ABRAHAM KUYPER ON FAITH AND SCIENCE

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This paper offers an interpretation of Kuyper's views on the relation between faith and science. The first section analyzes Kuyper's claim that 'every science in a certain degree starts from faith'. The second section argues that Kuyper is an epistemological foundationalist, much in the spirit of Thomas Reid, the 18th century Scottish philosopher and founding father of the school of common sense realism.

1. Kuyper on the role of 'faith' in science[1]

Kuyper was acutely aware of the various conflicts that are being fought out within the learned world. He points to Kantians opposing Hegelians, homeopaths opposing allopaths, Darwinists opposing anti-Darwinists, formalists opposing realists (in philology). Everywhere he notices contention, conflict, struggle. Among or beneath these conflicts, Kuyper believed, there is a principal conflict, 'the powerful conflict between those who cling to the confession of the Triune God and His Word, and those who seek the solution of the world-problem in Deism, Pantheism and Naturalism'.[2] The principal conflict is between those who assert that the cosmos as it exists today is in normal condition, and those who hold that it is in abnormal condition. The normalists reckon exclusively with natural data. Kuyper especially has in mind here the evolutionists, who believe in a slow progression from lower to higher forms of life in a way that is unorchestrated by God. The abnormalists, on the other hand, adhere to primordial creation, hold that humans are an independent species because they are created in the image of God, and they conceive of sin as the destruction of our original nature and believe in healing through regeneration.

This principal conflict, Kuyper maintains, is *not* a conflict between faith and science. It is not that the normalists (naturalists), go by science whereas the abnormalists (Christian theists), go by faith. A conflict between faith and science, he boldly asserts, does not exist, because 'every science in a certain degree starts *from faith*' (*Calv.* 131). Now what is the faith that science, for instance physics, starts from? Says Kuyper

> every science presupposes faith in self, in our selfconsciousness; presupposes faith in the accurate working of our senses; presupposes faith in the correctness of the laws of thought; presupposes faith in something universal hidden behind special phenomena; presupposes faith in life; and especially presupposes faith in the principles, from

[1] In writing this section, I have learned considerably from the following works (without agreeing with everything their authors say): Peter S. Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview. Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 167-195; Jacob Klapwijk, 'Abraham Kuyper over wetenschap en universiteit', C. Augustijn (ed.), *Abraham Kuyper, zijn volksdeel, zijn invloed* (Delft: Meinema, 1987) 61-94; Del Ratzsch, 'Kuyper's Philosophy of Science', Jitze van der Meer (ed.), *Facets of Faith and Science*, vol. 2 (Lanham: UPA, 1996), 1-32; Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'On Christian Learning', Paul Marshall & Sander Griffioen & Richard Mouw (eds.), *Stained Glass. Worldviews and Social Science* (Lanham: UPA, 1989), 56-80.

[2] Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism. Six Stone Foundation Lectures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1943) 131. This work is henceforth referred to as *Calv.*

> which we proceed; which signifies that all these indispensable axioms, needed in a productive scientific investigation, do not come to us by proof, but are established in our judgment by our inner conception and *given with our self-consciousness* (*Calv.* 131).

This quotation calls for comment. First ,'faith', as Kuyper is using the word here, does not denote religious faith, it is not faith in the soteriological sense of the word. It is what present-day epistemologists call belief[3], or rather a special type thereof. The beliefs that Kuyper is discussing have two features: they are a) held with certainty[4], and b) 'not the outcome of observation or demonstration', not 'founded on empirical or demonstrative proof'.[5] So when Kuyper talks about 'faith', he talks about *foundational beliefs that are held with certainty.*

Second, given this understanding of 'faith', Kuyper affirms that 'this places faith over against demonstration; but *not* of itself over against *knowing*' (*Enc.* 131). This remark indicates two things. First, that Kuyper did not adhere to the ancient tradition according to which belief ('faith') and knowledge are mutually exclusive.[6] Belief, he holds, is not *opposed* to knowing. But how shall we construe the relation between the two in more positive terms? It is tempting to think of Kuyper as endorsing the idea that knowledge is a form of belief (as most epistemologists in the analytic tradition nowadays do), for instance a belief that is at least both true and justified (in some sense of 'justified'). Second, the remark indicates that Kuyper distinguishes two kinds of knowledge, knowledge that results from demonstration and knowledge that does not (and which could therefore be called foundational knowledge). On this score Kuyper is in agreement with an impressive array of philosophers, including Aristotle, Descartes and Locke who distinguished demonstrative knowledge from intuitive knowledge.

