ships to Troy. Whether she was really sacrificed or saved at the last moment by Artemis depends on who is telling the story. To prevent any misunderstanding, it needs to be pointed here that Bavinck is still summarizing Lippert and not stating his own view of, for example, Abraham’s sacrifice. It is also worth noting that the Jewish Passover celebrates the “redemption” of Israel’s firstborn and the deaths of Egypt’s firstborn.

52. Ed. note: “Couvade” (from the French verb *couver* = to brood, to hatch) is a term coined by anthropologist E. B. Tylor to refer to “certain rituals in several cultures that fathers adopt

the child that belongs to the deity [213–15]. Thus, the child first needs to be “redeemed.”

Thus far the father was the master (patriarch) of the child, the wife, the slaves, and so on [218–19]. But before long the father became the procreator; at that point the family became smaller, the extended family⁵³ was divided into nuclear families,⁵⁴ and the archfather⁵⁵ retreated in favor of individual fathers; the concept of son also became more restricted [220–21]. The archfather becomes the king (head of the clan); Greece and Palestine had many “kings,” patriarchal governance [223]. One such clan⁵⁶ was the Roman *gens*, whose chiefs held seats in the Senate⁵⁷ [225]. Under Christianity the *gens* survives in the form of the parish, the aristocracy [225–31]. As long as the clan⁵⁸ exists, it owns land [235]. When a nuclear family⁵⁹ gained preeminence, it became the aristocracy and the others became subordinates [236]. Clans still exist among the Slavic people [238–39]. The house of the clan was divided into two: a court of justice and a house of worship with an altar,⁶⁰ the place where marriages, burials, and celebrations were held [248, 252]. There are also clans in Scotland and in Germany [250–52, 253–60].⁶¹

The history of the family as found in Scripture is much different and much more beautiful. Human beings were not formed in the image of an ape but in

during pregnancy.” Source: Wikipedia, s.v. “couvade,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Couvade>. Lippert writes,

A false name for a matter that is no longer clear can make its interpretation unrecognizable and fantastic. We see this in the widely held practice of a cultic rite of redemption on the part of the father which unfortunately, on the basis of a purely outward resemblance, has been given the agreed-upon name of “*Männerkindbett*” [sympathetic pregnancy] or *couvade*. At bottom, the whole thing—embellished as speculatively as the kingdom of the Amazons today—is nothing but what King David (and probably many Jewish fathers and others like him) did when it seemed that God wanted to tear away from them a dear son through a sickbed, since they viewed sickness itself partly as a divine thing, partly as a divine decree. “David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.” [213]

53. GO: *Gesammtfamilie*.

54. GO: *Sonderfamilien*.

55. Ed. note: Bavinck transfers the form of the German *Altvater* to the Dutch *altvader* [archfather].

56. GO: *Altfamilie*.

57. Ed. note: “In ancient Rome, a *gens*, plural *gentes*, was a family consisting of individuals who shared the same nomen and who claimed descent from a common ancestor.” *Gentes* were divided into patrician and plebeian. Source: Wikipedia, s.v. “Gens,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gens>.

58. GO: *Altfamilie*.

59. GO: *Sonderfamilie*.

60. DO: *rechthuis en Godshuis (kerk) met altaar*.

61. Ed. note: Here Bavinck ends his summary of Lippert and begins his own statement.

the image of God. Human sexual practice was not at first a form of heterism, a life like that of the animals, but a married life. Adam was created first and received Eve as a helper. Consequently, marriage and the family are not a gradual development, nor arbitrary and accidental, but divinely instituted.⁶²

However, the Jews taught that Adam's body at first had two sexes (androgyny) and two faces, until he received in the woman a contrasting image opposite himself.⁶³ In Plato's *Symposium*, Aristophanes, too, explains erotic love from the original unity of the sexes.

This idea was incorporated into theosophy by Jakob Böhme.⁶⁴ Adam had no reproductive organs, nor intestines; he was both man and woman at the same time, a male maiden. He was able to have offspring in a magical way, like plants, because he possessed two tinctures, a fiery male and a watery female, and conception and birth happened magically. And today in our time this idea has been taken up again by many theosophists: Franz von Baader,⁶⁵ Schelling in his later period, Hamberger, Keerl, and others; see also Lange⁶⁶ and Rothe, among others.

But this view has no basis at all in Scripture, neither in Genesis 1 nor in Genesis 2; it is kabbalistic theosophy, connected to two principles in God, with the opposition between spirit and matter. Nor is there any indication that the human fall had already occurred or had been prepared by the sleep of Adam and the creation of Eve. What is noteworthy, however, is that prior to the fall no children were conceived or born, as has sometimes been conjectured or supposed on the basis of the "children of God" mentioned in Genesis 6:1.⁶⁷ Sin, however, has deformed the family—think of Cain's hatred and murder. And it was in Cain's line that polygamy arose: Lamech (Cain—Enoch—Irad—Mehujael—Methusael—Lamech) took two wives, Adah and Zillah (Gen. 4:19).

And while among pagans, domestic life continued to deteriorate and finally perished through various kinds of immorality (Rom. 1 and 2), in Israel, thanks to revelation, the family was re-formed. Polygamy was not immediately

62. Cf. Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, 7:254–57.

63. Ed. note: Bavinck provides as source *Bereshit Rabbah*, chap. 8: "Rabbi Yirmeya ben Elazar said: When the Holy One blessed be He created Adam the first man, He created him androgynous. That is what is written: 'He created them male and female.'" Source: Sefaria: A Living Library of Jewish Texts, https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.8?lang=bi. The *Bereshit Rabbah* "is a Midrash comprising a collection of rabbinical homiletical interpretations of the Book of Genesis." Bavinck derived this source from Weber, *System der altsynagogalen palästinischen Theologie*, 203. Also see *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis* in bibliography.

