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DATES:

Published: 28 July 2021

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Bishop, S., 2021. Kuyperania 2020.
KOERS — Bulletin for Christian
Scholarship, 86(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.19108/KOERS.86.1.2504>

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Kuyperania 2020

ABSTRACT

This article looks at new works published in 2020 by or about the Dutch polymath Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920).

KEY CONCEPTS: Abraham Kuyper, common grace, government, family, upbringing, ecclesiology, creation

ABSTRAK

Hierdie artikel kyk na nuwe werk gepubliseer in 2020 deur of oor die Nederlandse polimaat Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920).

KERNBEGRIPE: Abraham Kuyper, gemeenskaplike genade, regering, familie, opvoeding, ekklesiologie, skeppinge

1. Introduction

November 8th 2020 was the centenary of Abraham Kuyper's death, and it is fitting then that the Kuyper Translation Project should produce, in this year, the final volume of his *Common Grace* trilogy. It is also inevitable that several other publications were produced to celebrate this event. Unfortunately, restrictions due to the COVID-19 virus meant that several conferences to celebrate Kuyper had to be postponed.

As well as *Common Grace* another volume of Kuyper's was translated and published: *Ever in Thy Sight*.

2. Translations of Kuyper

2.1 *Ever in Thy Sight*

The details in the style of Kuipers (2011) of this translation are:

Ever in Thy Sight

31 Devotions on the Psalms

Bellingham, WA, Lexham Press 2020. 243pp, 12.7 x 1.8 x 20.3 cm- £14.95

Translator: James A. De Jong

Edited by Jordan J. Ballor and J. Daryl Charles

Introduction by James A. De Jong

Binding: Paperback

Published: February 2020

ISBN 9781693593584

This book is a selection of thirty-one meditations on the Psalms taken from the recently translated and published *Honey From the Rock* (Kuyper, 2018).

The book is well designed and each of the meditations has the Psalm printed in grey on black, with the main verse(s) discussed emphasised in white lettering. De Jong in his introduction notes: 'Ultimately, Abraham Kuyper's meditations on the Psalms bring people into communion with God. They share his beatific vision of the God of grace for all who truly come to him' (p xii).

2.2 Common Grace volume 3

The details in the style of Kuipers (2011) of the final volume of *Common Grace* are as follows.

Translations

Common Grace

God's Gift for a Fallen World Volume 3

The Practical Section

Bellingham, WA, Lexham Press 2020. 600 pp., 18.8 x 6.1 x 25.9 cm, - £31.65/ \$49.99

Translation of: 1904.37 De Gemeene Gracie. Derde Deel. Het Practische Gedeelte.

Translator: Nelson Kloosterman and Ed M. Van der Maas

Edited by Jordan J. Ballor and J. Daryl Charles

Introduction by Vincent Bacote

Binding: Hardback

Published: August 2020

ISBN 9781577996699

This is the third and final volume of Kuyper's *Common Grace*. The previous two volumes explored the biblical and historical background to common grace, this one focuses on the practical issues. These include the church and government, the role of state, the family and upbringing, and society - science and art. The final chapters (Ch 61-71) on science and art were omitted from the Dutch original and were later published as *De Gemeene Gratie in wetenschap en kunst* (1905.21). They were translated into English as *Wisdom & Wonder* (Kuyper, 2011.12).

In this volume, Kuyper assumes that his readers have been convinced of the importance of common grace. Here he writes with often dogmatic assertions - this is not a volume that will convince the unconvinced regarding common grace. For example, in Ch14 §3 he states, "No Reformed Christian will deny the existence of common grace" (119): "It is safe to say that our blindness to common grace has been the cause of the shocking confusion of concepts that we encounter in the political realm". He often draws caricatures of the monastic and anabaptist movements to emphasise a point. And, being a person of his times, he accepts the cultural stereotypes and blind spots that abounded - particularly in his discussion of the African peoples. That said, however, there is much to be grateful for in this volume. Kuyper provides insights into church, government, family, science, education and art - not least in how they relate to one another.

