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A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CALVINISM FOR THE REFORMATION OF PHILOSOPHY

WHEN the invitation came to me to write an article for *THE EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY*, I gladly consented to do so, and that for more than one reason.

In the first place, I was pleased to use this means of showing my interest in this international Calvinistic periodical which does such noble work in strengthening the contact between fellows of the faith scattered over the entire world.

In the second place, it offered a very acceptable opportunity for asking the interest of its many readers for a subject which not only lies very close to my heart, but is a subject which may be said to be extremely important for the development of Calvinism, which I suppose is dear to us all.

For we cannot get along without philosophy, a truth which fortunately is being recognised again. To be sure, the danger of over-valuation faces us here: philosophy is exceptionally popular just at this time. But even after one has taken a large part of the present-day interest in philosophy and cancelled it, putting it to the account of the present-day fad, enough remains which is really genuine.

This really genuine interest comes first of all out of a desire to live in a house that has a *style*, a *plan*. This need for a plan is human, but in our circles it is felt intensely: the Calvinist has always considered half-heartedness a hindrance. There is distress all about us, a situation which we cannot relieve if we do not ourselves know what we want at this point.

And yet, there are many among us who cannot get away from the idea that we have never passed beyond this stage of half-heartedness or irresolution in the realm of philosophy. That is why some in our circles turn away from philosophy disappointed, sometimes after real earnest study, and say: "Philosophy is too far away from life," while another adds that "further work in this field is hopeless," and the third party says, "Yes, and even dangerous."

It is a good thing to listen earnestly to this last remark. Now, a person speaks thus giving us warning, not because there is an unfounded fear of new discoveries but because of sad experiences

of failure either on the part of others or himself. And I value this attitude of withholding oneself from the study of philosophy, for the sake of the faith, much higher than the attitude of many who do not distinguish between the Christian's hope for the future and "idealism"; and so, misled by a misunderstood term, propose a union of Christianity and Idealism and pass that on as a Christian Philosophy, working hard to win others for this same mixture, without noticing that their own life of faith has long since lost all its freshness. Indeed, if that is the way it has got to go, then it were better to count all this effort as but "loss and refuse."

The other two groups of disappointed ones are also mostly right; even though we admit gratefully that many modern philosophers are themselves oppressed by the feeling that philosophy is a stranger to life, although they have not yet found the way back to life. And is not the terminology of most philosophers so saturated with humanism that it seems well-nigh impossible to purify it and to bring it into harmony with the muscular, but at the same time restful language of faith?

When I say this I do not mean it to be a concession which I am forced to make to people whom I would consider opponents, more or less. On the contrary, these folk who have become disappointed in philosophy are my partners. And I wish explicitly to state my conviction here: *A synthesis between the Christian faith on the one hand, and the current philosophy on the other, is impossible.*

But that is certainly no reason to sit back and to do nothing. Rather, the impossibility of such a synthesis places upon us the obligation to make serious efforts to build up our own philosophy upon the sure foundation of the Word-revelation; for "Calvinistic philosophy" is certainly no contradiction in terms.

But then our own philosophical thought—in which, as in all other Christian effort, sin easily surrounds us—will have to experience a reformation both in its premises and terminology.

I trust that what I have written up to this point will have showed the importance of the question as to *the significance of Calvinism for the reformation of philosophy.*

Therefore I can conclude this introduction.

I shall now give a brief survey of the line of thought which is here followed.

To complete the task in hand we shall have (I) to ask the question: "What is Calvinism?" The answer will lead to a distinction between *Scriptural* and *non-Scriptural* philosophy. We pause to notice the fundamental motives of the Scriptural philosophy. Then (II) we shall try to trace the fundamental motives of the non-Scriptural philosophy. First we shall try to arrange these motives systematically (III); then we shall turn to history, for if there is anything necessary for us it is a bath in history. But a review of the development of all these motives would be too extensive, and would ask too much of my readers. So as not to make the limitation arbitrary, we will (IV) ask which of these fundamental motives have contributed most to the joining together of pagan and of Christian thought, thereby adding to the current confusion. We then (V) go on to study this motive systematically, and to follow it up in the history (VI) before, during (VII), and shortly after the days of CALVIN (VIII). We shall then be in a position to formulate the task of Calvinism in our day (IX), and to draw our conclusions (X).

