

van schepselmatige structuren meekomt of wellicht in eerste instantie zelfs een hoofdrol speelt.

De vermelde kritiekpunten doen niets af van de grote waardering voor dit boek. Het zou te betreuren zijn indien het niet ten onzent een ruime verbreiding kreeg. Dat de lezers van *Genoodzaakt goed te wezen* dit boek niet mogen missen, spreekt van zelf. Voor een nieuwe generatie biedt dit boek een ideale kennismaking met het werk van Goudzwaard. Ik denk in het bijzonder aan jongeren die niet de gelegenheid hebben gehad zijn lezingen bij te wonen. Het speciale van die lezingen was het verschil tussen begin en einde. De spreker placht wat aarzelend te beginnen, nog op zoek naar zijn stem en nog onzeker van zijn gehoor. Halverwege groeide bij het publiek het besef iets bijzonders mee te maken; en tegen het einde kon je een speld horen vallen. Misschien maakte wel de meeste indruk hoe hij bij actuele onderwerpen de Schriften opende. Het is een groot compliment voor Mark Vander Vennen en David van Heemst dat zij in hun samenwerking met Bob Goudzwaard dit aspect niet weg geredigeerd hebben, maar veeleer alle ruimte gaven.

S. Griffioen

S.J. Grabill, *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 2006: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 310 pagina's. ISBN 0-8028-6313-2

In this solid and penetrating study, ensuing from his dissertation, Stephen Grabill addresses the important issue of the role of natural law in Reformed theological ethics. This topic has received much theological attention during the last couple of decades, partly because of the revitalized ecumenical consciousness among Protestants. According to Grabill, there are at least three reasons for the still common negative attitude toward natural law that can be found among Protestants. First, Barth's epistemological critique of natural theology as well as his divine command theory have led to the neglect of the natural law tradition. Second, it is often thought, among others by G.C. Berkouwer and Herman Dooyeweerd, that natural law originates in and is essentially connected to Roman Catholic theology, which, then, is considered as a good reason to reject it. Third and finally, nineteenth century liberal German theology, with its anti-scholastic and anti-metaphysical tendencies, has strongly influenced Protestant orthodox theology.

Let me make two preliminary remarks on the aim of this book. This volume, Grabill says, offers a historical rather than a systematic argument in favor of the idea that natural law is useful as a way to discuss moral topics in public settings (p. 17). Unfortunately, Grabill fails to elaborate on the important issue of how precisely his discussions of the theologies of John Calvin, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Johannes Althusius, and Francis Turretin, that are offered in the following chapters, are thought to give credence to this main thesis. This is crucial, for what he offers in those chapters, is, I would say, rather a defense of the view that some representatives of Reformed thought did to some extent adhere to the concept of natural law and that their adherence to it was well integrated into the rest of their (Reformed) doctrine. It is not clear, however, how this demonstrates that natural law was and is in fact useful in public settings. What he should have showed in order to support his main thesis, is that natural law has been and is in fact fruitfully used in ethical debates in public settings and that certainly is not what he has done. Fortunately, elsewhere in the book, he seems to contend that the main thesis in the book is a different one: "(...) the argument of this book is that historically, in fact, Calvinists have made good use of the natural-law tradition, but that it ceased to exist in twentieth-century Protestant

theological ethics for a variety of reasons (...)” (p. 52) This, I am inclined to say, is a position for which he offers some strong arguments in this book.

Another problem related to the goal of this study is that Grabill claims to give support to the idea, originally championed by Russell Hittinger and John T. McNeill, that early Protestant — both Lutheran and Reformed — tradition passed on the doctrines of natural law and the natural cognition of God as non-controversial legacies from the early and medieval church. This view is voiced, for instance, on p. 175: “The preceding chapters have shown that the Reformed wing of the magisterial Reformation inherited the natural law tradition as a noncontroversial legacy of late medieval scholasticism (...)”. In the ensuing chapters, however, the only early Protestant theologians considered are John Calvin and Peter Vermigli, which is utterly insufficient to establish anything about the early Protestant or Reformed tradition as a whole.

Let us now have a more detailed look at each of the six chapters of the book. In the first chapter, which deals with Barth’s view on natural law and post-lapsarian knowledge of God, Grabill briefly describes the famous 1934 debate between Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, and Barth’s influence on later Protestant theologians, such as Jacques Ellul, Henry Stob, John Hare, and Richard Mouw. The second chapter portrays the development of the natural-law tradition through the high Middle-Ages. Also, Grabill argues that nominalism, voluntarism, and divine command theory are often, but wrongly identified with each other or considered to be fundamentally wedded. I agree that, on some understanding of ‘nominalism’, ‘voluntarism’, and ‘divine command theory’ this is correct, but in order to show this, one will have to be very precise about what one means by each of these terms. It is, therefore, somewhat disappointing that Grabill fails to offer clear definitions of these views, as well as of other issues that are discussed in these and following chapters, such as rationalism, intellectualism, realism, and the *extra-calvinisticum*.