Third, Kuyper argues that faith, taken in the sense explained, permeates the life of science and furthermore that there is nothing wrong with that. Kuyper offers the following examples:

(a) Science, at least the empirical sciences, involve observation. In order to do science, scientists have to trust the faculty of perception, and in fact do so. As Kuyper says, 'your *ego believes* in your senses' (*Enc.* 133). This is the ordinary run of things. It is only in special circumstances, such as 'in delirium or fever, in moments of anxiety, in hypochondria, or sudden insanity' that we stop believing what our senses tell us (*Enc.* 133). Unless we are in such abnormal conditions, Kuyper holds, the belief in our senses (the belief, that is, that our senses are reliable) is foundational; we hold it, but not on the basis of some argument or proof.

(b) Kuyper says furthermore: 'We actually owe all our convictions of the realism of the object exclusively to faith. Without faith you can never go from your ego to the non-ego; there is no other bridge to be constructed from phenomena to noumena' (*Enc.* 133). And: '... it

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[3] See, for instance, Robert Audi, *Epistemology* (London: Routledge, 1998), 213 ff.; Keith Lehrer, *Theory of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1993).

[4] Says Kuyper: '[faith] is that function of the soul by which it obtains certainty directly and immediately, without the aid of discursive demonstration' (*Enc*. 129).

[5] Abraham Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1898), 131. Hereafter referred to as *Enc.*

[6] For that tradition, see Jennifer Trusted, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Knowledge* (London: MacMillan, 1997, 2nd ed.) chaps. 2,3,6 & 10; D.W. Hamlyn, *The Theory of Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1970) 78-94.

is an undoubted fact that, with the exception perhaps of some weak-minded philosopher, every man, without thinking of verification ... is certain every moment of the day that his surroundings actually are as they appear; so that on the ground of this certainty he acts and works without hesitation' (*Enc.* 134). I take Kuyper's point to be here that all of us, scientists included, need not, and in fact do not, believe in the existence of an external world (as philosophers have called it) on the basis of demonstration or argument. We believe in its existence (and scientists believe in the existence of their objects of study) in a foundational way.

(c) Another element in the life of science is demonstration. Even demonstration, Kuyper maintains, proceeds from foundational beliefs. Demonstration requires axioms that cannot be proved and that have to be taken for granted. They are, says Kuyper, 'given with our self-consciousness; ... they inhere in it; ... they are inseparable from it; and ... of themselves they bring their certainty with them' (*Enc.* 136). In our taking, and having to take, for granted unproved and unprovable axioms, Kuyper sees faith making its appearance once more: 'faith is here also that mysterious bond which binds your *ego* to these axioms' (*Enc.* 136).

(d) Another element of faith within science concerns the belief in the existence of general laws, these laws being items that play an important role in the explanatory task of science. The existence of general laws, says Kuyper, cannot be proved. Kuyper does not mean to say that the formula of the law of gravitation rests on faith. The formula is the result of investigation. But what he does say is that 'the idea itself that there are such laws, and that when certain phenomena exhibit themselves, you are certain of the existence of such laws, does not result from demonstration, but is assumed in your demonstration and is the basis on which your demonstration rests.... Without faith in the existence of the general in the special, in laws which govern this special, and in your right to build a general conclusion on a given number of observations, you would never come to acknowledge such a law' (*Enc.* 139). So, the belief that general laws of nature exist, is a foundational one.