I

First, then, the question: What is Calvinism?

Is it anything like a non-critical admiration of everything that CALVIN has done, or a verbatim repetition of everything that he has taught? And does one have the right, then, to deny the name of "Calvinist" to everyone who thinks a little differently on one point or another than did the great reformer? People often act as if they have that right. And there are not a few—for instance the Kerstianen in the Netherlands—who, without being true to CALVIN in every detail themselves, are anxious to sow seeds of difference among Calvinists in this way: a theory, about the relation between church and state, which has been thought through more deeply than the theory of CALVIN, and which can be seen in the sixteenth century teachings of MARNIX VAN ST. ALDEGONDE, and in the nineteenth century work of KUYPER, is simply dubbed un-Calvinistic. But the truth is that both these Calvinists were in a position to submit their better solutions because they were loyal students of CALVIN and followed him closely.

If we feel that the opinion expressed above does us an injustice, we will naturally be careful not to make the same error. But, in order to this, we shall have to distinguish between that

part of the teachings of CALVIN which flows directly from his principles, and that part which of necessity grew out of the needs of his life and times.

In order to illustrate this difference, let us return to the case referred to. CALVIN confessed the divine election. Faith in Christ is, according to him, a gift which God does not grant to all men. Out of this there follows that no government in any land may require that all of its subjects be believers in Christ. CALVIN did not thrust this simple conclusion of his confession to the foreground while in Geneva, for this reason: he had made that city an asylum for those poor exiles who were not safe anywhere, neither in the Spain of the Habsburgers, nor in the France of the de Guises and the Medicis, nor in the England of Bloody Mary; when the storm of the Counter-Reformation broke loose. His desire to keep Geneva as the bulwark of the Reformation was worthy of his best efforts. When one no longer sees this heroic watching over the only possible solution to a concrete problem in its relation to that evil time which created the problem, but tries to get from it the principle which is to govern the relation between the churches—usually the singular is used here, which shows how blind people still are to reality—and the state, one arrives at a hopeless dilemma. For we shall either have to let go the recognition of divine election, thus degrading the church into a popular institution (*volks-instituut*), or else continue to confess election, and instruct all government to drive unbelievers out of their realm. In either case we should conflict with one of the fundamental ideas of the Reformation.

This illustration is used in connection with the needs of the *time* of CALVIN. In other instances we must notice the needs of his *life*. His time was short, and the task of his life weighed heavily upon him. Besides, he was a child of his generation which, however it excelled, had no careful knowledge of the past. For even a strong historical consciousness cannot take the place of a lack of real scientific knowledge. So that it is no trick to point out here and there that CALVIN never quite got out of the wilderness of scholasticism. Whoever wishes to prove this will find many citations to help him out. But such a person forgets that although CALVIN may have been the last of the great reformers, he never desired this honour for himself: his "*ecclesia semper reformanda quia reformata*" gives us a different impression.

Remembering the needs of CALVIN's time as well as his life, we ask what the *principia* of CALVIN were, by which we understand those thoughts which do not contradict each other, but which together carry the structure of his life work.

Without any danger of contradiction, we mention at once the acknowledgment of the Holy Scripture as the Word of God. In his *Institutes* and Church Polity, in polemics and commentaries, in sermons and correspondence, everywhere his appeal to Holy Scripture is for CALVIN the end of all contradiction.

Even today this "formal principle of the reformation" holds for all who call themselves "issu de Calvin."

Now this principle is of great significance for the reformation of philosophy. For it teaches us, for instance, that even if any significance can be given to the struggle between rationalism and empiricism, this difference can never be the real question in the theory of knowledge (*kentheorie*). This is rather the question: Is there another source of knowledge alongside these others? And the separation between right and left wing runs exactly between those who either affirm or deny that there is such a source.