The third chapter is dedicated to Calvin’s view on human natural knowledge of God as creator, the first conjunct of the *duplex cognitio Dei* (the other conjunct being the knowledge of God as redeemer). Grabill, rightly as it seems to me, interprets Calvin as taking a modified naturalist theological stance: natural law, written on humans’ heart, functions competently in the spheres of politics, economics, and ethics, although it is preferable for awareness of moral obligation to be generated on the basis of the written divine law as revealed in Scripture, since the latter is clearer and not as susceptible to corruption as the natural law is. In the course of this chapter, Grabill raises the interesting question of whether, according to Calvin, unbelievers have a genuine knowledge of God (p. 78), but in the end this question is left unanswered. Although I fully agree with Grabill’s interpretation of Calvin — over against Barth’s interpretation of the Genevan Reformer —, there are two problems with this chapter that return in the following chapters. First, Grabill does not clearly distinguish natural knowledge of God (Rom 1) from natural knowledge of good and evil (Rom 2). Now, I am aware of the fact that these two kinds of knowledge are closely related to each other and that they share several important characteristics. However, it does not follow from this that they are identical. The title of the third chapter — “John Calvin and the Natural Knowledge of God the Creator” — suggests that it concerns people’s natural knowledge of God, but the main subject of discussion turns out to be man’s post-lapsarian ethical knowledge. Grabill could easily have avoided such confusions by distinguishing the two kinds of natural knowledge from each other and by explaining their mutual relationships. Second, Grabill frequently uses expressions such as ‘natural law’, ‘natural knowledge of God’, ‘natural revelation’, ‘natural theology’, etc. without defining these terms or stating explicitly what each author — Barth, Calvin, Vermigli, Althusius, and Turretin — means by these terms. This as well makes it difficult to follow Grabill’s argumentation in these chapters.

The fourth chapter discusses Vermigli’s use of natural law. Vermigli, who has been profoundly influenced by Thomas Aquinas, stresses, like Calvin, the non-salvific

character of natural knowledge. However, he is significantly more sanguine about humans' ability to grasp the precepts of natural moral law through intuition, reasoning, and experience. Also, in contradistinction to Calvin, he makes frequent use of philosophical distinctions, such as the Greek distinction between contemplative and practical knowledge. Vermigli's formal training in the *via antiqua* contributed to his ability to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the doctrine of natural law than Calvin did.

The fifth chapter concerns Althusius' federal political theory and natural theology, primarily as put forward in his widely read *Politica*. It investigates the nature of and the relationships between *lex moralis*, *lex naturalis*, *lex communis*, *lex propria*, and *lex divina*. Grabill convincingly shows that Althusius employed the logical method of Peter Ramus and that he made use of Jerome Zanchi's analysis of different types of law. Grabill also gives credence to the thesis that, according to Althusius, the moral precepts of the Decalogue are derivative from the natural moral knowledge implanted by God in human beings at creation, whereas, at the same time, it ought to be acknowledged that the latter knowledge has become obscure as a noetic effect of the fall.

After discussing this representative of early orthodoxy, Grabill turns to one of the main figures in high orthodoxy, Francis Turretin. According to Turretin, natural knowledge of God is genuine or true knowledge of God, although it is present to people in varying degrees. Interestingly, on Turretin's model this natural knowledge of God comes in four varieties: 1) the universal voice of nature, that is, God revealing himself in his works and continuous providence, 2) contemplation of the human being, 3) the testimony of conscience, and 4) the general consent of peoples. At the same time, however, Turretin maintains that this knowledge is non-salvific and renders all people inexcusable for the knowledge they possess. Like Althusius, Turretin is broadly affirmative of the realist natural-law tradition and the *via antiqua*.

Only two or three pages of the final part of the book — the conclusions — actually contain what one might expect: conclusions. The bulk of this final part of the book is devoted to the interesting topic of the development of the natural law tradition after Turretin. Grabill deals with the theories adhered to by, among others, Thomas Hobbes, Christian Wolff, Herman Bavinck, and Samuel Clarke. All this is fascinating, but it does not follow from anything else in the book. Also the discussion of these philosophers and theologians is so brief that it will not satisfy the average reader and is in disproportion to the discussions elsewhere in the book. It would have been better for Grabill to seriously elaborate on these theories and devote separate chapters to them or to leave the whole issue out (which might have been better, given the fact that his main thesis does not require him to go into this whole area).