Kuyper develops these reflections concerning the role of faith in the scientific enterprise mainly with a focus on the natural sciences. This role, he contends, is often neglected because this faith 'is the same in all, and therefore makes no difference in the conclusion' (*Enc.* 139). The absence of difference (or dissensus), however, by no means shows that faith plays no role in science, although it tends to obscure this fact.

In the humanities faith plays a much more prominent role and there it does lead to dissensus. In the humanities 'faith enters in as the indispensable factor, and in a way which is *not* the same with all' (*Enc.* 140). In the humanities 'faith seems to operate differently in different persons' (*Enc.* 144). In history, for instance, there is the role of testimony. If you exclude from history any faith in testimony whatsoever and accept nothing but what has been obtained by the immediate observation of the senses or by logical demonstration, history as a scholarly field will be impossible. Some faith in testimony goes into all of the humanities.[7] It may be that we become disappointed in trusting some particular testimony. But, says Kuyper, 'though ... you may be disappointed in your credulity, you do not abandon your ineradicable confidence, simply because this confidence cleaves to your nature and is indispensable to life itself' (*Enc.* 143). Surely, we do not all trust the *same* testimony (this explains differences in

[7] Testimony enters into the sciences as well; see for this René van Woudenberg, 'Kennis op basis van ervaring en kennis op basis van getuigenis', *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 59 (1997), 407-433.

belief) but we all trust *some* testimony.

In the humanities, then, faith operates in different individuals differently. This has a twofold cause. First, the objects of humanistic studies are not material objects *simpliciter* (although some of them may have a material substratum, such as in linguistics, or history). They are 'spiritual', and on spiritual matters it is much harder to agree than on material objects. Therefore, says Kuyper, 'in these sciences almost everything depends upon the principles one starts out from, the meaning one attaches to words and the spiritual tendency by which one is governed' (*Enc.* 145). Second, other than in the sciences, in the humanities faith plays not only a *formal* role but also becomes the immediate voucher for the *content*. In the natural sciences 'faith renders the exclusively formal service of making us believe in our senses, in the reality of the phaenomena, and in the axioms and laws of logic by which we demonstrate' (*Enc.* 145-146). In the humanities, by contrast, faith touches the content of what is believed. This is one of Kuyper's examples: '... only because my mother revealed to me who my father was, do I know this as a fact; and ... this all important circumstance ... cannot be certified except by *faith* in the content of this revelation' (*Enc.* 146). I take it that Kuyper's point can be put in the following way: in the life of the natural sciences the role of faith is that we have the foundational beliefs that our senses are reliable and that the external world really exists; but it is not due to faith that we believe that iron expands when heated, nor that we believe that iron exists. In the humanities, by contrast, faith not only regards in a general sort of way our reliance on testimony, but also our reliance on specific testimony, e.g. the testimony that William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings, or the testimony that this person is my father.

Different people, then, have different faith, that is, different people have different foundational beliefs. These differences manifest themselves within the walls of the academia. Now of course it might be that some of the differences that occur within the academia are only of a relative sort, just differences of degree. There is nothing that makes Kuyper doubt this possibility. However, some differences are not differences in degree, or differences in emphasis, but differences of *principle*. A difference is a difference of principle when it is 'a difference which does not find its origin within the circle of human consciousness, but *outside* of it.' Kuyper proceeds, 'the Christian religion places before us just this supremely important fact. For it speaks of a regeneration, of a 'being begotten anew', followed by an enlightening, which changes man in his very being; and that indeed by a change or transformation which is effected by a supernatural cause' (*Enc.* 152). This regeneration, Kuyper says, breaks humanity into two kinds of people: 'If this fact of 'being begotten anew', coming in from without, establishes a radical change in *the being* of man, be it only potentially, and if this change exercises at the same time an influence upon his *consciousness*, then as far as it has or has not undergone this transformation, there is an abyss in the universal human consciousness across which no bridge can be laid' (*Enc.* 152). Being born anew, regeneration, involves a definite change in consciousness. I read Kuyper here as developing the view that those in whom regeneration has taken place, are conscious of different things than those in whom such a renewal has not taken place. They are, for instance, conscious of the existence of God, of his perfect goodness and never failing love; they are conscious of the reality of sin; they are conscious of the fact that the world in which we live, is God's creation, that human beings are created in God's image etc. The Christian is inwardly different from the non Christian 'and consequently feels a different content rising from his consciousness'; the Christian and the non Christian therefore 'face the cosmos from different points of view, and are impelled by different impulses' (*Enc.* 154).