II

But this "formal principle of the reformation" has little value if one scarcely understands the Scripture or understands it not at all.

For it all depends upon this understanding.

The formal recognition of Holy Scripture as the word of God first acquires content when the question is answered, "What does Scripture say?"

I can state the Calvinistic answer to this question very briefly as follows:

(a) Holy Scripture teaches the direct sovereignty of that God Who reveals Himself in His word, over all things, no matter in what realm, and distinguishes, in harmony with this idea, God as the Sovereign from that which He has created.

(b) The Scriptures view religion as a covenant (*unio foederalis*) which was made known to man before the fall by means of word-revelation.

(c) The Scriptures teach concerning conditions after the fall,

1. The total depravity of man;
2. Death as punishment of sin; and

3. The grace of the sovereign God, primarily as forgiving and restoring, secondarily as saving.

A Calvinistic philosophy must proceed from the same fundamental ideas.

To exclude all misunderstanding—terminology having a double meaning needs especially to be avoided—let me make a few remarks concerning the chosen expressions. This can be done briefly, except for the first remarks which demand thoroughness.

(a) To begin with, the statement "Who reveals Himself in His Word" is not superfluous. There is no word that philosophy has tossed about and played with more than the word "God." Sometimes one used it to indicate a certain primeval unity, and at other times God was made to be identical with the form of the world, etc. Especially people in the Middle Ages, when many Christians set themselves to the task of combining heathen and Scriptural thought, sinned at this point. That is why I state with emphasis: if anyone thinks that in his philosophy he must entertain a conception of God other than that given in Holy Scripture, his "god" is not the God of the Scriptures, and his philosophy is not Calvinistic.

(b) In the second place: What is sovereignty? The answer to this question can be clarified by referring to the relation between the absolute monarch and his subjects. Where this relation exists among men it is to be disapproved of, for the reason that it is rooted in a conception which deifies the monarch, either because he is looked upon as the creator of the state, or the son of the national deity, etc. The human sovereign makes a law and *considers* himself to be exalted above the law. But God *really* created the entire cosmos, and *really* placed it under His laws.

That is why one can speak of a *boundary* between God and the cosmos. Naturally, this cannot be a boundary-line in space: the spatial is itself part of creation, and a spatial boundary can only shut out something in the cosmos from something else in that same cosmos, so that the latter lies *outside* the former. But whoever thinks that God is *outside* the cosmos, could not do justice to the confession of God's immanence. Our fathers confessed that God stood "*above*" everything. This last expression indicates the way we must go. The boundary between God and the cosmos is the law. For everything that is above the law for the cosmos, is sovereign over the cosmos, is the God

of Scripture, and everything that belongs to the cosmos is under the law of God, is subject to that law, that is, is subject to God.

(c) The term "*over all things*" hardly needs to be clarified. When, for instance, the Calvinists fought against the "*princeps legibus solutus est*" which was the cry of the Renaissance, they did it on the basis of their confession "*Deus legibus solutus est.*"¹ Everyone who knows his history and remembers how sharply CALVIN distinguished between reformation and revolution knows that the Calvinists were not of the opinion that rulers had no authority. But the authority of rulers is not sovereign, so that nothing in this confession hinders the Calvinist from acknowledging the earthly powers which are placed over him, so long as these powers do not force themselves between him and his God.

(d) I must give a more extended discussion of the phrase "no matter in what realm." There is in the cosmos another distinction than the one usually made between "the one" and "the other." Pagan philosophy has often tried to force this rich variety into a scheme of one or two differences which the systematician had perceived. CALVIN's idea is different. The world is a creation of God. That is why creation is far richer than man can discover or know. Thus he mounts above the construction which can lead to nothing but crooked contrasts. And so he does not only reject the Roman Catholic distinction between the realm of nature and the kingdom of grace, but alongside of the family, the state and the church, between which LUTHER had already made a distinction, he gives the economic life its own place. But although his conception accepted the great variety of life, since it was founded upon his faith in the Scriptures, from one point of view there was a similarity in the variety: everything is placed under the law of God.

