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I.

RECENT DOGMATIC THOUGHT IN THE NETHERLANDS.*

THE Dutch theology of the nineteenth century has been discussed more than once by both foreign and native writers. The following is a list of the more important treatises on the subject: CHR. SEPP, *Proeve eener pragmatische geschiedenis der Theologie in Nederland van 1787 tot 1858*, 3d ed., Leiden, 1859; D. CHANTEPIE DE LA SAUSSAYE, *La crise religieuse en Hollande*, Leyde, 1860; Dr. G. J. VOS, *Groen van Prinsterer en zijn tijd 1800–1857*, Dordrecht, 1886; *Idem.*, *Groen van Prinsterer en zijn tijd, 1857–1876*, Dordrecht, 1891; Dr. J. H. GUNNING, J.Hz., *Het Protestantsche Nederland onzer dagen*, Groningen, 1889; Dr. J. A. GERTH VAN WYCK, art. "Holland," in Herzog und Plitt, *Realenc. für Prot. Theol. u. Kirche*, vi, s. 254–266; JOHANNES GLOËL, *Hollands Kirchliches Leben*, Würtemberg (1885); Dr. ADOLPH ZAHN, *Abriss einer Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche auf dem Europ. Festlande im 19ten Jahrhundert*, 2te Aufl., Stuttgart, 1888, etc. As secondary sources of information all these and other works may render excellent service, but the works of the representative theologians themselves will alone give an insight into the principles and nature of the successive tendencies.

Dutch theology during the present century has been subject to various influences. Its character has been molded in turn not only by Calvinism, which has always continued to live among the

* [Our readers are indebted for the translation of Dr. Bavinck's paper to Prof. G. Vos, Ph.D., of Grand Rapids, Mich.—EDITORS.]

people, but also by the Swiss Réveil; both by the German Vermittlungstheologie and by Greek philosophy. Nevertheless—and perhaps partly owing to this very fact—Dutch theology has a character of its own, and a history distinguished in many respects from that in other countries. A careful study of it will not fail to reveal the momentous struggle of deepest principles. The contest between belief and unbelief, between the gospel and revolution, is the controlling factor in its history; and from theology this contest has been carried into the spheres of the Church and the schools, of politics and of society. On the one hand, we may trace a tendency which, starting from the old Supranaturalism, passing through the Groningen School, issues into the Modern Theology, thus continually advancing on the road to negation. On the other hand, at the beginning of the present century, chiefly under the influence of the Réveil, a believing tendency appears, which first seeks its strength in Apologetics and Mediation, but afterwards returns to the historical antecedents of Dutch theology and boldly takes its stand on the basis of the national Calvinism. When viewed in this light, as the exponent of these underlying principles, Dutch theology may perhaps awake more than a purely historical interest even in the foreign reader.

I. SUPRANATURALISM.

The golden age which beheld the Reformed Church and the Reformed theology of Holland at their prime, was not of long duration. As early as the middle of the seventeenth century, that period of objectivity and authority, the subject arose, and criticism began to stir. Rationalism and Pantheism, Cartesianism and Coccejanism, each in its own manner, endeavored to free man from the yoke of tradition. In vain did the State and the Church oppose their united power; the tide would not be stemmed; the eighteenth century was the age of subjectivity. Reformed theology gradually withdrew from public life into the more humble and secluded circles of the common people. Here it was to be saved from utter extinction, and from this retreat it was to come forward with new vigor in the present century. On the other hand, an ever-increasing number of the people yielded to the influence of English deism and French philosophy, thus inviting infidelity and revolution to our borders. Midway between these two, between the national Reformed faith and the neology intruding from without, towards the close of the century a moderate tendency appeared, known by the name of Supranaturalism, and extending far into the nineteenth century. Its chief representatives were: at Leiden, the Professors Van Der Palm, Van Voorst, Borger, Clarisse, Kist, Van Hengel; at

Groningen, the Professors Abresch, Chevallier, Muntinghe, Ypey; at Utrecht, the Professors Bonnet, Heringa, Royaards, Bouman, Vinke. These were surrounded and supported by a corps of able and zealous ministers, as Dermout of The Hague, Donker Curtius of Arnhem, Bosveld and Ewaldus Kist of Dordrecht and many others. The dogmatic trend of this Supranaturalism may be known best, among other sources, from H. Muntinghe, *Pars Theologiæ Christianæ Theoretica*, 1800.

Its nature is not difficult to describe, superficiality being the main feature. It did not wish to pass for unbelieving; far from it, it honored religion, professed to be pious, put a high estimate on the Bible and Christianity. It had a strong aversion to neology. Neither did it want to be rationalistic in the sense of Wegscheider and Paulus. But it prided itself on being *rational*. Reason went for much in the sphere of religion, though it could not do without revelation, and even argued the necessity of the latter. From this it will be seen that Supranaturalism did not take its point of departure in revelation and faith, but from the outset occupied a higher standpoint from which it looked down upon both, and whence, by a process of reasoning, it tried to reach revelation and to demonstrate the reasonableness of faith. Of course the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti* could no longer render service on this standpoint. The argument from miracles and prophecy had lost its force with such as denied the credibility of the Holy Scriptures. Hence Supranaturalism chose the historical way. With the help of various external and internal witnesses, first of all the authenticity, integrity and trustworthiness of the New Testament Scriptures were established. From this *fides humana* one could ascend to the *fides divina*, inasmuch as the New Testament, having thus been demonstrated trustworthy, revealed a divine authority of Jesus and the apostles, confirmed by miracles and prophecies. The inspiration and authority of the Old Testament were established on the basis of those of the New Testament. After the *pars formalis* of Dogmatics had been struggled through in this manner, the *pars materialis* was taken in hand. But what sort of Dogmatics! With the aid of the much-lauded grammatical exegesis of Ernesti, a so-called Biblical theology was drawn from the Scriptures, which did not deserve the name of dogmatics. It was a conglomerate of certain commonplace, superficial Christian truths, not born from the depth of Scripture and utterly foreign to the spirit and vigor of the Reformed confession, a doctrine of religion which changed God into the Supreme Being, Christ into a teacher, man into a purely intellectual being, sin into weakness, conversion into correction, sanctification into a process of making virtuous. In a word, it was deistic