64. Claassen, *Jakob Böhme*, 2:176–77.

65. Mücke, *Die Dogmatik des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 141–45.

66. Lange, *Christliche Dogmatik*, 2:324–25.

67. Bilderdijk, "De ondergang der eerste wereld." Ed. note: A more recent edition: Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1959.

forbidden, but it was made more difficult. Monogamy became the rule. Thus according to Holy Scripture the family is the foundation and starting point of the physical and psychical world of the human race. The individual is not the starting point, the way Rousseau, Kant, and Fichte postulated. Individuals do not produce society by means of a contract, but vice versa: individuals arise from society. At our birth we are already in a society.⁶⁸ There are no births apart from society. Humanity exists before each individual human being exists. Humanity is not an aggregate of souls; it is not an atomism but an organism. The family is the root and germ of society, state, and humanity. The idea of a social contract, originating in the Middle Ages and developed in the previous individualistic, rationalistic, and moralistic century by Rousseau and embodied in the [French] Revolution, is categorically false. Wittewrongel, too, begins with marriage. The family is a nursery of church and commonwealth; in fact, the family is itself a church and a commonwealth.⁶⁹

§51. THE DUTY TO MARRY⁷⁰

In Scripture, at the foreground of its teaching, we read: “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). Marriage is highly esteemed throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament even priests and the high priest married. Only, they were not permitted to marry a prostitute or a woman put away by her husband, and the high priest was not to marry a widow (Lev. 21:7, 14).⁷¹ Neither does the New Testament have a prohibition against marriage. Jesus was not married, but some apostles were—for example, Peter (Matt. 8:14; 1 Cor. 9:5). To be sure, Jesus does say that some have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:12), and for a variety of reasons Paul deems it better not to marry (1 Cor. 7:1, 7, 26, 38, 40); yet he endorses marriage and condemns those who forbid it (1 Tim. 4:3).⁷²

68. LO: *societas*; see Maurice, *Social Morality*, 21–41. Ed. note: Bavinck calls attention to the second of Maurice’s lectures, “Domestic Morality: (1) Parents and Children,” which begins thus: “Many writers begin with considering mankind as a multitude of units. They ask, How did any number of units form themselves into a Society? I cannot adopt that method. At my birth I am already in a Society. I am related, at all events, to a father and mother. This relation is the primary fact of my existence. I can contemplate no other facts apart from it.”

69. Wittewrongel, *Oeconomia Christiana*, 1:1–2.

70. Kuyper, “Amsterdam, 16 Jan. 1891.” Ed. note: This is a reference to brief remarks by Abraham Kuyper about the obligation to marry.

71. Marginal note by Bavinck: Carnal knowledge, however, made one unclean, and was therefore impermissible for those serving in the temple (Exod. 19:15; Lev. 15:18). Similarly among the Babylonians and the Romans.

72. Ed. note: One of Bavinck’s prime sources for this paragraph is Mejer (and Jacobson), “Cölibat.”

However, there are nations⁷³ where celibacy seemed to be a higher stage of perfection and holiness. The *Brahmin* deems marriage and family fine for those who are still ethically immature, but the real *Brahmin* forsakes family, marriage, wife and child, dies to himself and the world, devotes himself to lonely contemplation of *Brahma*,⁷⁴ is seated in one place for years on end staring at one point, and practices total indifference to all earthly things. The Buddhist considers marriage a calamity⁷⁵ since it brings forth new births; but later it was recognized that not everyone can apply the pure Buddhist teaching, and therefore marriage became permissible.⁷⁶ The Buddha himself was a married man,⁷⁷ but at the age of twenty-nine he fled and led a life of an errant monk.⁷⁸ One of the rules is to not be unchaste—that is, for the layman not to commit fornication and for the cleric to abstain from all sexual intercourse.⁷⁹ Thus Buddhist morality distinguishes between higher, intermediate, and lower moralities.⁸⁰ Marriage is only tolerated, but every aspiring holy man is permitted to forsake his wife.⁸¹

This notion arose very quickly also in the Christian church with Hermas, Ignatius, Origen, and especially Jerome.⁸² As early as the second century, celibacy became a vow. By the third century, celibates were given preference for installation in the spiritual offices, although dissolving existing marriages was forbidden (cf. Paphnutius at the Synod of Nicaea). However, in 385 the bishop of Rome, Siricius, said: In the Old Testament priests were allowed to marry because they were chosen only from Levi; things are different now: marriage hampers carrying out your spiritual office.⁸³ And so that is how the prohibition of marriage came about, first for bishops, priests, and deacons,

73. E.g., priests in Ethiopia and Persia, the hierophants in Athens, the vestal virgins in Rome, the Essenes among the Jews. Ed. note: In Ancient Greece, a hierophant was “an official expounder of rites of worship and sacrifice.” Source: Dictionary.com, s.v. “hierophant,” <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/hierophant>.

74. Ed. note: Hindu language for the Supreme Being can be confusing to the uninitiated. In Hinduism, Brahman is the supreme and eternal essence of the universe. This Supreme deity is manifest in the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Confusion arises because *Brahman* also refers to the Hindu priestly caste, the highest in Hinduism. To avoid this confusion, the priestly class is also frequently designated as *Brahmin*. That is why, even though Bavinck uses the spelling *Brahman*, we will be using *Brahmin* to refer to the priestly caste.

75. DO: *onheil*.

76. Wuttke, *Christian Ethics*, 1:48–51 (§8).

77. Kern, *Geschiedenis van het Buddhisme in Indië*, 1:34–38.

78. Kern, *Geschiedenis van het Buddhisme in Indië*, 1:43–57.

79. Kern, *Geschiedenis van het Buddhisme in Indië*, 1:423.

80. DO: *de onderscheiding er van in geringere or lager, middelbare en hoogere [zedelijkheid]* (Kern, *Geschiedenis van het Buddhisme in Indië*, 1:423).

81. Kern, *Geschiedenis van het Buddhisme in Indië*, 1:449.

82. Cf. Mejer (and Jacobson), “Cölibat.”

83. Ed. note: Bavinck paraphrases a letter of Pope Siricius to Bishop Himerius of Tarragona (Denzinger, no. 89).

also for subdeacons after the fifth century; they were no longer permitted to marry once they were ordained.⁸⁴ The lower clergy could marry, but not with a widow, and only once. The Eastern church did not go along with this and considers marriage legitimate for the clergy.⁸⁵ But it was pushed through in the Western church, especially by Hildebrand (1059, 1063, 1074): the priest who was married was placed under the ban. And the Council of Rheims (1119) together with the Lateran Councils (1123 and 1139) confirmed the strict practice, as did Trent. Today, Rome has the following stipulations:

1. Celibacy is mandatory for the higher clergy and for those who made a solemn vow.⁸⁶ A marriage subsequent to the vow is not valid, and any children of such a marriage are illegitimate.
2. If someone of a lower order marries, it shall be valid, but he loses his office. Still, this stipulation also was eased at Trent. In case of a shortage of unmarried men, the lower orders can also include married men.