And so the Calvinist has a dual conception of freedom. (a) In the first place there is the Christian liberty. It is being free from sin which hinders us in every realm from serving God according to His word. Distinguished from this freedom, but not loose from it, there is the other liberty in which we glory when we speak of "free churches," "free state," "free society," and "free university."

¹ Out of the historical background of this contrast it becomes clear that this "*solutus est*" did not mean that God did not abide by His laws in His dealings with His creatures, but that God Himself was not *under* the law.

The asserting of this second freedom is due to the view, that even the life that has been set free from the power of sin may not, without any consideration, ignore the rich variety seen in the work of God. For even in a state where all the inhabitants would be Christians, the authority of the government is to be distinguished from the authority of the officers in the church. If one does not recognise these differences, the office-bearer of the one realm will step in to regulate matters in a sphere for which he has no qualification. And his ruling would constantly cause a disturbance. Now, just because this variety is the work of God, we can understand why the Calvinist really experiences his liberty through Christ in his recognition of this richness, and in his struggle against all short-sightedness which, because it is blind to this wealth, ends in the tyrannising of one sphere of life by the office-bearers of another. That is the meaning of KUYPER's battle for "the sovereignty in one's own sphere of life." In this struggle he asserted two things; first, the right of the office-bearers in a defined sphere of life to formulate the laws which are to govern that domain; and, second, the limitation of this right, so that other spheres of life are entirely free from those laws, having power to make their own.

In these days a tendency can be noticed in our circles which feels that all these distinctions are really secondary, especially in the field of Christian service; for they say that church and school, social and political action are all expressions of the one life. And is not the number of those who give themselves for this work rather small, so that you constantly meet the same people at meetings which are held for different objects? Especially those who occupy many offices in this work rather support the argument. To be sure, there is some truth in this. We really have too many societies. But the way out, that is suggested, is both superfluous and dangerous. It is superfluous because it generalises too much; for there are also many workers who specialise in one field of Christian service, and who, although interested in other endeavours do not belong to that small group which is seen at every meeting; and besides, a division of offices among a larger number of people will gradually answer this objection. But the appointed way is also dangerous; all authority is rooted in the ordinances of God, but these ordinances are often specified for a certain sphere, and so their authority is limited. And nothing so undermines reverence for constituted authority, even in the domain of the Christian life,

as misuse of rights on the part of office-bearers, or the claiming of rights which they do not have. That is why we see no salvation in any reaction against KUYPER's work ; rather, his fundamental idea ought to be maintained.

But even this is not sufficient : it ought, first, to be *thought through*, and second, it ought to be *applied* wherever that has not been done up to this time.

Concerning the *first* suggestion—difficulties have arisen and do still arise, because the word “ domain, sphere ” (*kring*) has a double meaning. The first meaning refers to differences of which the boundary can usually be determined in terms of space. So we have towns lying next to each other, local churches, etc. And even when this criterion causes a little trouble, one can usually find his way out by asking the question : “ Where is the centre ? ” Different city departments work next to each other in the same territory, but the centres are separate and different. And although co-operation can do away with much waste of time and energy, still we can understand that in a large city one labourer obeys orders from one bureau, and another obeys the orders from another central bureau. But it is an entirely different matter when we try to point out the boundaries between various functions which are bound to different laws. The boundary running between the two functions of a man who is at one and the same time father and tradesman does not run across the doorstep separating his home from his place of work ; for he is man and father when he shows to his wife and children the results of his labour outside of his home, and he is tradesman even when he is bending over his table at home working at his books. Those who remember the difficulties which arose some time ago in the discussions in the Netherlands about the “ baker's-law ” will admit that the question “ What is a domain, a sphere, ” can only be clarified when one does not lose sight of the difference between a spatial and a functional boundary. This distinction will also bear its fruit in practice.