Another problem with this study is its lack of philosophical acumen. Several times, Grabill uses the expression '*epistemological* consequences of sin', where what he refers are in fact *epistemic* consequences of sin. Moreover, he does not clearly distinguish these consequences from affective and existential lapsarian consequences or clarify in another way what epistemic consequences are supposed to be. Finally, he does not ask what the authors mean by terms such as 'believing', 'knowing', 'being ignorant', and so on.

Grabill promises to make a merely historical case for the idea that early Protestantism has made fruitful use of the natural law tradition. Unfortunately, Grabill does not always keep his promise. To mention just one example, on p. 81 Grabill states: "(...) Calvin's emphasis on the epistemological [again, read epistemic; RP] consequences of sin is exaggerated (...)." Such a bold claim needs to be sustained by exegetical, systematic theological, and philosophical arguments, and cannot be based on a merely historical analysis.

In spite of these critical comments, it should be said that Grabill has offered a rich and well-informed contribution to the debate on the natural law tradition in Protestant circles. He has convincingly argued that the Barthian position faces serious

difficulties and his treatments of Calvin, Vermigli, Althusius, and Turretin are extensive and illuminating. I am looking forward to the announced systematic sequel to this valuable book.

Rik Peels

John E. Hare, *God and Morality: A Philosophical History*. Oxford 2007: Blackwell. 309 pages. ISBN 9780631236708

The issue of how to write the history of philosophy is as controversial as what historians of philosophy say about particular philosophical figures. In ethics, the field has been dominated by what we might call *the Kantian school*, which is represented by thinkers such as John Rawls, Stephen Darwall, and Christine Korsgaard. Two assumptions drive this position. First, according to the Kantian school, modern moral philosophy is best seen as anticipating and culminating in Kant's work. Second, the Kantian school gives the religious context in which moral philosophers wrote relatively little attention. The idea seems to be that we can have an accurate and historically illuminating account of thinkers such as Butler, Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, and Kant even if we take only glancing notice of their religious context and convictions.

John Hare's *God and Morality* is a challenge to the Kantian view. In the spirit of C. D. Broad's *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, Hare considers four figures central to the history of ethics: Aristotle, Scotus, Kant, and R. M. Hare, arguing that we will fully understand their positions only if we pay close attention to their views about God. Hare's concerns, however, aren't merely historical. In each chapter, he considers a recent heir to the historical figures he considers. Larry Arnhart is presented as a contemporary Aristotelian, Sartre as a recent voluntarist in the tradition of Scotus, Christine Korsgaard as a contemporary Kantian, and Peter Singer as a contemporary philosophical descendant of R. M. Hare. The views defended by each of these figures, Hare maintains, encounter serious conceptual problems precisely because of their non-theism. In the final chapter, Hare draws upon all the figures discussed, sketching what he considers to be the most powerful version of a theistic ethical theory.

The book begins with a close reading of Aristotle. Hare contends that there is much more about God in Aristotle's ethics than other philosophers have stressed. Aristotle, according to Hare's reading, distinguishes different grades or types of happiness, the highest of which consists in being "blessed" — a blessed life being one in which we "live with the conviction that this divine thing in us is active to the fullest extent that is possible for humans" (p. 34). Like most commentators, Hare finds certain features of the *Nicomachean Ethics* puzzling. Did Aristotle make a mistake when he initially spoke of the practical life as the best type of life and then later said the same of the contemplative life? Yes, in a sense, Hare claims. Moreover, his reading of Aristotle allows us to diagnose exactly what went wrong, which is, roughly, this: Aristotle employs the concept *being divine* in such a way that he ends up saying something about what makes a life good (*viz.*, that it consists in the highest use of *noûs*) that is incompatible with what he said originally about the good life (*viz.*, that it is the practical life, which does not consist in the highest use of *noûs*). Contemporary Aristotelians, such as Larry Arnhart, by contrast, omit the concept of the divine from their thought. The result, if Hare is correct, is a position according to which goodness is determined by our desires, but there is no way of saying why any given desire is better than another. Aristotle had a way of ranking our desires, so Hare argues, and it is one that refers to their nobility or divine character.

The topic of chapter two is Duns Scotus, who is rightly presented as an unjustly neglected figure in the history of philosophy. In contrast to eudaimonists, such as Aristotle and Aquinas, Scotus assumes that there are two affections in the will, one