The first main sections (chapters 4-40) deal with the institutional church, government and the state and their interrelationships. He is careful to stress that it is the institutional church he is concerned with here.

The state is broader than government; the state includes citizens, the territory as well as the government. The state is the people under a form of government. He identifies some important points regarding the government and the state. He focuses on these in the first part as

Government is the clearest and most tangible manifestation of common grace (56).

These chapters (4-40) contain Kuyper’s most sustained discussion of the government and state and how they relate to the institutional church. Inevitably the shadow of Article 36 is felt, and Kuyper addresses the issues that this raised primarily in Ch 33-35.¹ Here he maintains that Article 36 is not the Reformed view but the Roman Catholic view as and that “government does not have the right and authority to render judgement on the theological, canonical and liturgical differences” (274).

He notes similarities between the state and the institutional church. Both are instituted because of sin and are formed on the basis not of creation ordinances but of grace — in the case of the state and government it is common grace and for the church it is particular grace — both are for the combatting of sin and both will disappear when there is no longer sin.

In chapters 15-17 he examines six differences - these I have summarised in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. A comparison of church and state – source Kuyper (2020, Ch14-16).

	State	Institutional Church
Similarities Ch 14, 17	Both arise from grace Neither are rooted in creation ordinances Both are for the combatting of sin “The church presupposes an ordered state” Ch 17 §1 The single final goal of both is the glory of Father, Son and Holy Spirit 17 §2 Both represent a principle that demands and dominates the whole of life 17 §4	
Starting point Ch 15	Common grace It emerges from creation	The fruit of particular grace Transcends nature Originates with the revealed Word and regeneration – it is miraculous Springs from a re-creation
Sphere Ch §3 – the circle in which life occurs	In the ordinary natural life The external features of the people e.g., the land, illnesses, dangers, income, weapons, roads and canals, safeguarding of property, punishment The visible manifestations of public life	The human as a sinner The heart, soul, the inner person The hidden person of the heart
Means Ch 15 §4	External means – wood and stone to build roads; judges and magistrates; metal to form weapons “...almost everything that is available in nature by virtue of creation to maintain its authority and to discharge its duty”.	Funds for building and its duties raised by voluntary contributions rather than taxes Never coercive Its means are spiritual – God’s word is its sword. Administers the sacraments

1 Article 36 of the Belgic Confession of Faith (1561-2) states:
And the government’s task is not limited to caring for and watching over the public domain but extends also to upholding the sacred ministry, with a view to removing and destroying all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist; to promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere; to the end that God may be honoured and served by everyone, as he requires in his Word.

<p>Character Ch 15 §5</p>	<p>All citizens are included – it is not voluntary. We are not given a choice; we are born subjects.</p> <p>Authority is over a certain region and it includes all those in that region.</p> <p>Obedience and subjection</p>	<p>Has the character of voluntariness</p> <p>Membership is voluntary, not coercive</p> <p>Membership is based on our convictions and will</p> <p>Uses spiritual urging to assert its authority</p> <p>Confession and faithfulness</p>
<p>Calling Ch 16 §1-2 – i.e., life task</p>	<p>To combat sin – but its calling is broader.</p> <p>Ensures the continuance of the particulars and preconditions of the broken life of creation</p> <p>Maintains justice by formulating it, demanding it and avenging it if violated</p> <p>Task falls in the present life</p>	<p>To combat sin – without sin it would have no calling.</p> <p>Labours in and for a new life that's was added to the broken life of creation</p> <p>Proclaims on God's behalf on the basis of justice as formulated in God's word</p> <p>Task consists in perpetuating the remembrance of what God did in Christ</p>
<p>Ultimate Goals Ch 16 §3-4</p>	<p>Lies in the present dispensation</p>	<p>Lies in eternity</p>

He then turns to the issue of a *Christian* state - he poses and answers the question: "In matters of state what makes something Christian?" (171)

- Is it abolishing the army and oath taking (Anabaptists)?
- Is it when the True church is the state church?
- Is it when meetings begun with a prayer?
- Is it with Christian statesmen who are believers, but organise the state according to mammon?

