Recensies

Goudriaan, A., *Reformed Orthodoxy and Philosophy, 1625-1750. Gisbertus Voetius, Petrus van Mastricht, and Anthonius Driessen* (Brill's series in church history XXVI; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006, xi + 391 blz., €119, ISBN 978 90 04 15498 8).

This is an excellent work of intellectual history. The importance of orthodox Dutch Reformed theology for the general debate about philosophy and science in the Dutch Republic in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century has often been noted but until now never systematically explained and analyzed.

The three prominent theologians taken as representatives of Dutch Reformed orthodoxy in debate with contemporary philosophy, Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676), Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706) and Anthonius Driessen (1684-1748), the first two rigid Calvinists and rather influential also abroad in Protestant circles, the third less influential outside the Republic and veering more to the Cocceio-Cartesian camp (though he was in some respects also an anti-Cartesian), were all closely involved in major public controversies concerning philosophy and its relation to faith and the Bible. It may have been previously reasonably well-known that the challenge and problems posed by Descartes' philosophy had a central shaping role in Dutch intellectual debate and higher education as a whole for over three-quarters of a century (1645-1720), and that orthodox Calvinists mostly regarded Spinoza's thought as an extension or continuation, rather than an overthrowing, of Cartesian thinking, but in this study these issues are dealt with in a more detailed as well as balanced and integrated way than one finds elsewhere.

The author is not so much concerned to offer three separate case-studies as to look at the three theologians in question together in relation to a series of key philosophico-theological issues where theology and philosophy were to a degree in collision. Thus, he deals in turn with the question of Bible Interpretation and the status of reason, Science and the principle of 'accommodation', the questions of divine Providence, Freedom of Will, sin, miracles, the Immortality and immateriality of the soul, and the notion of Divine Law.

In all these respects, Goudriaan succeeds in adjusting or nuancing established notions. It is easy, for instance, to assume that followers of Wittichius and other Cartesian-influenced Dutch theologians and philosophers embraced the idea of Biblical 'accommodation' of misconceived popular ideas of Biblical times whereas the literalists, Voetius and Van Mastricht, opposed 'accommodation'. However, Goudriaan demonstrates that neither Voetius nor Van Mastricht were opposed to the principle of accommation *per se*. The fact that both theologians conceived of 'accommodation' in a more limited way than colleagues such as Wittichius; and the fact that Voetius steadfastly interpreted Biblical passages regarding the movements of the sun in a literal

fashion opposing Copernicanism and refusing to accept that such passages were concessions to prevailing popular misconceptions, has to do less with the principle as such, and the philosophical nuancing this implies, than with the importance of the topic and status of Scripture as divinely-inspired. If, held Voetius, the compilers of Scripture could not tell the truth with regard to the Sun's movements, 'the Word of God is not authentic'; if they did not want to tell the truth, they would be responsible for readers' misconceptions (see 136-137). Here as elsewhere, it was vital to both Voetius and Van Mastricht to keep philosophy firmly subordinate to theology.

Some of the most interesting passages with respect to Driessen concern the question of how he differed from Voetius and Van Mastricht on the subject of miracles. Goudriaan suggests that the general acceptance of miracles in Dutch as in other European culture in the mid seventeenth century was such that Voetius and Van Mastricht were less on the defensive on this point, indeed remained more anxious to show that the incidence of miracles had greatly declined since Biblical times than they were with defending the possibility of miracles as such. Driessen, however, viewing the scene from the perspective of the early eighteenth century, saw God's Providence as clashing full frontally with the view of those philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz who asserted the unchangeable and absolute quality of natural laws. Consequently, Driessen, is far more concerned than his predecessors to defend the possibility – in the present no less than in the past – of miracles as such.

In his brief but interesting conclusion, Goudriaan re-emphasizes the importance for these writers of the question of how to relate philosophy to theology. He draws up a kind of balance-sheet showing that while there was a large measure of doctrinal continuity linking all three Reformed theologians, including their common commitment to the overriding authority of Scripture, the differences of philosophical affiliation and perspective between them also introduced some substantial differences especially between Driessen and the other two. He concludes that Voetius and Van Mastricht were far more successful in combining Calvinist theology with Aristotelian-scholastic forms and terminology than was Driessen in combining it with strands taken both from Cartesianism and from his critique of the Leibnitio-Wolffian philosophy. It was precisely the effort to modernize Reformed theology in this instance that placed it in greatest danger.

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Onnekink, D., *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite. The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)* (Oorspronkelijk dissertatie Utrecht 2004, Politics and Culture in North-Western Europe 1650-1720; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, xvii + 297 blz., £60,-, ISBN 978 0 7546 5545 9); Mijers, E., Onnekink, D., Redifining William III. The Impact of the King-Stadholder in International Context (Politics and Culture in North-Western Europe 1650-1720; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, xx + 293 blz., £55,-,

ISBN 978 0 7546 5028 7).

David Onnekink's *Anglo-Dutch Favourite* is a well-written, extremely competent study less of the life and career of Bentinck as such than of his role in the making of William III's career and major decisions, and as such is extremely welcome, filling a notorious gap in the literature and in our historical knowledge. The nature and exact forms of Anglo-Dutch collaboration and interaction during the years 1689-1702 when there existed in the world something like an Anglo-Dutch imperial complex, or multiple monarchy, have, as the author points out in his introduction, hardly ever been studied even to a minimal extent let alone fully investigated. As the most important of William III's 'Dutch' personal advisers, Bentinck's political and diplomatic career certainly provides an ideal vantage-point from which to begin filling the lacuna.

Accordingly, besides providing an excellent account of the system of 'favouritism' and informal advisers at William's court at The Hague, before 1688, the book supplies a great deal of new information about William III's international negotiations and diplomacy and especially about his complex dealings with the German states and the British aristocracy. His discussion of the religious factor in William III's and Bentinck's statecraft is nuanced and sensitive, and he convincingly shows that Bentinck was a more serious bearer of a distinctively Dutch Protestant ideology than the Prince himself probably was. At the same time he leaves the reader under no illusions as to Bentinck's cold, dry and intellectually-limited personality. A particularly valuable aspect of this study is the detailed and often innovative account of Bentinck's key role in Scottish and Irish affairs during the early 1690s and of Bentinck's success in integrating himself and his children into the English aristocracy. Very interesting and significant also, is his analysis of Bentinck's views on common Anglo-Dutch military strategy during the war against France from 1688 down to 1697 and how these differed from those of the king's English ministers, betraying what might justly be called a certain 'pro-Dutch bias' with a particular focus on the campaigns in the southern Netherlands.

The author has certainly succeeded in showing, on the one hand, as he puts it, that Bentinck played a key co-ordinating role in William's government of his four 'realms' in the 1690s and, on the other, how and why, to many or most of the English aristocracy and wider public he embodied what they saw as the evils of the Williamite settlement. In Britain he became and remained strikingly unpopular. There is a clear sense in which Bentinck's career and person personified Anglo-Dutch developments in the crucial decade after 1688. However, I do not myself think the author has substantiated his claims in one significant respect – his working towards what he suggests is a major reorientation in our understanding of the Dutch role in the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689.

Here, he begins by saying that 'to date, no satisfactory analysis of Dutch strategic considerations in 1688 has appeared' and that his aim is to re-orientate our interpretation by showing, in particular by reference to developments in Germany, how we can 'situate the decision to invade England within a