in its theology, Pelagian in its anthropology, Arian in its Christology, moralizing in its soteriology, collegialistic in its ecclesiology, and eudæmonistic in its eschatology. It was not to be wondered at, that this party, though accustomed to take merit to itself for its tolerant attitude, immediately lost all patience and composure, as soon as the Reformed theology and the pious Reformed people came under consideration. On the other hand it showed great fear of the left wing by which it was charged with half-heartedness, and persistently sought its favor by a conciliatory and indulgent attitude. This, however, proved of no avail. No sooner did a new tendency appear on the scene than the sway of Supranaturalism came to an end.

II. THE GRONINGEN SCHOOL.

The Groningen Theology had for its spiritual father Th. W. Van Heusde, Professor of Philosophy at Utrecht, 1804-1839. Van Heusde developed the principles of his philosophy in his works: *De Socratische School*, 4 vols., 1834-1839; *Initia Philosophiæ Platoniciæ*, 2 vols., 1827-1831; *Brieven over het Beoefenen der Wijsbegeerte*, 1837. The outlines of his system are as follows: Nearly all philosophers at the present day are one-sided and, owing to this, lapse into materialism or idealism. True philosophy should take its point of departure in man as Socrates and Plato have done. Man is the true source and starting-point for all sciences. His faculty of feeling is the source of all arts, which issue into *Æsthetics*. His faculty of knowledge gives rise to all those pure sciences of lower order (*μαθηματά*), which culminate in Logic. His faculty of desire is the principle of all those higher applied sciences (*ἐπιστημαί*), which centre in Ethics. The root of all these arts and sciences in man is his love for the beautiful, the true and the good. Man, however, is not merely the source; he is also the aim of the arts and sciences. They are all directed to this one end, of guiding him upward to the essence of the true, the good and the beautiful. This alone is the true philosophy, which, by means of arts and sciences, educates man for his true destiny. *Education*, consequently, is the central thought in Van Heusde's philosophy. To be sure by nature man possesses love and talents for the true, the good and beautiful. But this love stands in need of education; the talents require to be developed. The philosophy of Socrates and Plato satisfies this demand more than any other system. They have brought down philosophy from heaven to earth, diverted its interest from nature to man. By so doing they became the restorers of the arts and sciences and the reformers of religion. Through this feature their philosophy is allied with and preparatory to Christianity; as it were, the

προπαίδεια of the latter. Still, Christianity stands higher, being the true παιδεία, instructing us more fully than the philosophy of Socrates concerning God and ourselves. It speaks of God's holiness and love; of our guilt and reconciliation. Christ stands higher than Socrates, He being the perfect ideal of all that is true and good and beautiful.

These thoughts were far more attractive than the dry conceptions of a cold Supranaturalism. Van Heusde did not weary himself with the antithesis between reason and revelation. He did not speak of a revelation to man, but only of man's education. He did not look upon man as a purely intellectual, but also as an ethical and æsthetic being, and in consequence did not point to an abstract doctrine so much as to the Person of Christ. If we add to this that Van Heusde was a highly interesting personality and possessed the gift of inciting to reflection and of inspiring love for the truth, it will not be difficult to understand that he soon gathered around himself a company of young people who honored him as their teacher. A circle of students in Utrecht and another circle at Groningen came under the influence of his ideas. Soon afterwards, in a very remarkable manner, many of these students were settled in close proximity to one another, in the city and province of Groningen, as professors and ministers. J. F. Van Oordt and P. Hofstede de Groot were called to chairs in the University in 1829, Pareau in 1831. Van Herwerden became minister of the church of Groningen in 1831, Amshoff in 1832, etc. In 1835 some twelve of them organized an association which published a periodical, *Waarheid en Liefde* (*A Periodical for Cultured Christians*), 1837-1872. In addition to this they formulated their ideas in manuals, covering all branches of theology. Their *Compendium Dogmatices et Apologetices* was published in 1845.