Not surprisingly, he rejects all of the above positions. Only those confessing Christ are capable of achieving a Christian formation of the state, a Christian polity, a Christian government.

He rejects the notion of a neutral state – it is a "chimera" (205). He maintains that every government manifests some sort of religious character. Government should be God's servant.

From chapter 41 he looks at the family (Ch 41-51) and upbringing (Ch 52-57). By a Christian family, Kuyper understands it "to refer to a family that exists and behaves in accordance with a higher understanding of family that has been introduced in Christian lands, became indigenous, and still has validity through custom and law". (362) It encompasses the three foundational moral relationships: between husband and wife; between parents and children; and between siblings.

Kuyper rejects the idea that marriage is a sacrament – he thinks it is only a partial truth. If marriage were a sacrament it would "conceptualize marriage as being a work of particular grace" (342). He sees marriage as part of the creation order and thus not arising from particular grace. He writes:

Marriage is not invented by man but instituted by God. It is he who created us in two genders, who made the man different from the woman and the woman different from the man, and who ordained that the child would come from the union of man and woman. (404-405)

Upbringing, Kuyper maintains, is part of civil life and thus “falls under common grace”. However, the raising of children in the fear of the Lord goes beyond common grace.

Upbringing serves to transfer the gains of the ancestor, enriched with those of our own generation ... (447)

As part of upbringing, he includes education. Naturally, the school question looms large in Kuyper’s mind. He goes on to discuss the school in the broadest sense and includes what we today call apprenticeships. Upbringing, he stresses, involves intentionality – it is important that parents and teachers “see themselves as instruments in the service of God and fulfil their holy task”. (450)

The final section is devoted to “Society” (ch 57- 71). These have been previously published under the title *Wisdom & Wonder* (Kuyper, 2011- see the review in Bishop, 2012).

This final volume of the *Common Grace* trilogy serves to show the usefulness and the fruitfulness of common grace – however, of its own, this volume, would not convince the common-grace naysayers.

3. Books on Kuyper

3.1 *The Power of the Church*

What hope is there for the church? What has the church to do with power and what has power to do with the church? These are the important questions Mike Wagenman raises in *The Power of the Church* (Wagenman, 2020). By drawing on and developing the inchoate insights of Kuyper, he addresses these key issues of church and power - issues that are perhaps more relevant today than they were when Kuyper was writing in the nineteenth century.

Kuyper had a multi-aspectual view of power and Wagenman takes Kuyper’s seminal views and produces a much-needed critique of power in the church today.

In chapter 2 he examines ancient, patristic (e.g. Origen, Gregory the Great), medieval (such as Aquinas), modern (Max Weber, Andy Crouch, Paul Avis, Karl Rahner, Moltmann, among others) and post-modern (e.g. Lukes and Clegg, Canetti, Foucault) views of power. He astutely notes that “there as many theories of power as there are theorists”.

These views he finds lacking compared with Kuyper’s multi-dimensional view. The neo-Calvinist concepts of sphere sovereignty, structure and direction provide a much fuller and richer view of power.

In chapter 7, taking his cue from John Halsey Wood’s work (Wood, 2012), he examines “the sacramental aspect of ecclesial power in Kuyper’s theology”. He agrees with Wood and suggests that sacramental captures “a significant insight that needs to be excavated and highlighted in Kuyper’s ecclesiology”.

