ARCHITECTS OF EVANGELICAL INTELLECTUAL THOUGHT:
ABRAHAM KUYPER AND BENJAMIN WARFIELD

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Dr Peter Heslam, currently a curate in the Church of England, is an internationally recognised expert on the thought of Abraham Kuyper, the great Dutch polymath. He has recently published a major book, Creating a Christian World View (Eerdmans/Paternoster), which analyses the famous Lectures on Calvinism which Kuyper gave at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898. In this article he compares and contrasts the thought of Kuyper with that of another great fountainhead of evangelical thought, B B Warfield.

Introduction

Last year marked the centenary of a significant moment in the formation of the contemporary evangelical mind. In October 1898, the Dutch Reformed theologian, politician, journalist and educationalist Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) delivered the annual series of Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary. While in itself this may not seem like a very remarkable event, the core ideas of those lectures have informed and inspired several generations of evangelical thinkers, and there is every evidence today that the influence of these ideas is growing. The person most singularly responsible for Kuyper's international reputation was a member of the Princeton faculty at the time of his visit: Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921). Not only did he have a hand in Kuyper's invitation to deliver the Stone Lectures, but he was intimately involved in the translation, publication and distribution of Kuyper's work in the English-speaking world. In doing so, he openly expressed his admiration for his Dutch colleague, and commended him enthusiastically to new readers. In the introduction to Kuyper's *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, he wrote:

> As a force in Church and State in whose arm those who share his fundamental principles trust with a well-founded hope of victory, Dr. Kuyper is probably today the most considerable figure in both political and ecclesiastical Holland.²

Shortly before Kuyper's visit to Princeton, Warfield published a biographical sketch of Kuyper's career, in order to introduce him to a wider American audience. Once again, his admiration for his Dutch colleague is all too apparent:

> In the conflict with unbelief and indifferentism, with materialism and pessimism, in brief with all the elements that are undermining the health of the individual or of the people, he [Kuyper] has ... remained the leader whose
forceful words strengthen the hearts of the Christians in Holland, no matter to what ecclesiastical tendency they may adhere.\textsuperscript{4}

Two years later he wrote that Kuyper displayed ‘a systematizing genius that is very rare’.\textsuperscript{5}

Warfield's enthusiasm for and propagation of Kuyper's work may seem odd in view of the fact that these two theologians represent different figureheads, different sources of inspiration, in contemporary evangelical thought and reflection. As George Marsden has written: 'In almost every field today, evangelical scholars are divided in two camps ... the Warfieldians and the Kuyperians.'\textsuperscript{6} The key differences between Kuyper and Warfield were derived, however, from their difference in approach to a single issue: the relationship between faith and reason. This has to be fully acknowledged, alongside a recognition of the importance of this issue, if an over-exaggerated picture either of their differences or of their similarities is to be avoided.

This article will aim to compare the ideas on faith and reason that were held by these two architects of contemporary evangelical intellectual thought, and to account for some of the differences. Kuyper's Stone Lectures, which have most often been published under the title \textit{Lectures on Calvinism}, will be taken as the starting-point for this discussion. The comparisons that are made will serve a further aim of this paper, which is to situate Kuyper's lectures in the immediate context in which they were given: Princeton Theological Seminary in the autumn of 1898.\textsuperscript{7} The advantage of focusing the analysis on the Stone Lectures is that in them we are presented with the essential Kuyper. Anyone, in fact, seeking to discover the heart of Kuyper's thought is best advised first to go to the \textit{Lectures on Calvinism}, rather than to any of his other works. There are at least four factors that account for this.

First, they represent a summary of Kuyper's thought, the components of which he had worked out over the quarter-century of his public career that had passed before his visit to the United States, chiefly through his relentless and prolific journalism.\textsuperscript{8} Major areas of his thinking, about which he had published a great deal, are presented in concise form. Despite their modest length, therefore, the \textit{Lectures} have a broad scope: they represent a kind of 'manifesto' of Kuyper's thought.\textsuperscript{9} Secondly, the Stone Lectures were presented at the highpoint of Kuyper's career. When he gave them he was Professor of Theology, Member of Parliament, leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, and Chief Editor of his daily newspaper \textit{De Standaard} and his weekly religious newspaper \textit{De Heraut}. Three years later he became Prime Minister of the Netherlands. The Kuyper of the Stone Lectures, therefore, is Kuyper at the peak of his intellectual and organizational powers – it is Kuyper in his prime.\textsuperscript{10} A third factor is that in the Stone
Lectures Kuyper made an attempt to relate his ideas to a foreign audience that was unfamiliar with them. Out of all Kuyper’s publications, including those that have been translated into other languages, the Lectures on Calvinism is the only substantial work that was originally intended for a foreign audience. Because of this, allusions to debates and struggles peculiar to the Dutch context are kept to a minimum. This not only allows attention to focus on the underlying principles of his thought, but it contributes to the lucidity and accessibility of the style and argumentation.¹²