The ideas of the Groningen Theology do not differ materially from those of Van Heusde. They all centre in this single thought: revelation is the education of mankind to a state of conformity to God. In the doctrine of God this principle brings it about that God is not viewed as a Sovereign or Judge, but as a Father. In reference to man it follows that he is not a child of wrath, but, notwithstanding his sensual, sinful condition, a child of God, endowed with divine talents and capable of the most glorious development. In order to attain to this goal he needs education. God educates man by his revelation in nature and history. In this manner He has already been educating the heathen; their religions do not form an antithesis to Christianity, but merely stand on a lower plane. The *theologia naturalis* is cognate and preparatory to the *theologia revelata*. Christianity is the highest religion, the highest revelation of

God. The essence of Christianity does not consist in doctrine, but in the Person of Christ. In His entire manifestation, in His life and death, He is the Revealer of God. Christ is qualified for this work, not, to be sure, by being the eternal and essential Son of the Father, but still, by His having been preëxistent in heaven before His descent upon earth. His revealing work did not cease at His death, which was not a satisfaction to divine justice but a display of love, not necessary but merely permitted of God. After His resurrection and ascension, Jesus continues His divine training of mankind by means of His Church. The Church is the specific agency of Christianity, the training-institute of God. Rome has better understood this than the Protestants. And at the present juncture the Jacoban Church of Jewish congregations, the Petrine Church of Rome, the Pauline Church of Protestantism are destined to pass into the Johannine Church of the future.

With these ideas the Groningen Theology made its entrance into the Holland Reformed Church. After gaining an easy victory over Supranaturalism it soon spread, especially in the northern provinces of the country. It also was exposed, however, to severe criticism, both from the side of the old orthodoxy and from the Modern Theology, whose star was in the ascendant after 1851. In conflict with the latter party the Groningen School lost many of its disciples. In general, it prepared the way for the Modern Theology. Still, under the leadership of Hofstede de Groot (†1886), many have succeeded in maintaining an independent theological position. Having organized in 1867 a separate association for influencing Church elections, in distinction from the Moderns and the orthodox, under the name of *Het Evangelie*, they are since known as *Evangelicals*. At the universities they count as belonging to their school the ecclesiastical Professors Gooszen (the author of an important work on the Heidelberg Catechism) and Offerhaus at Leiden, Cannegieter at Utrecht, Reitsma at Groningen. Their organ is the periodical *Geloof en Vrijheid*, published monthly since 1867. From the Moderns they continue to be distinguished by their Supranaturalism.

III. THE MODERN THEOLOGY.

This tendency is more difficult to describe than the two preceding ones. In the sphere of theology it presents a variegated appearance, with widely differing features. Four persons especially have been influential in producing it. The Leiden Professor Scholten (†1885) was the dogmatician of its first period and after 1864 the spokesman of its critical views on the New Testament. His colleague, Kuenen, (†1891) lent powerful assistance by his historical criticism of the Old Testament and of the religion of Israel. From the

Utrecht Professor Opzoomer it received the stamp of a pronounced antisupernaturalism. Finally, the Baptist Professor Hoekstra, of Amsterdam, imparted to it its ethical tendency. While a student at Utrecht Scholten already felt dissatisfied with Supranaturalism, which then reigned supreme. He objected to two features in particular: to its unstable dogmatic basis and to its lack of philosophic depth. He soon sought a nearer approach to the Church doctrine, and in its name opposed the Supranaturalistic and Groningen theology. Schweizer's *Glaubenslehre der evang. ref. Kirche*, 1844-1847 confirmed him in this opposition. In 1848 he published the first volume of his *Leer der Hervormde Kerk, in hare grondbeginselen, uit de bronnen voorgesteld en beoordeeld*. In 1850 the second volume followed. During this first period (till 1864) Scholten was quite conservative. He maintained the personality of God, the metaphysical sonship of Christ, His sinlessness, resurrection and ascension, the genuineness of the greater part of the writings of the New Testament (in his *Hist. Krit. Inleiding tot de Schriften des N. T.*, 1856). He even took his stand against Opzoomer as an infidel and an enemy of Christianity. Those, however, who saw below the surface, such as Van Oosterzee and Sausaye, in their criticisms of Scholten's work, did not fail to predict that this conservatism was merely temporary, and that the principle which Scholten followed would of necessity lead him on to absolute negation. This principle consisted for the formal part of Dogmatics in a separation between the Scriptures and the Word of God. Historical demonstration did not suffice to establish the truth of the Scriptures; Lessing and Rousseau had shown this long ago. The *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti* was no more equal to prove anything for the historical contents of Scripture. For these reasons it became necessary to distinguish between the Scriptures and the Word of God. To the latter alone, *i. e.*, to the religious-moral contents of the Bible the purified reason bears witness. In this manner Scholten severed the bond between facts and ideas, between Christianity and history. In the material part of Dogmatics Scholten proceeded on the basis of spiritualistic monism, a principle which he borrowed from German philosophy and identified with the idea of the absolute sovereignty of God as embodied in Reformed theology. Under the criticism of this principle scarcely anything remained of the Reformed doctrines. The positive thoughts of Scholten's own system were simply these: God is immanent and reveals Himself in all created things. Revelation is coëxtensive with creation and preservation: there is no extraordinary, special revelation. God reveals Himself in all His works—in nature, in history, especially in the man Jesus, who, in His life and

death, exhibits to us the true religion. By this objective manifestation, therefore, God is knowable; all things proclaim His power, but also His goodness and love. Man, however, is born sensual, *i. e.*, selfish and sinful. Consequently, there must take place within him a subjective apokalypsis in order that he may understand this objective manifestation of God (*φανέρωσις*). This apokalypsis consists in the development of his religious-moral nature, in the enlightening of his intellect and the purification of his heart. Man, being thus developed religiously and morally, knows God, sees Him in all His works, has faith in His love and is conscious of being His child. This manifestation of God in nature and history, in life and destiny, especially in Jesus, is so clear and exerts such a powerful influence on the moral nature of man that it cannot be permanently resisted.