For Wood, Wagenman argues a “sacramental ecclesiology is an ecclesiology that gives the church’s sacraments importance because the church is an objective authority in society”. Wagenman finds flaws in Wood’s approach - and suggests that while Wood’s strengths are on the development of Kuyper’s thought in a historical context, they are weaker when considering the theological context – for example, he criticises Wood’s misuse of Avery Dulles. Wagenman also rightly notes that having a high view of the sacraments does not necessarily entail a sacramental ecclesiology. Nevertheless, Wagenman does maintain that Kuyper’s ecclesiology is a sacramental (and kenotic and incarnational), even if Wood’s “argument reveals a theological ignorance about what makes an ecclesiology sacramental”. In attempt to develop a sacramental ecclesiology Wagenman draws upon Vatican II, Karl

Rahner and Dulles. For Wagenman, sacramental ecclesiology is Christocentric and placially dynamic. Christology shapes ecclesiology and the importance of the institutional church's physical presence and place in the world is emphasised. As Wagenman describes it:

The sacramental nature of the kerygmatic power of the institutional church is its ability to be the true *sign* and invitational *instrument* of the presence and grace of God in Jesus Christ *in and for the world*. The church is the reminder, the pledge, the invitation to remember and believe that the world is God's loving creation, his patient work of redemption, and his promised realm of sustained and renewed life and joy. The church not only proclaims this instrumentally through its institutional words, sacraments, ministries of discipleship, and symbolic actions of justice and compassion, but the church also is the visible sign that the promises of God are still valid and will be fulfilled until the world is completely re-created and God's kingdom comes in all its fullness. This kerygmatic power of the institutional church has a kenotic, incarnational, and sacramental nature. When fully and faithfully employed, the institutional church receives and proclaims the Word of God and therefore is the instrument of the comprehensive and redemptive mission of God to restore his creation and usher in the Kingdom of God.

3.2 The Doctrine of Creation

In Bartholomew's (2017) *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition* on page 269, there is an appetite-whetting footnote: "Under Craig Bartholomew's editorship a new Kuyperian dogmatics is under way with IVP Academic." This book, *A Doctrine of Creation* (Ashford & Bartholomew, 2020) is the first fruits of that project. In this volume Ashford and Bartholomew develop a Kuyperian view of creation, a view of creation that is full-orbed and one that is both foundational and comprehensive.

Inevitably, as it is a Kuyperian approach culture is to the fore – key themes such as sphere sovereignty, common grace, and the antithesis are explored with respect to creation as well as providence and eschatology. The initial chapters take a look at other writers on creation and provides a helpful historical theological overview examining, among others, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Aquinas and Gnosticism (in Chapter 2) as well as Barth, Wittgenstein, Bonhoeffer and Moltmann and process theologians (in Chapter 3) before explicating the Kuyperian tradition which they see as comprising: a Trinitarian creator, a creation that is ontologically good, one that is a coherently ordered diversity, one that is intended to be developed by God's image bearers, but since the fall has been twisted towards wrong ends, (although sin cannot corrupt God's good creation structurally or substantially) God's restoration will consist in an elevation and enhancement of its original form.

Topics such as God's omnipotence, and its implications for evil and suffering, creation ex nihilo and modernity and power are covered in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides an in-depth look at Genesis 1. Non-human aspects of creation such as plants, animals (Ch 5) and heaven and the angels (Ch 6) are dealt with before the effects of the fall are thoroughly discussed in Chapter 8, here the antithesis and common grace are explored in more depth as well as a Kuyperian principled pluralism. Chapter 9 considers nature and grace and the nature of the vocation: we are all called to represent the Lord in all areas of life. Providence is the topic of chapter 10. The implications of eschatology are the subject of chapter 11; they ably defend a restorationist view against an annihilation view of the earth. Chapter 12 "Creation and ..." takes a few case studies of topics (philosophy, science, food, time, the self, and human dignity) to show that no area of life is untouched by creation.

This book deserves to be widely read and studied. It is an important work that develops Kuyperian insights.