Let us pause for a moment and have the whole picture before us. We saw that Kuyper holds that the natural sciences and the humanities involve beliefs of the following sort, the belief that sense perception is reliable, that there exists an external world, that lawlike regularities hold among things etc. These beliefs are foundational, that is, we have them without demonstration or reasoning being involved, and are furthermore held with certainty. Kuyper's argument is that *all* science proceeds from things accepted solely by faith, i.e. from foundational beliefs. To this Kuyper adds regeneration. Because of regeneration Christians are aware of other things than non Christians; they will furthermore have different beliefs, foundational beliefs included, then non Christians. One of the beliefs of a Christian is that God exists, and this belief can be foundational.[8] Kuyper maintains that belief in God makes a difference in science. The upshot of his line of thought is that since scientists inevitably proceed from foundational beliefs, when Christians proceed from Christian, or theistic, foundational beliefs, there is nothing wrong with that on that account.

When Kuyper says that Christians have foundational beliefs different from non Christians, he does not mean to say *all* foundational beliefs of Christians differ from those of non Christians. They in fact share many foundational beliefs. What he maintains is that the set of the Christian's foundational beliefs --let us call this the foundational set-- is not identical with the foundational set of the non Christian. The sets as such are different, but different sets may share some of their members. And, of course, Kuyper thinks examples abound, such as the belief that our faculty of sense perception is reliable, the belief that there is an external world, etc.

It is important to keep this in mind, because otherwise we could go wrong interpreting Kuyper's *dictum* that the fact that there are two kinds of people leads to two kinds of science. Kuyper suggests namely that because theists and non theists 'are differently constituted, they see a corresponding difference in the constitution of all things. They are not at work, therefore, on different parts of the same house, but each builds a house of his own' (*Enc.* 155). I take this to mean that the sum total of the theist's beliefs, that is the foundational set plus everything that follows from it by valid forms of inference, is very different from the sum total of the naturalist's beliefs. The two houses differ in more than one respect. But this does not mean that all the materials that are being used by the naturalist, need to be despised by the theist, and *vice versa*. There are lots of shared materials in the two houses, lots of shared beliefs in the two different belief sets.

Kuyper is ready to acknowledge this not grudgingly, but happily.[9] Says Kuyper, 'there is a very broad realm of investigation in which the difference between the two groups exerts *no* influence. For in the present dispensation palingenesis works no change in the senses, nor in the plastic conception of visible things' (*Enc.* 157). Primary observation is common to

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[8] Whether or not Kuyper held that belief in God is foundational, much in the way Alvin Plantinga holds that belief in God can be properly basic, is discussed by Gijsbert van den Brink elsewhere in this volume.

[9] 'However plainly and candidly we may speak thus of a twofold science, and however much we may be persuaded that the scientific investigation can be *brought to a close* in no single department by all scientists together, yae, cannot be *continued* in concert, as soon as palingenesis makes a division between the investigators; we are equally empathic in our confession, which we do not make in spite of ourselves, but with gladness, that in almost every department there is some task that is common to all, and, what is almost of greater importance still, a clear account can be given of both starting-points' (*Enc.* 161-162).

both. The first, or lower parts of the natural sciences, such as observation, measuring, counting etc. fall outside of the difference. This, to repeat it again, does not mean 'that the natural sciences as such and in their entirety fall outside of this difference, but only that in these sciences the difference which separates the two groups exerts no influence on the *beginnings* of the investigation' (*Enc.* 157), that is, not on the *observational* beginnings of it. But the more the facts are being interpreted, the more likely it is that differences will occur.