These philosophical thoughts, however, were not expounded with perfect distinctness in the beginning. They were too much clothed in the old orthodox forms and had too large an admixture of conservative elements for this. Scholten himself lived in the honest conviction of having discovered the reconciliation of faith and knowledge, of theology and philosophy, of the heart and the intellect. He was able also to impart this conviction to others. Soon the new gospel was proclaimed with enthusiasm from many pulpits. His lectures were largely attended. The *Leer van de Hervormde Kerk* appeared in three new and enlarged editions within a short time. Among his followers the illusion was well-nigh universal, that the reasonableness of the faith, and of the doctrine of the Reformed Church at that, had been established. This illusion, however, was soon to be dispelled. In 1864 the reaction set in with Scholten himself. In the Preface to his work on the gospel of John, which was published in the year just mentioned, he openly declared that, while formerly believing that he found in the Scriptures, when well expounded, his own view of the world, he no longer cherished this conviction. The system of John was not his system. He now begins to recognize that between his ideas and those of the Bible there is no agreement, but a deep chasm. Henceforth he devotes his labors to the historico-critical investigation of the New Testament, in close alliance with the Tübingen School.

This change of front with Scholten was no doubt the result of a consistent carrying out of his own principles. At the same time it was due to the influence exerted on him by Kuenen and Opzoomer. Kuenen had, by his criticism of the Old Testament (*Hist. Krit. Inl.*, 1861), come to the conclusion that the religion of Israel admits of full explanation without resorting to any supernatural element. After a brief period of adherence to Krause Opzoomer passed under the influence of Comte's and Mill's philoso-

phy, paying homage to a strict empiricism which left no place for miracles. The results soon showed themselves. The illusion had been dispelled, faith and enthusiasm suffered shipwreck. Some ministers, like Pierson and Busken Huet, resigned their office and left the Church. Others felt dissatisfied with the monism of Scholten. The heart put in claims which his intellectualism was not able to satisfy. The moral nature of man could not rest in his determinism. A whole group of modern theologians broke loose from Scholten's system and sought a closer alliance with Hoekstra. The latter had not been taught in the school of Hegel, but in that of Kant. According to him the basis of religious faith was not to be found in reason, but in the heart, in the moral nature of man. Against Scholten he had defended also the liberty of the will. This new ethical tendency, which now came to the front among the Moderns, argued in the following strain: Even though we should be able to reach, by means of reason, God as the Absolute, yet this Absolute would not be the God which our heart stands in need of. Creation does not proclaim a God of love. The God we need is not to be found outside of ourselves, but within. Religion is consecration to the moral ideal, to the power of the good, to the "Thou shalt" of conscience. Religion is not science, not a view of the world, but a specific conception of life. Pure morality, holiness is the content of religion. Some adherents of this tendency went to such an extreme in the avowal of these ideas, that with a degree of justice an "atheistic shade" of Modern Theology began to be spoken of.

For more than ten years, from 1868 till 1878, a violent war was waged between the intellectualists and the ethical wing of Modern Theology. Neither party, however, can boast of having gained the victory; nor has a reconciliation been effected. The confusion has rather increased. On both sides certain elements have been adopted from the opposing party, and in consequence the various groups and shades have become numerous. The differences relate chiefly to the origin, the essence, the revelation and the value of religion, to the relation between religion and morality, and to that between religion and science. Nor has the work of Prof. Rauwenhoff—*Wijsbegeerte van den Godsdienst*, 1st Part, Leiden, 1887 (incomplete owing to the author's death, January, 1889)—brought about a reunion. Notwithstanding the high degree of interest and of appreciation with which it has been received, it is far from being able to claim the importance for the second period of the Modern Theology which Scholten's work possessed for the preceding period. It has been severely criticised. Rauwenhoff seeks the *origin* of religion in the moral emotions of reverence and awe, which, on certain occa-

sions, were awakened in primitive man, and after having been transferred to some power of nature, clothed the latter to his view with the attributes of divinity. The *essence* of religion, according to Rauwenhoff, consists in belief in a moral order of the world, a belief which science cannot assail. The *form*, however, in which this essence reveals itself, is belief in a supersensual, personal power, and this form is a product of the poetic imagination. It causes no surprise that these ideas found but little assent and effected no unity. The Modern Theology has shown itself strong in destroying, but weak in the work of reconstruction.

In casting a retrospective glance at the three tendencies described up to this point, we are struck with the tragic aspect of this development of dogmatic thought. It is a slow process of dissolution that meets our view. It began with setting aside the Confession; Scripture alone was to be heard. Next Scripture also is dismissed; and the Person of Christ is fallen back upon. Of this Person of Christ, however, first His divinity, next His preëxistence, finally His sinlessness are surrendered, and nothing remains but a pious man, a religious genius, revealing to us the love of God. But even the existence and the love of God are not able to withstand criticism. Thus the moral element in man becomes the last basis from which the battle against materialism is conducted. But this basis will appear to be as unstable and unreliable as the others.

IV. THE UTRECHT SCHOOL.

However great the number of those that were carried away with these tendencies on the road to negation, the core of the nation was not swept along but adhered to the Bible and to the Confession. Among the higher classes a revival of faith was produced by the Réveil, which, after the Restoration, had been transplanted, by personal intercourse and writings, from Switzerland to our country. The men of the Réveil, however, were far from being children of one spirit. At first this was less apparent. But gradually differences of opinion in regard to the Confession, theology, the Church, the State, the university were brought to light. Out of these differences, which were present from the very first, afterwards distinct theological tendencies were born in the sphere of science also.