Rome came to this practice of celibacy due to its hierarchical tendency.⁸⁷ Gregory VII openly stated his personal view:⁸⁸ “The church cannot be free from servitude to the laity unless the clergy free themselves of wives.”⁸⁹ Indeed, among us the laity exert a great deal of influence through the women.

The introduction of celibacy did not occur in the Roman Catholic Church without much struggle and opposition. This is shown by the numerous stipulations about this in decrees and councils since the eighth century. But Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) drove it through with force. And as recently as

84. Ed. note: Bavinck translates the German word “ordination” as *ordening* (instead of *ordinatie*).

85. Ed. note: Bavinck added the note: “Except for bishops?”

86. LO: *votum solenne*. Ed. note: Such as entering a religious order or a monastery.

87. GO: *Tendenz*. Ed. note: Bavinck’s source, from which he also borrows the word *Tendenz*, is Mejer (and Jacobson), “Cölibat,” 302.

88. DO: *intieme gedachte*.

89. LO: *Non liberari potest ecclesia a servitute laicorum, nisi liberentur prius clerici ab uxoris*. Ed. note: Bavinck gives “Gregory VII, *Epist.*, lib. III, p. 7” as the reference that he borrows (along with the quotation) from Mejer (and Jacobson), “Cölibat,” 302. After searching in vain for this quotation in Gregory’s epistles (PL, vol. 148), I discovered why it was so hard to find; Francis X. Funk, in his *Manual of Church History*, 1:400, states: “The words commonly attributed to this Pope, *Non liberari potest ecclesia a servitute laicorum, nisi clerici liberentur ab uxoris*, are nowhere to be found in his writings, any more than the principle they express.” The fact that the quotation and reference were frequently cited in the nineteenth century is a classic instance illustrating how error can become received “truth”: an original faulty reference is repeated by a succession of secondary attributions, none of whose authors search the primary source for verification. Thanks to Richard Muller for assistance on this question.

the nineteenth century, opposition arose against it,⁹⁰ and the abolition of the requirement of clerical celibacy was pursued in the countries of France, Brazil, and Portugal, in the regions of Baden, Hesse, and Württemberg, and in the city of Trier.⁹¹ But Gregory XVI condemned and squashed all this opposition in the encyclical of August 15, 1832.⁹² Old Catholicism, however, has abolished the law of celibacy entirely.⁹³

A strong voice for celibacy is the work *Should a Priest Not Marry?*⁹⁴ The author claims that a priest's three relations—to God, to the church, and to the faithful—make celibacy imperative for the clergy [47–67]. After all, he sacrifices in the Mass and therefore must be pure and chaste; he must be independent of society and the state, being bound only to the church, having only spiritual relationships. He must have time to devote himself to study, visits, preaching, and his office [77–91]. He must practice self-denial as an example to others; otherwise, he could not hear confession [103–10]. He must have love, possessions, and money to spare for others [111–38], and he must not be stingy or ambitious.

The Protestants broke the practice of celibacy. Luther wrote repeatedly about marriage. He, Zwingli, and Calvin were married.⁹⁵ Calvin wrote against

90. Led by Wessenberg. Ed. note: Bavinck is referring to Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg (1774–1860), elected as bishop of the Diocese of Constance, Germany, in 1817 but never recognized by Pope Pius VII, who dissolved the bishopric in 1821. Sources: Catholic Online, s.v. “Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg,” <https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=12270>; Wikipedia, s.v. “Prince-Bishopric of Constance,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince-Bishopric_of_Constance.

91. Cf. Richter, *Lehrbuch*⁸, 372n24 (§116); Mejer (and Jacobson), “Cölibat,” 302.

92. Ed. note: The encyclical is *Mirari Vos* (subtitled “On Liberalism and Religious Indifference”); paragraph 11 is directed against those who “conspire” against celibacy:

Now, however, We want you to rally to combat the abominable conspiracy against clerical celibacy. This conspiracy spreads daily and is promoted by profligate philosophers, some even from the clerical order. They have forgotten their person and office, and have been carried away by the enticements of pleasure. They have even dared to make repeated public demands to the princes for the abolition of that most holy discipline. But it is disgusting to dwell on these evil attempts at length. Rather, We ask that you strive with all your might to justify and to defend the law of clerical celibacy as prescribed by the sacred canons, against which the arrows of the lascivious are directed from every side.

The entire encyclical is available from Papal Encyclicals Online, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/greg16/g16mirar.htm>.

93. Von Schulte, *Der Cölibatszwang*; cf. Christian Bühler, *Der Altkatholicismus*, 171–72, 348; Theiner and Theiner, *Die Einführung der erzwungenen Ehelosigkeit* (1891), §15, “Fortbestehen der Priesterehe” (1:161–66), sketches the history and the unreasonable consequences of celibacy. Ed. note: Bavinck adds, “Cf. *Theologisches Literaturblatt* 23 (1902), col. 279”; this is a reference to a book notice by Carl Fey concerning Ferdinand Heigl, *Das Cölibat*.

94. Fortini, *Moet de priester niet trouwen?* Ed. note: This is a translation of a French volume, *Grave question à résoudre: Ne faut-il pas que le prêtre se marie?* In what follows, page references to the Dutch translation of this work will be provided in text in square brackets [].

95. Luthardt, *Die Ethik Luthers*, 102–18.

celibacy,⁹⁶ as did the Protestant confessions.⁹⁷ Yet from time to time there was greater respect for celibacy than for marriage among some Protestants, especially Pietists.⁹⁸ And Rothe advocated a “monastic institute”⁹⁹ where learned scholars live together and work with the constantly expanding materials, separating themselves from the bustle of the world in order to devote themselves in peace and quiet to the pursuit of learning.¹⁰⁰ For the genuine scholar, celibacy is the most suitable condition. Rothe himself was unmarried, and had the motto “I yearn not for rest but for silence.”¹⁰¹ Cicero also said: “The pleasure of the body is not in accord with great thought. Who can pay attention or follow a reasoning or think anything at all when under the influences of intense pleasure?”¹⁰² And Jerome writes: “A wise man therefore must not take a wife. For in the first place his study of philosophy will be hindered, and it is impossible for anyone to attend to his books and his wife.”¹⁰³

Now undoubtedly the practice of celibacy contains some validity. It is not an apostolic institution, but it is nevertheless a very ancient one, with

96. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xii.23; IV.xiii.18.