Not only is there common ground with respect to perception, there is also common ground with respect to reasoning. Says Kuyper: 'The formal process of thought has *not* been attacked by sin, and for this reason palingenesis works no change in this mental task. There is but one logic, and not two' (*Enc.* 161).[10]

Still more can be said about the relation between the two sciences. In Christians palingenesis is caught up in a development. Regeneration changes the Christian's conscience *potentially*, it is sown in her like a seed that in the course of time must be nourished and then eventually will bring forth real fruits. But because this process is slow, the two houses will be more similar than in the fullness of time will seem justified. But given the slowness of the process Christians cannot expect to erect a totally new, and even separate building. Furthermore, Kuyper contends, it has to be born in mind that 'the fundamental conceptions, which have been starting-points of the two groups of scientists, were for many centuries governed altogether by Special Revelation' (*Enc.* 163).

2. Kuyper's version of foundationalism, and Reid's

In terms currently used in contemporary epistemology, we should say that Kuyper was a foundationalist of sorts. Foundationalism can be characterized in various different ways, one among them being the following. Foundationalism is a thesis concerning the permissibility of belief. It states that whereas some beliefs are permissible, others are *im*permissible and it furthermore offers a suggestion as to how to distinguish the one from the other. The suggestion is that only those beliefs are permissible that are either foundational, or based on beliefs that are foundational. We can see that this is only a bare bone description of foundationalism. It leaves open two crucial questions: 1) 'which beliefs are foundational?' (or: 'which beliefs are we permitted to have in a foundational way?') and 2) 'which procedures are available for someone to base, in a permissible way, non-foundational beliefs on foundational ones?'

I take it to be obvious from the previous section that Kuyper held that there are permissible beliefs, and furthermore that many beliefs that are crucially important in the life of science are foundational; he also held, but I have laid no emphasis on that, that there are inferential procedures that enable us to get from foundational to non-foundational beliefs, especially deduction and induction.

In order to be able to appreciate Kuyper's foundationalism, it will prove useful to set it off against a dual background. First, the main alternative to foundationalism is coherentism. Coherentism can be described as the view that only those beliefs are permissible that cohere with a sufficiently large body of generally accepted beliefs. The coherentist typically denies there are foundational beliefs. One task for coherentists is to explain what coherence comes

[10] For an extended discussion of the idea that sin has noetic effects, see René van Woudenberg, 'Over de noëtische gevolgen van de zonde. Een filosofische beschouwing', *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 52 (1998), 224-240.

to, and that has proved difficult indeed. One problem that coherentism has often been confronted with, is that a coherent body of beliefs ('coherent' spelled out in any acceptable way) has no relation to the truth. A body of beliefs can be ever so coherent, it may nonetheless be utterly false. Foundationalism is committed to the view that there is a positive relation between a belief's being foundational and it's being true. For present purposes I need not go into this, for I mention coherentism only as a general sort of alternative to foundationalism.[11]

Second, true appreciation of Kuyper's foundationalism requires that it be set off against one important and historically influential member of the foundationalism family, the position that has come to be called *classical foundationalism*.[12] According to classical foundationalism a belief is permissible if it is either self-evident, or evident for the senses, or an incorrigible report from experience, or inferentially based on what is self-evident, evident for the senses, or on an incorrigible report from experience. According to the classical foundationalist it is permissible to believe that 7+5=12 (because it is self-evident), or to believe that some things are in motion (because this is evident to the senses), or to believe that I seem to see a computer (because this is an incorrigible report from experience); and it is furthermore permissible to believe that 41x42=1722 (because this inferentially based on self-evident beliefs). Many beliefs, on the classical foundationalist criterion, turn out to be impermissible. The belief, for instance, that our senses are reliable, is neither self-evident, nor evident for the senses, nor an incorrigible report from experience, nor is it inferentially based on any such beliefs; therefore it is impermissible. The belief that God exists is likewise impermissible, for it too is neither self-evident, nor evident to the senses, nor an incorrigible report from experience, nor is it based on any such beliefs (at least, many are inclined to think so).