Fourthly, it was in the Stone Lectures that Kuyper first used the concept of worldview in the specific sense of Weltanschauung as a way of giving shape to his entire body of thought. This is not to deny that certain aspects of his worldview concept were evident in his thinking before 1898: but where these occurred there was no systematic application of this concept to opposing ideologies, and no attempt was made to define the contours of a Calvinistic worldview. The transition to the full use of the worldview concept as the central feature of Kuyper’s thought was largely due, in fact, to the influence of the Scottish theologian James Orr (1844–1913), whose Kerr Lectures for 1890–91 Kuyper consulted in preparing his Stone Lectures.¹³

Taken together, these four factors help account for the fact that it is this work amongst Kuyper’s extensive repertoire that has had the greatest international rapport and impact. A number of other eminent Dutch theologians have given the Stone Lectures since they were founded by Levi Stone in 1871, but none of these series of lectures, once published, have been as widely circulated or as profoundly influential as Kuyper’s Lectures on Calvinism. At the height of his career, Kuyper made a bold and spirited attempt to bring together the main strands of his thought in a concise, comprehensive and systematic way and in so doing accentuated their dynamic potential. What ensued is the most complete, cogent and visionary expression of Kuyper’s thought that is available to any reader.

**Kuyper at Princeton**

What was Kuyper’s reception like when he came to Princeton? Against a background of excitement and anticipation a certain degree of irritation emerged shortly before he arrived. The cause of this irritation was Kuyper’s decision to make amendments to his Lecture manuscripts following his reading of American history en route to the United States and in the public library in Manhattan.¹⁴ The alterations having been made, he sent a full annotated text to Warfield with the request that it be translated afresh. There were, however, only about ten days to go before the Lectures were due to begin. With break-neck speed Warfield organized translators amongst his colleagues and contacts and managed to run off a printed version for Kuyper’s use on the rostrum. In the front of one of the dozen copies that were made...
of this version, Warfield paid a handwritten tribute to 'the gentlemen who permitted themselves to be hurried through the task of translating these lectures'. He pointed out that before the English edition of the Lectures was published in 1899, 'the text was much altered by Dr. Kuyper himself with a view to bettering the English, but with the effect of waning it sadly'.

Exasperation gave way to bewilderment after Kuyper arrived. In the conferment ceremony of honorary doctorates at the university Kuyper was accompanied in the procession by Albert V. Dicey (1835–1922), Professor of English Law at Oxford University, who along with Kuyper was to receive an honorary doctorate in law. Both candidates for the degree were called upon to address the audience. In a letter to his wife Dicey wrote:

> On the platform were the President and other University officers. Distinguished visitors, such as the ex-President of Cleveland, and the recipients of degrees, viz. Dr. Kuyper and myself. It was a bright, gay scene, but in some ways oddly unlike the giving of degrees at Oxford. ... We were each asked to say a few words. This led to the most remarkable speech I have heard for a long time. Kuyper ... looked like a Dutchman of the seventeenth century. He spoke slowly and solemnly. His English was impressive, with here and there a Dutch idiom. He told us he was a Calvinist; that he had been persecuted by anti-Calvinists – this itself sounded like the language of another age. All the good in America had its root in Calvinism, which was as much a legal and an ethical as a religious creed. The Continental States had sympathised with Spain. Not so the Dutch Calvinists. We have not forgotten our contest with Spanish tyranny; we fought it for a hundred years. In six weeks you have given Spanish power its coup de grace, but neither England nor the United States would have been free but for Dutch heroism. Spain has in all countries and in all ages been a curse to the world... This was the tone of the whole speech. There was not a word of flattery to America. One felt as if the seventeenth century had visibly risen upon us to give the last curse to Spain. After that I spoke, said nothing very remarkable, but dwelt on our ideas of law and justice being the true bond between England and the United States... Then luncheon and a sort of levée – infinite handshakings and introductions. My head whirled over it... This is the outline of our jaunt to Princeton. I brought away an additional LL.D., a gorgeous hood, very pleasant recollections.'