Consider now the *application* of this thought to a comparatively new field. All that we have said up to this time can be known by everyone even though he has never been a student in any branch of scientific learning. Not infrequently Dr. KUYPER's distinctions were intelligently received by those who had never tasted the luxury of advanced study. The reason why they agreed so heartily with him was this : in their own practice

they had experienced that a law or an ordinance formulated by one who had not proper authority to do so, brought disturbance into their lives. And so they became mature for the insight that life has various domains, all of which are obedient to the laws of God, and adapt themselves to the formulating of these laws by competent authorities who accomplish their difficult work with love and knowledge of matters, but resist when there is forced upon them an arbitrary ruling that does not agree with their nature.

Now, science has had the same experience. For instance, as long as the mathematicians did not distinguish between the domain of numbers and space, but tried to classify the latter under the first, space showed itself to be unruly, and even in this twentieth century it places the men of science before the antinomies which faced ZENO the ELEATIC and the PYTHAGOREANS. But as soon as one differentiates between number and space, letting every attempt to classify one under the other go, this antinomy is done away with.

As long as we do not start out with the conviction that there are no antinomies in the cosmos, practice and science run aground. This principle (*principium exclusæ antinomiæ*) is nothing else than a corollary or result of the confession of the sovereignty of God over all things in every domain. For when these spheres are subjected to the law of God made especially for them, it is clear that none of them are subject to any other law, and every human endeavour to force them to subjection under a law not made for them is doomed to suffer shipwreck. The battle that has been begun in our circles during the past years against the acceptance of antinomies is, really, the continuance of the age-old struggle against the pseudo-sovereignty of the reason, a battle which has been so bravely fought in another domain.

Meanwhile, the battle will be no less severe here than elsewhere. For pagan thought has always accepted antinomies. Nor could it be otherwise.

For paganism itself had called them into being. Since it did not recognise in the cosmos an orderly work of God, it thought that it had to do with a chaos which waited for human regulation and order. And the simpler the regulation, the easier it would be. Did not DRIESCH, just a few years ago, put forward the monistic ideal of order, only to admit that it will not do? And even when one is forced to recognise a variety of functions,

the old premature adjustment comes peeking around the corner ; they expect no surprises, but as soon as they have run across a variety of functions they attempt immediately to classify everything under the established heads. Thus the astrologist in Babylon distinguished between space and motion, the vitalist swears by the difference between the mechanical and the organic, and others notice nothing else than that the emotional life is other than the organic, something that the Marburger denies with a passion, only to place just as strong an emphasis upon the view that analysis cannot be traced back to the emotions. Naturally, this attitude resulted herein, that many functions, namely, those which had wrongly been classified under one or the other, were not carefully distinguished. I have already mentioned the including of the number with the space. And it is universally known that the Greek conception of "logos" united together analysis and the language-function, so that analytics ("Logic") and the science of language still labour under the effects of this wrong conception.

What must we think of this struggle ? All of these movements are right insofar as they see that there is a difference which cannot be traced : motion is not to be classified under space, nor is the organic to be classified under motion ; the emotional is surely something else than the organic, even as the analytical differs from the emotional. Creation is like a book written by God, and all these various spheres are to be differentiated as so many chapters in this book. But just because all these thinkers are right insofar as they find the differences which are irreducible, they are all wrong as soon as each one wants to force all the rich variety into the frame-work of the one difference which he discovered anew, after it had been forgotten in a former period, and which he now unjustly values too highly. And so, looking at the history of science (*wetenschap*), we feel that we can distinguish already between the following functions : the arithmetical, the spatial, the physical (that is, the energetical, including kinetic energy which was the only thing the old mechanicians saw), the organic, the emotional, the analytical, the historical, the linguistic, the social, the economical, the æsthetic, the juridical, the ethical and the function of faith (*pistis*). All of these functions are, in the order given above, closely related to one another, and are subject to the laws of God made for them.

It is with difficulty that I refrain from spending some time to point out the beauty of the order and the fine texture of the relation between these functions. But for the purpose of this study it is not necessary; perhaps I have spent too much time at this point already. So I go on to say: All of these functions are functions of things, and are not themselves to be considered as things.