Classical foundationalism, then, lays it down that at least some of the beliefs that Kuyper says play a foundational role in the life of science are impermissible. The issue, then, between Kuyper and the classical foundationalist is not *whether* some beliefs are foundational, but *which* are. And we can see that Kuyper allows much more beliefs to be foundational than the classical foundationalist does. As a matter of fact, I know of no member in the foundationalist family that is so close to Kuyper as is Thomas Reid. In critical response to the classical foundationalisms of Locke and Hume, Reid worked out a position that has appropriately been called *Reidian foundationalism*.[13] The shortest way to bring out the structural affinities between Kuyper and Reid, is to consider, however shortly, Reid's theory of first principles. According to Reid,

> There are ... common principles, which are the foundation of all reasoning and of all science. ... In all other sciences, as well as in mathematics, it will be found that there

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[11] For an excellent discussion of the relations between foundationalism(s) and coherentism(s), see Laurence BonJour, 'The Dialectic of Foundationalism and Coherentism', *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*, ed. John Greco & Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) 117-142.

[12] The most penetrating presentation (and criticism) of classical foundationalism that I am aware of, is offered by Alvin Plantinga in his paper 'Reason and Belief in God', Alvin Plantinga & Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds.), *Faith and Rationality. Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1983).

[13] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 183.

> are a few common principles, upon which all the reasonings in that science are grounded, and into which they may be resolved.[14]

The principles Reid has in mind are of a foundational nature, that means that they 'need no proof, and ... do not admit of proof' (*EIP* 230). Or, which comes to the same, 'their evidence is not demonstrative, but intuitive. They require not proof, but to be placed in a proper point of view' (*EIP* 231). It is, therefore, entirely permissible to believe the foundational principles without proof, that is, without these principles being demonstrated. For these principles are such that their truth *cannot* be demonstrated.

Now which principles Reid holds are foundational? He mentions a whole series of them, but the following ones are especially relevant to our present concerns. One first principle Reid mentions is '*That the natural faculties, by which we distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious*' (*EIP* 447). Reid is thinking here of such faculties as perception, memory, and reasoning. Reid's point is that it is entirely permitted to trust our senses, memory, and reason, even though we cannot prove they are reliable. This is materially the same point Kuyper makes when he says that 'your ego believes in your senses'. For both Reid and Kuyper the belief that our senses are reliable is foundational.

Another first principle Reid mentions is '*That those things do really exist which we distinctly perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be*' (*EIP* 445). To this he adds that 'it is evident ... that all men are by nature led to give implicit faith to the distinct testimony of their senses, long before they are capable of any bias from prejudices of education or of philosophy'. Reid has in mind here the problem of the external world, and he points out that all people in fact believe there is an external world, even though that cannot be proved. For both Reid and Kuyper, the belief that there is an external world is foundational (and permissible).

Reid furthermore holds there are logical axioms, or logical first principles, that cannot be proved but that are nonetheless presupposed in all proofs and demonstrations, such as '*That every proposition is either true or false; That no proposition can be true and false at the same time; That reasoning in a circle proves nothing*' (*EIP* 452). The belief in these principles is foundational, and furthermore permissible. Here again there is an obvious parallel with Kuyper, who holds that 'faith is ... that mysterious bond which binds your ego to the axioms', by which he means that the logical axioms are believed by us although they cannot be proved.

As I read him, Kuyper allows for even more foundational beliefs than Reid does. Many of the beliefs that according to Kuyper result from regeneration, he regards as foundational: they are not based on other beliefs that constitute evidence for them. Theistic beliefs for Reid, by contrast, however well established they may be, are never foundational. Reid was convinced that there are perfectly good proofs of God's existence, for example. Belief in God for him is not permissible if it is of the foundational variety.[15] Be that as is may. It is clear that Kuyper's foundationalism is much more like Reidian than like classical foundationalism.

It is no part of my thesis that Kuyper was actually influenced by Reid, although he

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[14] Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* [1785], ed. William Hamilton (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), 230. This work is henceforth referred to as *EIP*.