97. Augsburg Confession, art. 23; Apology to the Augsburg Confession, art. 23; First Helvetic Confession, art. 27; Second Helvetic Confession, art. 29. Ed. note: Bavinck borrows these references from Mejer (and Jacobson), “Cölibat,” 302, with some of the references corrected. Bavinck also added a reference that is difficult to trace: “*Anglicana*, art. 8, 24.” The reference cannot be to the Anglican Church’s Thirty-Nine Articles; art. 8 is “Of the Creeds,” and art. 24, “Of Speaking to the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand.” Chapter 24 of the Westminster Confession deals with “marriage and divorce,” and while celibacy is not explicitly mentioned, it is implied in this sentence: “It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent.”

98. Wuttke, *Christian Ethics*, 1:254 (§37). Ed. note: In the margins, Bavinck added: “Cf. also Thiers on the Irvingites.” Such a work proved impossible to find; perhaps Bavinck is referring to Heinrich Wilhelm Josias Thiersch (1817–85), whose *Ueber christliches Familienleben* discusses celibacy on pp. 14–19; cf. Thiersch, *Vorlesungen über Katholicismus*, 2:312–20, for a similarly nuanced view on celibacy.

99. GO: *klösterliches Institut*. Ed. note: Bavinck’s source for this term is Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 5:155 (§1109). Rothe himself refers back to Renan, *Les Apôtres*, 131; ET: *The Apostles*, 140. The term “monastic institute” (*klösterliches Institut*), however, is Rothe’s; Renan simply states, “Each church is a monastery” (*Chaque Église est un monastère*).

100. Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 5:155 (§1109).

101. GO: *Nicht nach Ruhe sehne ich mich, aber nach Stille*. Ed. note: This motto appears in handwriting underneath the portrait of Rothe that is printed in each of the five volumes of his *Theologische Ethik*. Cf. also Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 5:157 (§1109).

102. LO: *Conguere enim cum cogitatione magna voluptas corporis non potest. Quis enim, cum utatur voluptate ea, attendere animo, inire rationem, cogitare omnino quidquam potest?* Cicero, *De Hortensio*. Ed. note: The work from Cicero is not extant; the text is taken from Augustine’s fourth book against Julian. Our translation is from Augustine, *Against Julian* IV.72 (p. 229). Bavinck’s source is Fortini, *Moet de priester niet trouwen?*, 79–80.

103. LO: *Non est uxor ducenda sapienti; primum enim studia impedire philosophiae, nec posse quemquam libris et uxori pariter inservire* (Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* I.47; NPNE² 6:383). Ed. note: Bavinck’s source is Fortini, *Moet de priester niet trouwen?*, 80.

origins back in the second century, and thus was definitely not introduced by Gregory VII. It has yielded great blessings and much fruit (think of the monks and nuns, their dedication to learning, to works of mercy, to missions, and more).¹⁰⁴ It furnished the church with power and unity, in order to stand firm in the Middle Ages against the power of the sword and to win the nations for Christianity.¹⁰⁵ There are circumstances in which remaining unmarried for the sake of the kingdom of God is valid (Matt. 19; 1 Cor. 7). For missionaries in tropical countries it is perhaps essential.¹⁰⁶ It is true that sexual intimacy takes possession of the will and of the entirety of the higher life of the spirit. Such intimacy drags this life down, leading it to sink down into the lower, animal life of the senses, and for that reason this intimacy is hidden and the veil of shame is placed over it. It is also true that there is no marriage in heaven, and we shall be as the angels of God (Matt. 22:30). On the other hand, there is much to be said in opposition to the practice of celibacy:

- a. In every age celibacy has led to considerable immorality in the monasteries and among the clergy. All testimonies from the time of the Reformation are unanimous on this point. To be sure, Roman Catholics reply that abuse does not negate proper use. Marriage, too, has often been abused and desecrated, but marriage itself is a good thing. Marriage does not cause the sin, but constrains it. Celibacy, however, is a cause of much immorality. Marriage is definitely a divine institution; celibacy is a human invention.
- b. No single commandment in Scripture favors the practice of celibacy. The example of Jesus is an isolated case. He stood entirely alone in contrast to everyone else as the Son of God, and as the Savior of the world, as the one who lived exclusively for his work assigned to him, as the only one who could be married to his church, as the only one who could bring forth spiritual children by means of regeneration, as Head of the new humanity. It is a profane thought to imagine Jesus as a married man.¹⁰⁷

104. Ed. note: Bavinck included this note in the margin: "Consider: the Governor-General of Tonking recently, in the presence of the French troops. Presented the cross of the Legion of Honor to a nun, Maria Theresia, sister of charity for the wounded soldiers etc. October 1887."

105. Marginal note by Bavinck: D. B. Zimmermann, *Der Priester-Cölibat und seine Bedeutung für Kirche und Gesellschaft*.

106. Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden, "Organisation der Missionsarbeit," 534–38; cf. Dr. X., "Der Cölibat—Das Mönchtum und die Klöster."

107. Martensen, *Christian Ethics, Special Part*, 2/2:14. *Christian Ethics, Special Part*, is vol. 2 of the 1888–89 edition of Martensen's *Christian Ethics*; the second part of this volume is *Social Ethics*. The present volume of *RE* will follow the convention of citing *Christian Ethics, Special Part: Social Ethics* as 2/2. (See also *RE*, 2:13n62.)

Most of the apostles were married, including Peter. Perhaps not John, nor Paul. But Paul deems the unmarried state of such little superiority to the married state, except in special circumstances, that he opposes those who forbid marriage (1 Tim. 4:1, 3; cf. Dan. 11:37), and he directs that an elder must be the husband of *one* wife—married only *once* (Rome?)—or not with two women at one and the same time (1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6). So celibacy may not be imposed as a demand, a duty.