This is true also of the highest actual function of man, that of believing (*pistis*). As a function, as believing, it is no more than the acceptance of the word-revelation of God, or of whatever one looks upon as a word-revelation. For you will find this function among non-Christians as well,¹ among whom it is not fixed upon the Word of God, but upon a substitute. The result is that those who stand in an unbelieving attitude toward the Word of God draw their opinionated knowledge of that which the Christian learns from the Word of God from that which early or late has come up out of the heart of man as revelation. So the unbeliever catches the reflection of a product of his own culture.

On the contrary, the believer in Christ trusts in the Word of God. And in this trust he lives in covenant with God.

(b) I have come to the elucidation of the second and third parts of my thesis. Religion is far from being a *unio substantialis* or *functionalis*. It is a *unio foederalis* in which God speaks to man, and man may speak to God.

According to the conception of Scripture the covenant was always present in religion, which became a religion of grace when the Gospel was preached after the fall.

(c) As to conditions after that, Holy Scripture teaches that all of man is corrupted. Except where grace intervenes redeemingly, Scripture sees nothing in man that can make an exception to this rule. Death as punishment of sin goes on in its working, and touches not only Adam, but all who were speaking with him. When PAUL mentions this condition his included becomes a groaning: "for they have all sinned and come short of the glory of God." But the Word of God did more than preach judgment; it also preached forgiveness and restoration by God, a "being justified freely," while even

¹ DR. A. KUYPER, *E Voto Dordraceno*, Amsterdam, 1905, Vol. III, page 536: ". . . as if such a man existed without faith. Not so, for every modernist and every so-called unbeliever is really an idolater, and has a false faith"

outside of the circle within which God glorified His grace, His goodness is revealed.

Naturally, most of this is known to my readers. But it would not do to omit this résumé of the chief content of Scripture because there is such danger that one shall forget these fundamental ideas when he ventures out upon the confusing variety of philosophical theories. And many a man who was Calvinist in his dogmatics, went off the track in his philosophy. He then confessed that human nature was corrupt, but did not see that that means mankind in its development from the first human pair; and so, without noticing it himself, he exchanged this meaning of the word "nature" for another one according to which nature e.g. is the same as the lower functions. In a similar way another person, under vitalistic influences, could make use of the word "death," meaning not the wrath of God against sin, but referring to the functions lower than organic functions. And a third found himself—even as LEIBNITZ—well on the way to identifying grace with the actual functions of man which are not found in the animal.

And the sad result of all this was that in times of need, when matters in our circles were tense, many a man of science held back, so that the decision was left to an intuition which, although it often proved to be very sound, really missed the help of erudition.

Why is it that this constellation appeared repeatedly? Largely, because people trusted the current philosophy too much, not seeing the deep chasm which, because of principle and history, divides it from a childlike faith.

III

If, in the future, this is to be changed, then it is necessary, first of all, to remark that we lack a proper grouping of the fundamental motives of the non-Scriptural philosophy, to fit in with our view. How often are not deism and pantheism presented as sharp contrasts, only to stamp one's own view as "theism"! Now, even though we feel that this method brings us no further, we need to remain fair. There was a time when Calvinists had to defend themselves at these two fronts, and we need to be thankful that they did so. In the second place, we need to remember that terminology had to be made in haste, yes, that it usually rested

upon the terminology of others, because the issue was the chief concern. The writer has himself been satisfied temporarily to speak of Calvinism in the sphere of philosophy as being "theistic," until a quotation in the *E Voto*¹ of Dr. KUYPER, in which KUYPER discusses the use of the word, and sensed something wrong in the use of it, set him to thinking upon it. Since then the question as to the grouping of the fundamental motives of the opponents from our own view-point, has not let the writer go. In recent years the following terminology has seemed to him to be usable :

Standing in the presence of any philosophical motive (*motief*) we ask the all-controlling question, whether in its opinion, *there is a boundary between God and created things*. The answer will either be affirmative or negative. MONISM denies this boundary; DUALISM accepts one.²

Let us view each a bit more closely.