The first important sign of life, by which the party of believers asserted itself in the field of scientific theology, was the publication, from 1845, of the *Jaarboeken voor Wetenschappelijke Theologie*, edited by Dr. J. J. Doedes, Dr. J. J. Van Oosterzee and others. The latter opened the first number with an *Essay on the Present State of Apologetics, and the Desirability of Developing this Science in our Days*. The ultimate ground for the truth of Christianity,

he did not seek in an intellectual process of reasoning, nor in historical evidence, but in feeling, in Christian experience. After a severe criticism by Opzoomer, who had been called to the chair of philosophy at Utrecht in 1846, Van Oosterzee soon declared, in the same periodical, that formerly he had been led astray by guides from the school of Schleiermacher, into the error of subjectivism; but that he now considered the facts to be the foremost and objective proof for the truth of Christianity. This retraction brought him on the track, which his colleague, Doedes, had been following for some time. Van Oosterzee and Doedes were at first fellow-ministers of the church at Rotterdam, and were once more united by their professorships at Utrecht, the former being called to the chair of theology in 1863, the latter in 1859. Along with their distinct talents and gifts, there existed between these two friends an important theological difference of opinion concerning the relation between faith and knowledge. Doedes judged that in reference to God and divine things, strictly speaking, knowledge is not possible; and consequently he made a sharp distinction between believing and knowing. Van Oosterzee, on the other hand, judged that a theology which is born out of faith is undoubtedly a science, a specific science of course, a science of faith, but nevertheless a science as strictly as any other branch of higher instruction. The agreement, however, which existed between the professors on other points, has obliterated this difference among the disciples of the Utrecht School. This agreement extended very far. In the *pars formalis* of Dogmatics both renewed the old Supranaturalism. The ultimate grounds of faith lie in historical proof. It was admitted that, for their convincing power, in leading one to faith, these proofs were dependent on a certain predisposition of the heart, a moral receptivity. The proofs, on which faith rests, are not proofs in the strict sense of the term, but only grounds of belief, which must be supplemented and strengthened by subjective assurance. Still the grounds of belief lie within the sphere of knowledge. Nothing is to be accepted without previous investigation. Doedes went so far as to assert on one occasion that, when it is written, "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God," it will be necessary first to inquire whether that fool may not be right. Both Van Oosterzee and Doedes chose their theological standpoint not *within* faith, but *before* it and on the *outside* of it. Their labors began in a period during which the Groningen School and the Moderns were waging war, with great self-confidence, against orthodoxy; and for this reason they felt in duty bound to justify their faith over against these tendencies. Van Oosterzee accordingly builds a broad apologetic foundation before proceeding to the thetical construction

of his Dogmatics. Apologetics and Polemics were the weapons which the Utrecht professors liked to wield in preference to all others. It may be true that, owing to this Supranaturalism, they have not sufficiently asserted the independence of theology and have placed faith in a position of servile dependence on knowledge; but we should not forget, that in their time this position was perhaps the only tenable one. To be sure they did not win the adherents of the Groningen and Modern Schools, but within their own circle they have strengthened the weak and wavering faith of many, and prepared the way for those that were to follow.

The contents of their Dogmatics are closely dependent on this apologetic standpoint. In comparison with the deep chasm that separated them from their opponents, the differences among believers appeared of but slight importance. They did not enter upon the significance of these differences. The confessional consciousness was not fostered by them. They were satisfied if, by surrendering the outworks of Christianity, they would be able to save the fortress. They placed no emphasis on any specifically Reformed doctrines, but bravely professed and defended the main truths of Christianity. Van Oosterzee's motto was: *Christianus nomen, Reformatus cognomen*. His Dogmatics did not advance beyond the theology of the Réveil, the unchangeable truths of the Reformation. Doedes went back still further, and in his *Leer der Zaligheid* gave a simple Biblical Theology. Being defenders of a moderate orthodoxy, they were unable to join the later movement towards a more strictly Reformed theology. They felt a strong antipathy against such a thoroughgoing confessionalism. Even during the last years of his life Van Oosterzee lifted his voice against it, as, for example, in his treatise on *Theopneusty*, 1880. Doedes entered a strong protest against it in his works on *The Belgic Confession*, 1880, and *The Heidelberg Catechism*, 1881, in which he subjected both creeds to a sharp but somewhat superficial criticism.

Nevertheless, though they have been outgrown and left behind by orthodoxy, they have well deserved of the Church and of theology in Holland. At a period when the orthodox faith had come to be considered as an antiquated and abandoned standpoint, they were not ashamed to confess Christ, and suffered much reproach and scorn for His sake. They trained a generation of ministers who have proclaimed boldly and bravely in the churches the great truths of the Scripture and the Confession. Up to the present day the majority of believing ministers in the Reformed Church consists of their disciples, of their spiritual children. In the universities their views are represented, with more or less modification, by Professors Cramer and Lamers at Utrecht (who jointly publish,

Bijdragen op het Gebied van Godgeleerdheid en Wijsbegeerte), Van Toorenenbergen at Amsterdam, and the ecclesiastical Professors Van Leeuwen at Utrecht and Kruijf at Groningen.