- c. For this very reason we cannot presume that God will give the gift of continence, as Roman Catholics claim.¹⁰⁸ It is a form of self-willed religion. Celibacy may well have yielded rich blessing—in particular, by guaranteeing that every new priest always hails from a new family, so that the church has no succession, no clerical order or dynasty. The entire institution owes its origin to the hierarchy and is necessary for that reason alone. The church will have, and must have, servants that render absolute obedience. Among the Protestant clergy, on the other hand, marriage bore fruit no less rich. There is no better, more quiet and peaceful upbringing than in the parsonage. Countless scholars across all disciplines, poets, artists have come forth from the parsonage.¹⁰⁹ And the spouses and children of Protestant clergy, although being often reproached and also at times having exercised a wrong influence, nevertheless have also done much good.¹¹⁰ Still more, precisely through his own family, wife and children, the Protestant clergyman, far more than the Catholic priest, can enter into the life of his parishioners. Celibacy is always one-sided, whereas the married man becomes acquainted with a vast wealth of life experience: chores, suffering, comfort, crosses, prosperity and adversity.¹¹¹

108. Council of Trent, session 24, canon 9: “Since God does not refuse that gift to those who seek it rightly, ‘neither does he suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able’ [1 Cor. 10:13]” (Denzinger, no. 979).

109. Rauwenhoff, *Geschiedenis van het protestantisme*, 1:155.

110. Cf. Mertz, “Pfarrfrauen. Pastorentöchter. Alte Jungfern.” Ed. note: Bavinck added a cryptic marginal note at this point: “St v W., Vr. 1917.” The reference is to the journal *Stemmen voor Waarheid en Vrede*, and Bavinck may have had in mind one or both of the following: Bakhuizen van den Brink, “De beteekenis van den economischen toestand,” or Bronsveld, “Kroniek.” The former salutes the remarkable efforts of minister’s wives, “who, under God’s blessing, know how to make something of nothing and then still set aside something to help others.” The latter sets forth this ideal: “A parsonage should be a place from which demonstrations of love and compassion go forth. I pity the parish pastor whose spouse does not understand the craft of bringing comfort and preparing assistance for the sick and the weak.”

111. DO: *leven, plichten, lijden, troost, kruis, voor- en tegenspoed*: Martensen, *Christian Ethics, Special Part*, 2/2:13.

- d. It is a great defect¹¹² in our social circumstances that so many are forced to remain celibate. Apart from those who avoid marriage for the sake of the kingdom of God (e.g., a missionary), there are many today who want to get married but cannot. Especially young women who must wait and who are not asked. Others stay single because their love remains unrequited, or their girl- or boyfriend or spouse has died. Others do not marry because they cannot provide for a household. All of these are valid reasons. Then, celibacy must be borne with submission and patience, and God will then grant the gift of abstinence to those who desire it of him. Such celibate people find comfort in Horace's words: "Nothing is more godly, nothing is better, than a celibate life."¹¹³ Celibacy then is a stimulus to be "concerned about the Lord's affairs—how [one] can please the Lord" [1 Cor. 7:32 NIV].

Except for these special reasons, everyone is duty bound to marry. This is so for two cogent reasons, the first of which—companionship—was valid also before sin; the other—to avoid fornication—became valid because of sin.

a. Because "it is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18; cf. 1:28; Eccles. 4:9–10), God *wills* marriage and has instituted it. To marry is a divine commandment. Celibacy is neither physically nor spiritually good. The idea of a human being was instantiated and embodied neither in the man alone nor in the woman alone, but only in both together—in fact, in the human race together. There is a significant difference between a man and a woman.¹¹⁴ According to Lotze¹¹⁵ there is a significant difference outwardly and bodily. The contours of a woman's form are more round, that of the man more angular, indicating that a man has a stronger tendency toward a characteristic individuality whereas a woman adapts more closely to a universal model and takes a corresponding shape. Skull and muscles point to a woman's lesser strength; shoulders and chest are less suited to lifting things and carrying heavy weights; her hips and legs are less shaped for quick steps and a steady gait under a heavy load; her muscles, though more limber and agile, are less suited to sustained exertion. A man's body is an oval with the greatest width across the shoulders; that of a woman with the widest girth

112. DO: *gebrek*.

113. LO: *Nil esse ait pius, melius nil coelibae vita*. Ed. note: Bavinck's probable source is Fortini, *Moet de priester niet trouwen?*, 4.

114. Cf. Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 2:265–71 (§305), and the literature cited there. Ed. note: Cf. Bavinck, *Bijbelsche en religieuze psychologie*, 77; Bavinck, *Christian Family*, 5–7; Bavinck, *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 122.

115. Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, 2:382–92.

around the hips, with the result that a man carries his body like a load and, chest out, is ready to face any challenge; a woman feels more restricted and looks for her sphere of work in her immediate surroundings. To a far greater degree, a woman is structured for sex—breast, womb, genitals—whereas a man has only genitals. This indicates that a woman finds her calling, destiny, and sphere of action there, whereas a man's sexual life is only temporary and occasional. A woman's physical needs, food and drink, are much less than those of a man. She breathes less, does not choke as quickly, endures privations better, and is tougher than might be expected from her physical strength; she sustains severe loss of blood and pain much better; she can adjust more easily to new circumstances. In general, a woman's portion is beauty, a man's is strength; he the oak, she the ivy.

But this physical difference presupposes and at the same time produces a psychic, spiritual difference as well. The sexual nature is at once somatic and psychic. And here, too, a man is the stronger, a woman the weaker, vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). Lotze says that a woman may have no less intelligence than a man, yet there are many things in which a woman will never be interested and so will never learn.¹¹⁶ A man focuses mind and will on the universal in things, a woman on the whole of things. A man analyzes and gets to the bottom of phenomena, a woman dislikes analysis and apprehends (as by intuition) the whole in its immediate value and beauty. A man finds pleasure in inventing and working with machines, to produce something instrumentally by means of universal forces according to universal laws; a woman prefers direct contact with things and wants to experience the warmth of her feelings in what she is doing. In all the beauty and grandeur of the world, a man sees a universal law of cause and effect at work; a woman believes that nothing universal has independent, absolute value. A man, profoundly in awe of the universal in things, loves to work in service of the universal alongside a host of like-minded men. By contrast, a woman devotes her attention to the whole of things, does not want to be one example among others but wants to be desired and loved purely for herself, for the uniqueness of her individuality. According to Lotze, a man desires respect, a woman love.¹¹⁷

A woman's life is less energetic than the man's; she is less dependent on material nature, does not have those strong, sensual, self-seeking drives, and, for that reason, is not able to harness and employ material nature as completely as a man. (A woman's strength lies in perception, feeling, desire; a man's in intellect and power. A woman's treasure is the heart, the life of emotion,

116. Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, 2:385.

117. Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, 2:382–86.

of personality; that of a man is the intellect, consciousness, the life of the universal.)¹¹⁸ Hence a woman is at home in a smaller circle, the household, the extended family, in all those things that have a distinct, individual character (like religion, moral deeds of sacrifice, dedication, art); the man is more at home in those things that are universal, public, in learning, civil society, socioeconomic affairs and politics.¹¹⁹ According to Schopenhauer, “Women may have great talent, but no genius, for they always remain subjective.”¹²⁰ With a woman, feelings dominate the intellect, the passive dominates the active,¹²¹ receptivity dominates vigorous initiative. With a man, it is the exact opposite.

A woman is therefore predominantly sanguine or melancholic; a man is predominantly choleric or phlegmatic. A predominantly choleric or phlegmatic woman is unpleasantly masculine; a sanguine or melancholic man is unpleasantly feminine.¹²² A woman is mainly passive (also in sexual activity), a man active; she is receptive, he is spontaneous. She is the heart, he is the head. She is intuitive, he is discursive; she is concrete, he is abstract.

These general characteristics are confirmed a thousand times in real life. A man is abrupt and to the point, less verbal; a woman is verbal, repetitive, lacks business sense.¹²³ For the man, one word of loyalty is enough; the woman demands a host of small confirmations and trifles. A man attaches less importance to harmony in his environment, but he is punctual, shows up on time; a woman arranges and irons out a host of objects so that they inform a harmony, but she does not pay attention to time; he is a man of the clock, she is a woman of space. A man is devoted more to the essence, the principle, the invisible aspect, the background of things—hence he penetrates more deeply; a woman esteems form, adorns herself, preens, seeks in all kinds of ways to please.¹²⁴ For a man, love’s most important motive is the sensual; for a woman the sensual is the least important motive; he desires her physically from the start, she gives herself only at the very end.¹²⁵ A man is open, frank, lives more publicly, with wide-open windows; a woman, however gossipy, loves to keep secrets, lives in the background. A man strives ahead, farther,

118. Ed. note: Bavinck penciled parentheses around this passage at a later stage.

119. Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 2:265–71 (§305).

120. Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Idea*, 3:159.

121. DO: *het passieve over het actieve, het lijdende over het dadelijke*.

122. Schleiermacher, *Psychologie*, 480–81. Ed. note: Bavinck’s source is Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 2:269, note (§305).

123. DO: *De man is kortaf, zaakrijk, woordenarm; de vrouw is woordenrijk, herhalend, zaakarm*.

124. Ed. note: Between the lines: a flirt by nature, a coquette.

125. Henri Lou, *Im Kampf um Gott*. Ed. note: Henri Lou was a pseudonym of the female German-Russian writer and psychoanalyst Lou (Louise) Andreas-Salomé (1861–1937).

higher; a woman retreats within herself, into her innermost world. A man desires authenticity, solidity; a woman is often satisfied with appearances; a man wants to be somebody, a woman wants to appear to be somebody. A man is fond of scientific analysis, a woman of live encounters, sensitive imagination, and she possesses a rare talent to see things at once in their wholeness and to resolve them.¹²⁶ In the words of the poet ten Kate: “A twin has man been born, yet in his two-ness one.”¹²⁷

This shows that neither male nor female makes the other sex superfluous. Neither can claim absolute priority over the other. Neither alone fully realizes the idea of what it is to be a human being with all its qualities. By themselves, neither is the fullness of being human. Whoever knows *only* the man or *only* the woman does not know what it is to be human, knows half the human being, imperfectly, deficiently. Each is but the “other half.”¹²⁸ A man does not become fully a man until he bonds with a woman; a woman is not fully a woman until she bonds with a man. Fichte put it this way in

126. Cf. Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, 2:387–90.
127. Ed. note: Bavinck’s source is Jan Jacob Lodewijk ten Kate’s poem *De schepping: Een gedicht*, 165. Bavinck quotes the first two lines of a twenty-line stanza that we reproduce in full below (the English translation reflects the form of the original):

<i>Tweeling is de Mensch geboren; maar toch in zijn tweeheid één:</i>	A twin has man been born, yet in his two-ness one:
<i>Helft en weêrhelft, ééne ziele, beide elkanders vleesch en been</i>	Half and other half, one soul, both each other’s flesh and bone.
<i>Hij—alleen voor God geschapen; zij—voor God ook, maar in hém.</i>	He—only for God created; she—also for God, but in him.
<i>Hij—Gods glorie; zij—de zijne; zij—het oor; en hij—de stem</i>	He—God’s glory; she—his; she—the ear; and he—the voice.
<i>Hij—het hoofd, vol ernst en wijsheid, maar door háár gevoel verzacht;</i>	He—the head, full of gravity and wisdom, but by her feelings softened;
<i>Zij—het hart, vol vreugd en teêrheid, maar gesteuvigd door zijn kracht.</i>	She—the heart, full of joy and tenderness, but bolstered by his strength.
<i>Hij—zelfstandig als de ceder, die op eigen wortel steunt;</i>	He—independent as the cedar, by its own roots supported;
<i>Zij—afhankelijk als de klimöp, die zich aan zijn takken leunt.</i>	She—dependent like the ivy, upon his branches leaning.
<i>Somtijds echter, zij—de meerdre, sterker dan de trotsche Man,</i>	But sometimes she—superior, stronger than the proud man,
<i>Wien ze in geestkracht, trouw en gaven, menigmaal beschamen kan.</i>	Whom she, in spiritual strength, loyalty, and gifts, often can outshine.