I. The MONISTIC answer can rest upon various considerations. It can deny the boundary between God and the cosmos either because it denies the existence of God or of the cosmos : in which case it is *negative* and resolves itself into *atheism* and *acosmism*. It can also be based upon a subsuming of God under the cosmos, or the cosmos under God : then it is *subsumptive*, or *pancosmism* or *pantheism*.

II. DUALISM acknowledges that the boundary exists. But the un-Scriptural dualism thinks that the boundary lies in a different place than where the Scripture places it. It can be one of two : In the first instance it subsumes part of what the Scripture ascribes to God, as belonging to the cosmos, and then it is *partial cosmistic*. In the second instance it accepts part of the cosmos as being divine, and then it is *partial theistic*.

However these motives may differ, they have this in common, that they either deny or infringe upon the sovereignty of the God of the Scriptures. For monism in its various forms denies every boundary and thus cannot recognise the law of God as such. And the un-Scriptural dualism either thinks of only a part of God

¹ Dr. A. KUYPER, *E Voto Dordraceno*, Vol. I, page 178 : " And with this ' doctrine concerning God ' the sparring with the equally Græcian-philosophical idea of Theism will be stopped. But this says nothing. At the best it contains a denial of Deism and Polytheism, but it certainly does not hinder the intrusion of Pantheism ; and the Unitarians, just like the Groningers here in our country who deny the holy Trinity, use the word Theism and Theistic with preference."

² Naturally the terms " monism " and " dualism " may not be used elsewhere without explanatory additions. I indicate the standpoint of the person who distinguishes between only one or two functions as " function-monism," and, in the same way, " function-dualism."

as sovereign, or else thinks that God has got to share His sovereignty with creation.¹

IV

Let us use these distinctions while looking at the difficulties before which the Christians among the Greeks came to stand, when in their time they laboured in this domain.

To do this we must go back to the time when the Gospel was preached to the peoples about the Mediterranean Sea. Nothing is less correct than the view which, forgetting the difference between the Gospel and those who heard it, dreams of a pure primitive Christianity. On the contrary, there was a very great danger that these peoples with their primeval, thoroughly heathen culture which was dear to them, did not understand the Gospel; even at those times when they felt that they could accept it—yes, perhaps then especially.

This misunderstanding of the Gospel threatened the highly-cultured most of all, because it was their task to give the main content of the Old and the New Testament in a language which would speak to their surroundings.

We honour them because they saw their task.

And we are surprised at the way in which they did their work. For the view of BRÉHIER² c.s. that early Christianity made no deep impression upon philosophy, is decidedly wrong. Had it been otherwise, then surely would they have failed to see the difference between the Holy Scriptures and their own earlier philosophy, and the entire development of the Mediæval scholasticism would have come to pass.

If we look a little more closely, we can notice a remarkable difference. As long as the struggle is against *Monism* they are conscious of the danger of being led astray: even ORIGEN does not accept the Eastern Neo-Platonism without radical modifications.

¹ In view of these additions it is easy to understand the difficulties involved in describing the position of Scripture as "Theism," holding to the middle of the road between pantheism and deism. Briefly, they are these:

1. Good does not lie half-way between two evils, but is anti-thetical to both.
2. Deism is but a variation within the limits of pan-cosmism: it conceives of God as a machine-creator.
3. In this way one can never distinguish in "Monism" between the ignoring and the subsuming motive (*negerend en subsumeerend*); pantheism is something other than atheism, and pan-cosmism is something other than a-cosmism.
4. To throw aside the denial of boundaries, taking this position over against deistic pan-cosmism and pantheism, is not sufficient to describe a system.
5. The use of the term "theism" to accomplish this, is subject to objections (see note 3).