V. THE ETHICAL THEOLOGY.

Though the influence exerted by the Utrecht School was very great, its views did not receive the approval of all. A new theological tendency appeared on the scene in the person of D. Chantepie de la Saussaye (born 1818, minister at Leeuwaarden 1842, at Leiden 1848, at Rotterdam 1862, professor at Groningen, 1872-1874). De la Saussaye was an amiable personality, a deep thinker, a powerful preacher. None of the existing schools could fully satisfy him. The Réveil was not sufficiently theological, the Groningen School had too little of philosophy, the orthodox tendency was lacking in scientific spirit, the Modern Theology saturated with unbelief. He looked about for something different and better, which finally he discovered in the German Vermittelungstheologie of Nitzsch, Twes-ten, Müller, Dorner, Rothe and others. Like these theologians he desired to retain both faith and science. The orthodox Dogmatics could not be accepted in the customary manner with a simple unquestioning faith. It posited *a priori* the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and thus precluded a free investigation. It put doctrine before faith, transformed faith into an intellectual act, and consequently suffered from a fatal intellectualism. Moreover, by Kant's philosophy and the historical criticism of the Scriptures, this standpoint had long been judged. Another path must be followed to gain access to the truth in the sphere of religion and morals. This is the ethical way, which means that man knows and understands the truth not by reason and intellect, but by his soul, his heart, his conscience, in his capacity as a true man, a moral being. To express the same in scriptural language: He alone, that is born again of water and of the Spirit, can see the kingdom of heaven (John iii. 3); whosoever doeth the will of God, understands of the doctrine of Jesus, that it is of God (John vii. 17). Such a one does not believe on the ground of any external authority of the Bible, the Church, historical evidence, but exclusively on the ground of his own experience of that testimony which the truth carries with itself. He does not assent, by a purely intellectual process, to a number of orthodox propositions. That is not the true faith. Faith is not an act of the intellect, but a matter of the heart; faith is life. It is the life of the Holy Spirit within us, the satisfaction of all our ethical aspirations, the true, perfect, natural, genuinely-human life. The contents of such a faith are not some theoretical dogmas, some system or confession. Truth is not intellectual; it is

thoroughly ethical by nature; it is personal, identical with the living Christ Himself. Those are the true believers, that in their heart hold communion with the living, personal Christ; in Him they are partakers of the truth, should their confession of Christ be ever so erroneous. But this life of faith, residing in the heart, does not remain shut up in the heart. It controls the whole man, reveals itself in his actions, and attains to consciousness in his intellect. Hence the duty of theology to enter into this life by thought and to formulate it. Thus doctrine is made to follow life. Dogmatics is built upon Ethics. Dogmas are a description, never infallible, of the life of faith. Consequently they are to be subjected to an ever-renewed criticism. They are to be thrown into the crucible without sparing, in order that the good ore may be purified of its admixture of clay. There is no danger in this whatsoever. Forms may change, the essence remains. The life of faith is not dependent on any dogmatic formula, or on any result of historical criticism. It rests in itself, and creates for itself ever new forms. The Church has nothing to lose and everything to gain by this process of criticism.

Especially the present time was a time, according to De la Saussaye, that stood in need of a reconstruction of all dogmas. The important duty devolved upon theology to divest them of their scholastic form, ethically to renew and Christologically to reshape them. All dogmas, that of inspiration, the Trinity, creation, Christ's satisfaction, were to be subjected to such a remodeling. Saussaye himself labored in this direction. It is easy to conceive what had to be the result of this in regard to the separate dogmas. Election, for example, was no longer an eternal decree of God, but became the act whereby God personally communicates Himself to man. Satisfaction no longer consisted in the fulfillment of the divine law, and the bearing of the divine wrath, but in the union of God and man as begun by Christ in His incarnation, upheld and completed in His death. There was but little original in all this, the German *Vermittelungstheologie* having elaborated these ideas before.

Nevertheless, De la Saussaye's significance for the history of Dutch theology should not be underestimated. For many he has become a rich blessing by his powerful and attractive preaching. He opposed intellectualism and empiricism with all his might, set forth clearly the darkening influence of sin, and emphatically argued the necessity of regeneration for attaining to knowledge of the truth. He had the advantage of the Utrecht Theology in this, that he felt absolved from the duty of demonstrating the claims of his faith on the basis of a broad and unstable Apologetics, and could appeal directly to conscience in man over against the Moderns also. Still

the number of those who consciously followed him was rather small. The period of his activity at the university was too short to form a school. In Dr. J. H. Gunning, formerly minister at The Hague, afterwards ecclesiastical professor at Amsterdam, at present professor at Leiden, he found a talented assistant, who faithfully adopted his ideas, but also combined them with certain theosophic and apocalyptic views. Among the teachers in the universities his tendency is represented by his son, T. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, at Amsterdam (author of the *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 1887-1889), Valetton at Utrecht, Van Dijk, Wildeboer and Van Rhijn at Groningen. A number of ministers, like Dr. Daubanton and others, edit a periodical, *Theologische Studien*, which advocates the principles of the Ethical Theology.