Available online at https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/kate001sche01_01/kate001sche01_01_0012.php.
128. DO: *wederhelft*.

his *System der Sittenlehre*: “The unmarried person is only half a human.”¹²⁹ The distinction, the relative contrast, between a man and a woman must not be eroded and erased by culture. On the contrary, the more pure, free, and perfect a man is as man and a woman is as woman, the more intimate in both man and woman will be their sense of personal worth, their need to bond, for their love and marriage,¹³⁰ and the richer will be their mutual complementarity.¹³¹

b. The second divine reason for the duty of marriage is to avoid fornication. This is a reason occasioned by sin. Paul already says that “because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). People have accused Paul of having a very carnal, sensual conception of marriage.¹³² But Paul knew a different, higher view of marriage, saw more in it than just a “moderation of intemperance”¹³³ (cf. Eph. 5:25–27). Paul, however, had no false idealism and spiritualism. Practically speaking, the reason he gives is sound and sober.¹³⁴

The Reformers, too, placed this reason in the foreground. In the words of Luther: “Men cannot dispense with wives without sinning.”¹³⁵ Marriage alone helps against the temptations of the flesh; marriage is a medicine against unchastity, so it must not be scorned, lest one fall into the snare of the devil. Indeed, he calls this goal of marriage, in the present situation of sin, the “first goal,”¹³⁶ although marriage was not originally instituted for the sake

129. GO: *Die unverheiratete Person ist nur zur Hälfte ein Mensch*. Ed. note: Bavinck’s source is Rothe, *Theologische Ethik*, 2:266 (§305); Rothe’s own source is Fichte, *Sämtliche Werke*, 4/A, 332. Bavinck adds in the margin a folk saying from Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl: “The longer one remains a bachelor, the deeper one goes into hell” (GO: “*Je länger Junggesell, je tiefer in der höll,*”—sagt das Volk). Source: Riehl, *Die Familie*, 91. Bav. note: A celibate is self-centered, becomes either a despiser (ascete) or a slave of the flesh.

130. Fabius, *De Fransche revolutie*, 75.

131. DO: *wederzijdse aanvulling*; cf. Rösler, *Die Frauenfrage*, 8–80: John Stuart Mill: nature teaches us a woman’s calling—the woman has the same human nature (17–18; cf. 3n1); there are anatomical, physical differences (18–24); these differences are found also among animals, founded in nature (24–25; H. E. Ziegler). Ed. note: Rösler provides a reference to Ziegler, *Die Naturwissenschaft und die socialdemokratische Theorie*, 26; Rösler observes that Ziegler has a “Darwinian perspective” [*darwinistischen Standpunkt*]].

132. Such as the German theologian Leopold Immanuel Rückert (1797–1871); F. C. Baur, “Beiträge zur Erklärung der Korintherbriefe,” 20. Ed. note: Bavinck also adds a reference to “Richard Rothe, *Theologische Ethik, Dritter Band*, 614.” Since the edition Bavinck used was unknown, we were unable to trace this reference. Rothe discusses 1 Cor. 7 at length in *Theologische Ethik*, 5:13–74 (§§1080–89).

133. LO: *temperamentum incontinentiae*.

134. DO: *goed en ernstig*.

135. GO: *Die Männer können der Weiber ohne Sünde nicht entrathen*; Luthardt, *Die Ethik Luthers*, 106; Köstlin, *Theology of Luther*, 2:477–80.

136. LO: *finis primus*; Köstlin, *Theology of Luther*, 2:478.

of pleasure and enjoyment of the flesh.¹³⁷ Luther himself, however, did not marry until he was forty-two years old.

In Calvin, too, this point of view takes center stage: before sin, the purpose of marriage was the procreation of the race, but now it is also a “remedy against fornication,”¹³⁸ a gracious accommodation of God to our weak nature.¹³⁹ The traditional Reformed liturgical form for marriage mentions as the third reason that each person may live a life that avoids all unchastity and evil lusts (the first reason was being a help to each other, the second reason was nurturing children).¹⁴⁰

Indeed, people have accused the Reformers, as they did Paul, of having a carnal conception of marriage. But this “third reason” is perfectly true¹⁴¹ and is confirmed by history and the experience of all times and all peoples. Without marriage, life amounted to simply a pigsty¹⁴² (Calvin). In all ages, prostitution has always been horrendous.¹⁴³ The sex drive is the most powerful, the most terrifying, the basic urge,¹⁴⁴ the least tamable of all.¹⁴⁵

137. LO: *propter voluptatem et delicias carnis*; Köstlin, *Theology of Luther*, 2:478.

138. LO: *remedium vitandae scortationis*; Lobstein, *Die Ethik Calvins*, 96.

139. GO: *eine durch Gottes Gnade zugelassene und verordnete Accommodation an die Schwäche unserer sündigen Natur* (Lobstein, *Die Ethik Calvins*, 95–96). See Calvin, *Institutes*, II.viii.41; and see Calvin’s commentaries on Gen. 5:2; 9:1; 20:3; 24:59; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4–10; 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5:28–29. Ed. note: Bavinck adopts the references enumerated in the footnote from Lobstein, *Die Ethik Calvins*, 96n1.

140. Ed. note: The Dortian Liturgical Form that was used in the Dutch Reformed Church of which Bavinck was a member is still in use today; it can be found on the website of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches at <https://canrc.org/forms/form-for-the-solemnization-of-marriage>.

141. DO: *volkomen waar*.

142. DO: *beestenboel*.

143. On prostitution, see the publications of Otto Gerhard Heldring (1804–76); his two-volume biography, *Leven en arbeid*, prepared by his son, Louis Heldring; and his asylums for women and neglected girls, Steenbeck (1849), Talitha Kumi (1857), and Bethel (1863). Ed. note: Otto Heldring was a Dutch Reformed minister (*Hervormd*) who wrote numerous books on domestic and overseas missions, poverty, and Reformed church order. Three of those works have been added to the bibliography. Bav. note: Cf. Dupouy, *De prostitutie bij de volken der oudheid*; Godefroi, *Geduigen en redden*; van den Bergh, *De strijd tegen de prostitutie in Nederland*. See also the revelations in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1885, about white slave girls. Ed. note: According to Spartacus Educational, “In 1883 the *Pall Mall Gazette* carried a series of articles on the subject of child prostitution,” and in 1885, *Pall Mall Gazette* editor William Stead “joined with [members] of the Salvation Army to expose what had become known as the white slave traffic.” Source: Spartacus Educational, s.v. “British History/British Journalists/Pall Mall Gazette,” <https://spartacus-educational.com/Jpall.htm>.