² Em. Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, 1928, I, 486-522.

upon the terminology of others, because the issue was the chief concern. The writer has himself been satisfied temporarily to speak of Calvinism in the sphere of philosophy as being "theistic," until a quotation in the *E Voto*¹ of Dr. KUYPER, in which KUYPER discusses the use of the word, and sensed something wrong in the use of it, set him to thinking upon it. Since then the question as to the grouping of the fundamental motives of the opponents from our own view-point, has not let the writer go. In recent years the following terminology has seemed to him to be usable:

Standing in the presence of any philosophical motive (*motief*) we ask the all-controlling question, whether in its opinion, *there is a boundary between God and created things*. The answer will either be affirmative or negative. MONISM denies this boundary; DUALISM accepts one.²

Let us view each a bit more closely.

I. The MONISTIC answer can rest upon various considerations. It can deny the boundary between God and the cosmos either because it denies the existence of God or of the cosmos: in which case it is *negative* and resolves itself into *atheism* and *acosmism*. It can also be based upon a subsuming of God under the cosmos, or the cosmos under God: then it is *subsumptive*, or *pancosmism* or *pantheism*.

II. DUALISM acknowledges that the boundary exists. But the un-Scriptural dualism thinks that the boundary lies in a different place than where the Scripture places it. It can be one of two: In the first instance it subsumes part of what the Scripture ascribes to God, as belonging to the cosmos, and then it is *partial cosmistic*. In the second instance it accepts part of the cosmos as being divine, and then it is *partial theistic*.

However these motives may differ, they have this in common, that they either deny or infringe upon the sovereignty of the God of the Scriptures. For monism in its various forms denies every boundary and thus cannot recognise the law of God as such. And the un-Scriptural dualism either thinks of only a part of God

¹ Dr. A. KUYPER, *E Voto Dordraceno*, Vol. I, page 178: "And with this 'doctrine concerning God' the sparring with the equally Græcian-philosophical idea of Theism will be stopped. But this says nothing. At the best it contains a denial of Deism and Polytheism, but it certainly does not hinder the intrusion of Pantheism; and the Unitarians, just like the Groningers here in our country who deny the holy Trinity, use the word Theism and Theistic with preference."

² Naturally the terms "monism" and "dualism" may not be used elsewhere without explanatory additions. I indicate the standpoint of the person who distinguishes between only one or two functions as "function-monism," and, in the same way, "function-dualism."

as sovereign, or else thinks that God has got to share His sovereignty with creation.¹

IV

Let us use these distinctions while looking at the difficulties before which the Christians among the Greeks came to stand. when in their time they laboured in this domain.

To do this we must go back to the time when the Gospel was preached to the peoples about the Mediterranean Sea. Nothing is less correct than the view which, forgetting the difference between the Gospel and those who heard it, dreams of a pure primitive Christianity. On the contrary, there was a very great danger that these peoples with their primeval, thoroughly heathen culture which was dear to them, did not understand the Gospel; even at those times when they felt that they could accept it—yes, perhaps then especially.

This misunderstanding of the Gospel threatened the highly-cultured most of all, because it was their task to give the main content of the Old and the New Testament in a language which would speak to their surroundings.

We honour them because they saw their task.

And we are surprised at the way in which they did their work. For the view of BRÉHIER² c.s. that early Christianity made no deep impression upon philosophy, is decidedly wrong. Had it been otherwise, then surely would they have failed to see the difference between the Holy Scriptures and their own earlier philosophy, and the entire development of the Mediæval scholasticism would have come to pass.

If we look a little more closely, we can notice a remarkable difference. As long as the struggle is against *Monism* they are conscious of the danger of being led astray: even ORIGEN does not accept the Eastern Neo-Platonism without radical modifications.

¹ In view of these additions it is easy to understand the difficulties involved in describing the position of Scripture as "Theism," holding to the middle of the road between pantheism and deism. Briefly, they are these:

1. Good does not lie half-way between two evils, but is anti-thetical to both.
2. Deism is but a variation within the limits of pan-cosmism: it conceives of God as a machine-creator.
3. In this way one can never distinguish in "Monism" between the ignoring and the subsuming motive (*negeerend en subsumeerend*); pantheism is something other than atheism, and pan-cosmism is something other than a-cosmism.
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