3.3 A Short Introduction to Abraham Kuyper's Lectures in Calvinism

Jesse Sumpter is a Classical school educator based in Moscow, Idaho. In this brief - 48 page - introduction to Kuyper's Stone Lectures Sumpter begins by identifying three of Kuyper's "key ideas". These he identifies as the lordship of Jesus, Calvinism as life system, and spheres of authority.

The remaining chapters in this booklet then follow each of Kuyper's lectures. Sumpter provides a summary of each one and provides copious quotes from each lecture.

The book provides an entry-level introduction to the lectures and would be helpful for those who haven't as yet read Kuyper's lectures.

4. Articles

Bishop (2020) in *Foundations* the journal of Affinity² provides a brief biography of Kuyper before examining some of the key themes in his approach (namely, the sovereignty of God, the cultural mandate, the antithesis sphere sovereignty, common grace, and Christianity as a *Weltanschauung*) and explores how Kuyper applies these to church, politics, education, and apartheid.

Derek Schuurman (2020) examines Kuyper's approach to technology in his *Christian Scholar's Review* article.

In a sense, Kuyper speculates that science and technology will enable us to do "greater things than these." Although I am an engineer and computer scientist, I confess to being uncomfortable with Kuyper's speculations on this. Perhaps Kuyper's questionable interpretation of the verse is a reflection of the era in which he lived, a time of considerable optimism in the development of science and technology.

Despite this observation that Kuyper has been influenced by the optimism of the age he also identifies areas in which Kuyper provides helpful resources.

The first resource is his writing on the topic of automation, an issue that was as important in Kuyper's day as it is in ours. The second resource is Kuyper's insights on the impact of a comprehensive life and worldview. The third resource is the concept of common grace. The fourth resource is the idea that there is no neutral space. And finally, the fifth resource is Kuyper's observations about the impact of technology on faith and the importance of palingenesis, a topic of timeless importance.

There have been several working in the area of law who have worked out a Kuyperian approach to law and have applied these "valuable insights", one of these is David S. Caudill. In an article in the *Pepperdine Law Review* (Caudill, 2020), he examines the Kuyperian influence of another, namely Robert Cochran. Caudill identifies sphere sovereignty, common grace and the antithesis as the trilogy of Kuyper and examines how Cochran has applied these in his approach. He concludes "that Cochran has helped to popularize, and advance the cause of, Neo-Calvinism by applying some of its principles in new legal contexts."

Lucas Freire in his *Journal of Church & State* article examines both Kuyper and Kuyper's mentor Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (Freire 2020a). He sees them as anti-rationalist liberals - as defined by F.A. Hayek (1899-1992) of the Austrian school of economics and

2 Affinity is a fellowship of Churches, evangelical Agencies, and Christians in the UK.

defender of classical liberalism. Freire acknowledges that both van Prinsterer and Kuyper criticise liberalism but sees this as a “secondary element in their rejection of the worldview backing up French revolutionary ideas”. The liberalism they attack, Freire maintains is of the rationalist variety.

Kuyper’s sphere sovereignty Freire maintains reflects “some of Alexis de Tocqueville’s views of societal pluralism”. Tocqueville was in Hayek’s scheme “in the anti-rationalist tradition”.³ Freire discusses Kuyper’s sphere sovereignty and his view of the state and applies it to public health (the use of vaccinations during an epidemic), decentralisation and the care of the poor by church and state. He identifies some areas in which Kuyper’s and van Prinsterer’s view coincide with Hayek’s anti-rationalist liberalism, but I’m not fully convinced it is enough to label them as such, any more than we can describe Hayek as a neo-Calvinist.

Also, by Lucas Friere is a paper that draws upon Kuyper in an attempt “to articulate a Christian view of entrepreneurship from a normative perspective within the framework of the reformational tradition of thought” (Freire, 2020b).

Brian Ford (2020) in “Neoliberalism and four spheres of authority in American education: Business, class, stratification, and intimations of marketization” compares Amy Gutman’s three sources of authority with Kuyper’s sphere sovereignty.