144. DO: *gronddrift*.

145. Ed. note: In chap. 24, n. 268, we refer to two letters that Bavinck had saved and tucked between pages 984 and 985 of his manuscript. The content of the first letter and Bavinck’s notes about them are included in this footnote because they concern the topics of this chapter:

1. The letter writer asks about contraception and whether the command “to be fruitful and multiply” is an absolute obligation.
2. If the goal of the sex drive is procreation, does this not imply that coitus is forbidden during pregnancy and while a woman is nursing? Is this what the Bible is referring to with

In all large cities today, every imaginable and unimaginable abomination dominates in the moral realm. See, for example, Wilhelm Petersen's study of prostitution in Berlin.¹⁴⁶ In Berlin there are about forty-five thousand prostitutes, who at night make the main streets unsafe for every decent woman and man, "who live by themselves in a small room or on floors together with so-called pimps or 'Louis,'" ¹⁴⁷ or who serve as waitresses in cafes, or as seamstresses, textile factory workers, or dressmakers. In addition, there are several thousand people who commit unnatural unchastity, who traffic in children and girls. Between 1846 and 1886 the number of prostitutes grew sevenfold while the population only tripled. Everywhere it is the same.¹⁴⁸

State, church, and home missions must work together here to combat this terrifying evil. The state brothels must be abolished; they always promote prostitution and give it legitimacy. In Bremen (population 123,000) the state

Joseph "not knowing" Mary? If so, was this a general rule applicable to all pregnancies or only in the special case of Mary's pregnancy?

3. Roman Catholics have a developed and detailed casuistry concerning marriage. Do Reformed people or Protestants have an equivalent?

Bavinck's notes (for the authors and works for which Bavinck provided only an abbreviation, I have filled in the full titles):

- Reformed people are not inclined to this sort of casuistry but insist upon purity (*kuischheid*) also in marriage, including separation for a time.
- References to Wittewrongel, *Oeconomia Christiana/Christelijke Huishouding*, 1:72–79; Ames, *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof*, chaps. 37–39.
- Sometimes celibacy is not obligatory.
- Marriage and sexuality are temporal, earthly.
- God sometimes gives the gift of abstinence (*onthouding*).
- Those who lack this gift are obligated to marry.
- No marriage for those who have infections or leprosy (Zanchi, III, 809).
- Mutual consent is required for sexual intercourse.
- Separation for a period is permissible.
- Impotence is a ground for divorce but not if it commences after the marriage has been entered (Forbes, *Theologia Moralis*, 1/2:128).
- Genesis 1:26 is a *command*; Calvin, *Institutes* II.viii.41–44; Musculus, p. 47; de Moor, *Commentarius Perpetuus*, 2:910.
- L. G. van Renesse, *Vier boeken vande voorzienigheyt Gods in het beleyt der houwelycken*.
- Peter Martyr Vermigli
- Hoornbeeck, *Theologiae Practicae*
- Rivetus I. (Ed. note: This reference is unclear; Rivet's treatment of v. 14 [adultery] is found on pp. 244–66 of *Praelectiones in cap. XX*.)
- Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum* 1, 325; IV, 356.

146. Petersen, *Die Prostitution in Berlin* (1887). Ed. note: Bavinck cites this from a journal article with the same title in *Zeitfragen des christlichen Volkslebens*.

147. GO: *Zum Theil leben übrigens auch diese Dirnen in Einzelwohnungen oder gemeinsamen Etagen zusammen mit Zuhältern oder "Louis"* (Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 186–87).

148. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 207, 217. For the history of prostitution, see Stursberg, *Zur Geschichte der Prostitution in Deutschland*; Stursberg, *Die Prostitution in Deutschland*.

brothels were introduced in 1878, and immorality has increased. In another North German town (population 15,000) the brothels were abolished, and immorality decreased. Prostitution must not be privileged, must not have an official basis of operation; the ground must constantly shake beneath its feet, as it is forced to avoid the light of day and to withdraw into the back alleys, which in any case is better than what is happening now when it appears publicly and shamelessly.¹⁴⁹ Medical inspection of prostitutes at state cost is definitely reprehensible; it grants a privilege to the sinner.¹⁵⁰ It is totally useless since it tests only the officially registered prostitutes, and these only every other week or monthly anyway, and it is harmful because it provides a false security. But some people, such as Petersen, are still partly in favor of it.¹⁵¹ In addition, the authorities ought to pay more attention to the rental of space in houses, to nightclubs, to displays of books and posters—for example, at our train stations, as well as in the press and in magazines. Authorities must be concerned about the protection of girls and the prevention of human trafficking.

Meanwhile, churches and home missions should establish shelters, Christian inns and hostels, young men's and young women's associations, and the like. Granted, the results are not great. As a rule, barely a third of the fallen will be rescued. There are also very difficult problems connected with it: the shelter may not compel girls, yet it is expected to apply strict discipline, and to put them to work and help them persevere. It is also difficult, when they leave, to help them get a decent position in society.¹⁵² And even if there is little success, the effort must be made. Murder and theft are also punished, even though all murder and theft will never be fully prevented or discovered.¹⁵³ People must especially speak out plainly and publicly about these sins.¹⁵⁴ No one really wants to talk about these sins. But this must be done, openly, forthrightly, and seriously, especially among our young men and young women. Consciences must be awakened. The world is perishing through such abominations and iniquities.¹⁵⁵ Prostitution is the most horrendous social ill of our age; lust leads to unnatural fornication, and this in turn to bloodthirstiness and cruelty. Socialism and revolution are fed by it.¹⁵⁶

149. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 208–19.

150. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 201–2.

151. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 201–2.

152. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 202–3.

153. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 216.

154. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 210.

155. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 215.

156. Petersen, "Die Prostitution in Berlin," 195; for laws on bordellos in the Dutch Republic, see Wiltens, *Kerkelyk Plakaat-Boek*, 1:836; for such laws in the Province of Zeeland, see Wiltens, *Kerkelyk Plakaat-Boek*, 1:848–64.