VI. THE REFORMED TENDENCY.

The Apologetic and Ethical Theologies, though worthy of appreciation, suffered from two defects. In the first place, their principles lacked that inner consistency which could enable them permanently to resist the attacks of modern unbelief. And secondly, owing to this very fact, they could not win the support of the Reformed party among believers. One could easily foresee that the period of reconciliation and mediation would be followed by a period of separation and parting of ways, as soon as the futility of all attempts at union should have become apparent. Notwithstanding every slight and oppression, a numerous party among believers remained faithful to the Reformed truth. At the beginning of the present century, only a few ministers sympathized with this spirit, and the pious were obliged to meet in conventicles and to feed on the writings of the old divines while complaining of the desolation of the Church. The state of things was indeed sad in the extreme. A spirit of deep slumber had been poured out upon the entire Church; a cold Supranaturalism reigned supreme everywhere. In addition, the king had, in 1816, without a semblance of right or of necessity, forced upon the Dutch Reformed Church an organization and a government which were utterly at variance with the Presbyterian system. Complaints and protestations of grievance were not lacking; but not until 1834 was courage mustered for action. Being debarred from speaking and acting according to the Word of God and the Confession of the Church, many believers, in agreement with Article xxix of the Belgic Confession of Faith, separated themselves from the Dutch Reformed Church, as from a false Church, thus giving birth to the present "Christian Reformed Church." Though this separation was very influential at the beginning and became so to an ever-increasing extent afterwards, still

the number of those who joined it was small; the greater part remained within the pale of the old Church.

Among the men of the Réveil, however, there were some who sought a closer contact with the Reformed among the people. First among these was the great poet, Bilderdijk (†1831). He became of significance for the Reformed tendency, chiefly in two respects. First, by advocating and upholding untiringly, both in prose and in poetry, the confession of God's absolute sovereignty, defending it against all Deism, Rationalism, and Pelagianism. In the second place, by forming a company of disciples during his sojourn at Leiden in meetings where various important topics, chiefly relating to Dutch history, were discussed by him. Among the disciples who joined in his protest against the spirit of the age the foremost was Mr. G. Groen Van Prinsterer (born 1801; died 1876), who was led by his study of Plato, by his researches in Dutch history and by his subsequent intercourse with men of the Réveil, not merely to a positive Christianity in the general sense, but, beyond this, to specific Christian-historic convictions. According to his own testimony his Christian-historic or Antirevolutionary training was completed and his outline of principles prepared in 1831.

From the very beginning Groen occupied a distinct position among the men of the Réveil. Attaching himself to the history of his own country and people, he emphasized the Christian character of the nation and the rights of the Reformed Confession. In 1842, together with six other gentlemen of The Hague, he presented an address to the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, requesting it to maintain the rights of the Reformed Confession against the Groningen School. This year may be called the birthyear of the Confessional party in the Dutch Reformed Church, and it inaugurated the separation between the various groups of believing Christians. The rupture, however, was destined to extend still further. Groen was the champion, not merely of the rights of the Reformed Confession within the Church, to defend which he published an important work in 1840; he also professed the gospel in the sphere of politics. In 1847 he had published his standard work, *Ongeloof en Revolutie*. In 1849 he was elected to the Lower House of the States General. Hence this year may be considered the birthyear of the *Antirevolutionary* party. The Reformed party, led by Groen, henceforth was a political party also. In this way a separation was brought about between Christians and Christians not only ecclesiastically, but politically likewise.

There remained one point, however, in regard to which all were in harmony, so as to make coöperation possible. This was the point of Christian instruction in the common schools. The demand for

this constituted the leading article in the platform of the Antirevolutionary party. Groen endeavored to preserve coöperation in this matter. He did not urge adherence to Reformed principles of a pronounced type, but stood firm by the unchangeable truths of the Reformation. On this platform he strove to unite, the Confessional party, the Ethicals, Lutherans, Baptists, Dissenters, and others. In 1857, however, the cabinet under the leadership of Van der Bruggen, a friend and adherent of Chantepie de la Saussaye, introduced schools that professed to be strictly neutral, stripped of all religious character. This was a blow aimed directly at the Christian-historic party, all the more painful because inflicted by a fellow-believer. From this moment Groen made an important change in his political programme. Hitherto he had defended the Christian character of the Dutch State and its civil institutions. On his return to the Lower House in 1862, he declared his acquiescence in the principle of neutrality, which had been voluntarily adopted by the government. He now demanded free schools as a rule, and neutral public schools only by way of exception; he embodied in his programme a separation of Church and State; he insisted upon abolishment of the theological faculties in the State universities. This change of front became a new cause of rupture; the difference of principles between the various groups of believers, in reference to the Church, the State and the schools, became more and more apparent. Even many Reformed in the Dutch Reformed Church did not cordially endorse Groen in this new movement. Thus the division on the line of principles had become a fact of history already during Groen's lifetime.

Groen died in 1876, after having pointed out Dr. A. Kuyper as his successor and the leader of his party. Dr. Kuyper was born in 1837 at Maassluis as the son of a Reformed minister. He studied theology at Leiden under Scholten, and took his degree as Doctor of Divinity in 1862 with a dissertation on the idea of the Church in Calvin and Á Lasco. The historical studies he had to pursue in writing this treatise, and his intercourse with the pious Reformed people in his first congregation at Beesd, in the province of Gelderland, under the Lord's guidance brought him to a believing acceptance of the Scriptures as the Word of God, and to a firm conviction of the truth of the Calvinistic doctrine. By his splendid gifts and many-sided talents, he became not only the able political leader of the Antirevolutionary party, but also the powerful champion of Reformed principles. He quickly perceived the unsatisfactory character of the Apologetic tendency, and the dangerous character of the Ethical Theology. Both were wasting their strength in vindicating their own standpoint, and in a constant warfare against their opponents, thus weakening themselves without persuading the enemy.