Chapter 20 in the *Oxford Handbook of Reformed Handbook* (edited by Allen and Swain, 2020) is by Richard Mouw on “Abraham Kuyper’s Lectures on Calvinism”. It is significant that such a chapter is included as it shows the increasing interest in Kuyper. Here Mouw provides the background to the lectures and discusses each of them. It provides an excellent summary and introduction.

George Harinck (2020a) in the edited volume on *Secularization, Desecularization, and Toleration* (Karpov & Svensson, 2020) examines Kuyper’s model of pluralism. A model which allows for religious and non-religious citizens to participate in society on an “equal footing”. Harinck shows how Kuyper drawing upon Calvin prompted the rejection of a natural/supernatural distinction as God was sovereign over all, and the freedom of conscience. This meant that religion “could never be forced” - there is always room for the “heretic”. Kuyper also developed some of Calvin’s ideas into the notion of common grace. These were the ingredients in Kuyper’s view of the need for a plural society. It was also seeing that modernist, naturalistic and liberal worldviews were also religious. Freedom of conscience meant that for Kuyper room should be provided in society for all these views. Society should not be dominated by one worldview - the state had to recognise that the Dutch people held to different worldviews. Thus, tolerance meant “making room legally for the reality that people differ in their worldviews” rather than favouring one particular (liberal) viewpoint. This resulted in what has been termed a “pillarized society”. Harinck then looks at the shift post-Kuyper in the Netherlands from a plural society to multiculturalism. This was the result of the Dutch no longer identifying themselves as adherents of a particular worldview but as individuals. He ends the article by considering the question: “Is Kuyper’s idea of a worldview-based society still relevant ...?” He proposes that despite cultural changes that they still are.

In another article Harinck (2020b) takes up a similar theme and looks at a case study in the history of the Netherlands, that is, Kuyper’s development of pluralism in a liberal democracy. Harinck suggests that Kuyper’s “religion-based criticism of liberalism and his coping with the tension between individual freedom and the equality democracy are still relevant today”.

3 According to Hayek, as cited by Freire, anti-rationalist liberalism “stresses that which we call political order is much less the product of our ordering intelligence than is commonly imagined”. This tradition includes Tocqueville, Edmund Burke, and Lord Acton.

Oslington (2020), an Australian economist, takes to task the Kuyperian approach to economics espoused by Bob Goudzwaard, Tony Cramp, John Tiemstra, and Alan Storkey among others. He examines Kuyper's antithesis, sphere sovereignty and common grace and maintains (wrongly in my opinion) that these Christian economists' approach fails to do justice to all three. He sees the approach as a flawed sectarian response which fails to take theology seriously.

Bruce Demarest (1982) maintained that Kuyper's approach to general revelation was closer to Barth's than Calvin's — Yoo (2020) examines and refutes this hypothesis. In this paper Jeong Mo Yoo an Assistant Professor, Historical Theology at Torch Trinity Graduate University, Korea, compares Kuyper's views on general revelation with those of John Calvin and Herman Bavinck. He finds that post-fall Kuyper, Calvin, and Bavinck all agree that God continues to reveal himself. However, the effects of sin mean that this general revelation cannot produce saving knowledge, it is unable to do so without special revelation. He argues Calvin provides no clear statement regarding natural theology, but Kuyper and Bavinck are both negative towards its use. He concludes that although Calvin and Bavinck have a more positive attitude towards general revelation than Kuyper, Kuyper still stands more in the Calvinian than in the Barthian tradition.

Kristanto (2020) examines Kuyper and Bavinck's view that God "would never abandon nor destroy his creation."