[15] See for this Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'Thomas Reid on Rationality', Hendrik Hart, Johan van der Hoeven & Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds.), *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition* (Lanham: UPA, 1983) 43-70.

may have been. I do not know which philosophers Kuyper has read, and I do not know in any detail in what way Reid influenced 19th century philosophy. My thesis is only that Kuyper's foundationalism is much more like Reid's than Locke's (or Hume's). Kuyper's epistemology displays striking parallels with Reid's common sense realism. Given the fact that Kuyper is often considered as deeply influenced by German Idealism, this seems a strange and implausible thing to say. Rather than arguing from standard views of Kuyper, I have tried to let the textual facts speak for themselves. And they indicate, to repeat myself once more, that Kuyper is an epistemological foundationalist much in the spirit of Thomas Reid.

Both Reid and Kuyper, then, allow for foundational beliefs. One crucial and sceptical question that no doubt by now will have entered the heads of some of my readers is whether Reid and Kuyper have any arguments to the effect that beliefs permissibly held in the foundational way *are true*. It is one thing to argue, as Reid and Kuyper do, that we do in fact have (and cannot help having) foundational beliefs. But it is quite another thing to think that beliefs we have in this way are true. Could it be argued, for instance, that because a particular belief is held in the foundational way, it is true? I do think that both Reid and Kuyper would have something important, and similar, to say on this score. But this is a very large topic, that I have to put to one side on this occasion.[16]

By way of conclusion I should like to consider some passages from a striking speech Kuyper gave at the Free University in 1900. The speech's title, in translation, is *Scolastica II. Seeking or finding? The goal of genuine learning*.[17] In this speech Kuyper defends three theses about seeking and finding in science. First, he says, 'one should not mislay, what was not lost' (13). Kuyper's idea here is that it is permitted to have what I have called foundational beliefs, and what Reid has called 'first principles'. All science, he says, has to proceed from fixed points of departure, such as the logical axioms, the belief in our senses, and the belief that the cosmos exists. These beliefs, that are the stock and trade of common sense, should not be mislaid. For they were never lost. Second, 'one should not seek for what was already found long ago' (16). Kuyper's point here is that science is a communal enterprise, and that it is wrong in science to accept exclusively what one has found out for oneself. Crucial in the life of science is testimony, the acceptance of what others have found out, without there being the possibility to verify or check what is testified. Finally, 'we should stop seeking those things that God, in his grace, has revealed to us'. Kuyper's point is that through revelation we may know things that we are unable to know in any other manner, and that we may use in doing science.

One final note. In this paper I have not offered a systematic evaluation of Kuyper's thoughts on faith and science. But the careful reader, I am sure, has sensed that I am in considerable agreement with Kuyper's basic tenets. His views on the relation between faith and science are not only important and historically interesting, they are also an approximation of the truth of the matter.[18]

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[16] I have discussed Reid's thoughts on this in my paper 'Thomas Reid over common sense en eerste principes', Ger Groot (red.), *Van Agora tot markt. Acta 18de Filosofiedag* (Rotterdam: RFS, 1996) 113-118, and in a much more elaborate fashion in 'Reid and Kant against the Sceptic', Joseph Houston (ed.), *The Philosophy of Common Sense* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1999).

[17] The Dutch title is *Scolastica II. Om het zoeken of om het vinden? of het doel van echte studie* (Amsterdam: Höveker & Wormser, [1900]).

[18] In a more systematic way I have discussed the relations between faith and science in

'Enkele argumenten tegen het naturalisme', J. de Bruijn (red.), *Dooyeweerd herdacht* (Amsterdam: VU Press, 1995) 39-77, and in 'Wat bedoelen we wanneer we zeggen dat de wetenschap grenzen heeft?', J.P. Verhoogt, S. Griffioen & R. Fernhout (eds.), *Vinden en zoeken. Het bijzondere van de Vrije Universiteit* (Kampen: Kok, 1997) 137-156.