The truth of Christianity was not to be vindicated by means of Apologetics and Mediation. Only on one occasion, therefore, has Dr. Kuyper made a direct attack upon Modernism, in a lecture of 1871 in which it was exposed by him as a *fata morgana*. In this he settled accounts with it forever, being convinced that it would consume itself and did not need his opposition. Avoiding all Apologetics, Dr. Kuyper proceeded in a thetical manner. He chose his standpoint not on the outside but within faith, planted himself squarely on the basis of the infallible Scriptures and the Reformed Confession. His arms were directed not against the unbelieving enemies without, but against the heterodox friends within. Incessantly in his weekly paper, *De Heraut*, the reigning orthodoxy was exposed, as to the weakness of its principle, its departure from the Reformed Confession, its destructive tendencies. The result was that the followers of Van Oosterzee, Doedes and De la Saussaye became more and more estranged from Dr. Kuyper.

While thus embracing the Reformed doctrine, he revives the same in its most strict type. To him the line marked by the names of Calvin, Voetius, Comrie represents Reformed theology in its most correct development. For it is characteristic of the Reformed doctrine, that it deduces all things from God and makes all things return to God. Hence Dr. Kuyper is not satisfied until every dogma has been traced to its deepest roots and set forth in its inner connection with the divine decree. He never remains on the surface, but goes down into the deep region of principles, seeking to penetrate through the phenomena into the sphere of noumena. It would be unjust therefore to say that Dr. Kuyper's work confines itself to a mere repristination and slavish imitation of the old Reformed models. He does not produce a new theology, but reproduces the old in an independent and sometimes in a free manner. The various Reformed doctrines to him are not loosely connected *loci communes*, but, being most intimately related, they form one world of ideas, one strictly coherent system. This system, with its firmly drawn, clear lines of thought, reproduced from the writings of the best Reformed theologians, he endeavors to accredit and recommend to the children of our age, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

This depth of insight is accompanied in Dr. Kuyper by a marvelous breadth of vision. He not only fathoms the depth of principles, but is able, likewise, to follow them up in all their consequences and to trace their application in every sphere of life and in regard to every practical question. In politics he has succeeded, with the aid of Jhr. Mr. A. F. de Savornin Lohman, lately Minister of Internal Affairs, in making the Conservative party dis-

appear from the scene; has inflicted irretrievable blows upon the Liberal party; has supplemented and extended Groen's programme and applied the Antirevolutionary principles to the systems of lower, of middle and of higher education, to the relations between Church and State, to the colonial, social and numerous other problems, which claim the attention of our age and country. In the sphere of the Church he has labored from the very beginning for the deliverance of the Reformed churches from the illegal government imposed upon them in 1816, and for obtaining a truly-Reformed training of the future ministers of the Word. In this he has the valuable assistance of Prof. Dr. F. L. Rutgers, a scholar well versed in the Church History of Holland and in Reformed Church Government. His labors in this direction, however, could but widen the breach between his own followers. The establishment of the *Free University* in 1880, and the organization of the *Doleantie* in 1886 have not only confirmed, but also increased, the disharmony which in Groen's lifetime already existed among believers. Since that time many Reformed in the Dutch Reformed Church, who condemn on principle every separation, have withdrawn from his leadership in Church affairs. It is to be feared that this division will destroy coöperation in political life and in regard to the system of lower education likewise.

In addition to all this, Dr. Kuyper possesses in a remarkable degree the power of eloquent language. He commands a style which, by its clearness, liveliness, pithiness, and owing to his inexhaustible resources of illustration, never fails to attract and to hold attention. By his political organ, *De Standaard*, published daily, and by his Church periodical, *De Heraut*, published weekly, he has now for almost twenty years been incessantly molding the people in one and the same spirit. He is a master in debate and has great skill in cornering his opponent. All this will fully account for the fact that his influence is greater than that of any living Dutchman; that he possesses more violent enemies and counts more fervent admirers than any other leader. The widening of the breach between believers since the beginning of his labors certainly pains, but does not discourage him. He relies upon the illusory character of the theories of unbelief, upon the truth of the Scriptures, upon the vitality of the Reformed principles in the hearts of the Dutch people. It is especially to the last that he owes his strength. All other tendencies have had their day and passed by. But in the face of all scorn and oppression the core of the Dutch nation has remained faithful to Calvinism. In Calvinism, therefore, a power must reside which is not to be found in other principles and systems. It is possible to check and repress for a short

while the influence of Calvinism in politics and Church life; nevertheless, the principles of Calvin will ever again emerge from the depth of the people's life. Dr. Kuyper believes, notwithstanding his frequent disappointments, in the future success of the Calvinistic principles, because they are deeply rooted in the past and interwoven with the innermost fibre of our national existence. At present all his labors aim at bringing together, in one united Church, the three groups of Reformed believers, those of the separation in 1834, those of the doleantie in 1886, and those that still remain within the Dutch Reformed Church. It is impossible to predict what the result of these efforts will be, but undoubtedly for the future of the Reformed Church and of Reformed theology in Holland a great deal depends on the success of this reunion.*

KAMPEN (NETHERLANDS).

H. BAVINCK.

* [Since this article was written the union between the two first mentioned of the above groups has been in principle resolved upon by their respective Synods, although formally it has not yet been concluded.—TRANSLATOR.]