In his book *Faith Life and Theology*, written to support theology as "pisteology", John Vander Stelt (1934-2020) devotes a chapter to Kuyper (Vander Stelt, 2020). He obviously has much respect for Kuyper:

[Kuyper] focused on the urgent and complex issue of how Christians should live in a culture shaped by leaders who were deaf to God's Word revealed in Christ Jesus. His work, and role, was in a sense comparable to that of John Calvin... . (101)

But he also identifies some flaws in Kuyper's approach:

As with any reformer, Kuyper had his limitations. He was most innovative when he ventured into new areas of reflection and renewal called for by major social, political, economic, and other challenges in his country and culture. As to certain traditionally firmly established ways of living and thinking, he was less innovative and reformative, especially in the areas of deeply rooted ecclesiastical customs and scholastically tainted theological thinking. (110)

Vander Stelt identifies several "positive features of [Kuyper's] worldview". These are "common grace", creation, fall, redemption", and "the authority of Scripture". He also identifies what he describes as "questionable features in his worldview". These he sees as being inherent in the conservative tradition he inherited⁴ and are related to his philosophical, anthropological, and epistemological thinking. These features include:

- Remnants of a dualistic anthropology
- A semi-scholastic and idealistic epistemology
- A dualism in his encyclopaedia of the sciences
- A hierarchy in the God world relation
- A philology unable to acknowledge the full impact of sin and renewal in logic, philosophy, and pedagogy.

He deals with two in more detail, in sections entitled "philosophical anthropology" and "formal faith". In his critique of Kuyper's anthropology, he draws upon Fernhout (1975).

4 Vander Stelt suggests that Kuyper "Uncritically, ... accepted the views of Voetius"

According to Vander Stelt:

To stress the unity of man, Kuyper introduced a (non-substantial) qualitative distinction within the (substance of) soul between 'psyche' and 'pneuma'.

He sees Kuyper as having an accommodated anthropology, accommodated from Plato and Aristotle, via Scholasticism, in his adoption of a higher and lower substance in his dualistic theory. The higher part expresses itself in thinking, willing and feeling – the intellect (thinking) is seen as the most important part. This traditional scholastic element remained in Kuyper's anthropology.

The other "questionable feature" Vander Stelt discusses is Kuyper's view of formal faith. Though it is less clear why he sees it as being questionable.

Kuyper sees faith not as an addition or an optional extra, but as integral to being human. He sees faith as a formal function.

He then describes "four problems" these are "faith and theology", "encyclopaedia and curriculum", "organic and logical", and "Creator-creation relation". As regards faith and theology Vander Stelt notes that Kuyper recognised that in both faith and theology have religious roots and that theology does not have a privileged role in the academy, it is one of several disciplines.

Vander Stelt maintains that Kuyper "opened up the door ... for Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven and other students to think of faith life as something human and as religiously directed in a Christian and non-Christian way". (129) The book by Vander Stelt is an important work and deserves wide attention.

5. Reviews

John Gay, in the *Church Times*, reviews Kuyper's *On Education*. He concludes:

This is a complex book, especially for a readership brought up in England, but matching a very complex character, who will be well known in the Netherlands and in sections of North America — as the very useful bibliography attests. But this is an indispensable reference book, nevertheless, which helps to explain why theologically conservative Christians are often suspicious of the implications of a state monopoly of educational funding and control which can restrict the part played by the family, especially in the areas of moral instruction and Christian education

Shaun Stiemsma, an associate professor of English at Dordt University, has a five-page review of *On Education*. He observes that a more accurate title for this collection would be Abraham Kuyper on National Educational Policy. He suggests this for two reasons:

Nearly the entire book presents Kuyper as a politician waging war for "school equality" meaning equal access for parents of all beliefs ... (43).

He goes on to note:

There is very little in the book, in fact, that could be taken as useful for a Reformed theory of education, and even less that could be specifically put in place by educators in any practical way. (44)

Stiemsma suggests that the audience, rather than educators, is political-science majors or policy and data enthusiasts (45).

6. Conclusion

Once more we have seen Kuyper scholarship flourishing. Key Kuyperian topics of sphere sovereignty, common grace and the antithesis keep cropping up as important themes in his work and these have been applied to several areas, including ecclesiology, creation, technology, and law.

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