Although these words come from only one member of Kuyper's audience, and an English one at that, they provide a unique insight not only into the occasion itself but into the kind of impression Kuyper made at Princeton.
Kuyper and Warfield

Warfield, of course, would have been less taken aback by Kuyper than Dicey, given his familiarity with Kuyper’s work and with the Calvinistic tradition in which he stood. He, like Kuyper, was both an eminent theologian and an ardent polemicist, not given to exercising restraint when dealing with opinions that stood opposed to his own, even when it was with Kuyper that he disagreed. 17 He also resembled Kuyper in his passion for publishing his views. Numerous articles flowed from his pen, most of them appearing in the Princeton Theological Review, which he dominated in a not dissimilar way to Kuyper’s domination of De Standaard and his weekly religious newspaper De Heraut. Many of his publications, like those of Kuyper, dealt explicitly with the subject of Calvinism, and he shared with Kuyper the conviction that historic orthodoxy had to undergo further development so as to be able to address contemporary issues. Warfield also struggled, as did Kuyper, against the mounting influence of liberalism, although Warfield restricted his opposition largely to theological issues and particularly to the doctrine of Scripture. It was no doubt because of such affinities that one of Kuyper’s daughters translated some of Warfield’s work into Dutch. 18 and that Warfield was known to American students as the ‘American Kuyper’.19

The similarities and differences between Kuyper and Warfield on the relationship between faith and reason are seen most clearly when their treatments of evolution, biblical inspiration, and a Christian approach to science are compared. Although these similarities and differences have until recently escaped detailed scholarly attention, their relevance to current discussions of the same issues is highlighted by the point made at the start of this paper that the Warfieldian and Kuyperian traditions are still of considerable importance in evangelical reflection on the issue of belief and rationality.

Evolution

Kuyper maintained that the worldviews of Christianity and evolution were diametrically opposed to each other, without any hope of reconciliation. They were, as he put it, ‘antipoles between which neither reconciliation nor comparison is thinkable’.20 He did not, however, in contrast to many of his Catholic and orthodox Protestant contemporaries, reject the validity of the scientific data produced by evolutionary scientists, nor was he opposed to the idea that one species may have evolved out of another. 21 He maintained, rather, a notion of ‘relative evolution’, or ‘evolutionary creation’, by which he sought to acknowledge the validity of biological research whilst maintaining the integrity of the Genesis account. 22 His censure of evolutionary theory was based on what he regarded as an attempt by its purveyors (such as Herbert Spencer and
Ernst Haeckel) to take all areas of knowledge, including metaphysics, within its ambit, thus allowing it to assume religious pretentions. Whilst, therefore, rejecting evolution as a worldview, he accepted it as a scientific hypothesis, conceived using fallible human reason. Ilse Bulhof has claimed that this position, assenting as it did to the idea of progress and to a form of qualified Darwinism, was ‘doubtless the most creative’ amongst religious responses to evolutionary theory in the Netherlands. In Claude Welch’s estimation, similarly, it represents ‘an ingenious way of looking at evolution “from a Christian point of view”’. Despite the threat to orthodox Christian faith posed by the evolutionary worldview (or ‘evolutionism’ as Kuyper often called it), Kuyper did not believe that engaging in reasoned dialogue with its advocates was the way forward. This, he maintained, would be entirely fruitless, given the reality of the antithesis between Christian and evolutionary presuppositions. Christian opposition to evolutionism should take the form not of a blow-by-blow defence, but of the development of an equally fundamental, religious worldview that was true to Christian principles.

Kuyper’s treatment of evolution would certainly have struck chords with his Princeton audience. In contrast to their predecessor Charles Hodge (1797–1878), who had vigorously opposed evolutionary theory as essentially atheistic, A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield sought to reconcile Darwin’s findings with the teachings of Scripture. In a way similar to Kuyper, they argued that evolutionary theory should be accepted as a viable hypothesis for explaining natural development, but they insisted that it must not seek to address metaphysical questions. If it did so, it would be bound to fall into anti-Christian speculation, whereas Darwin’s agnosticism was not the inevitable outcome of his evolution theory. Warfield was keen to stress, indeed, that evolution might supply a tenable theory of the means by which divine creation occurred. He thereby wished to accept ‘theistic evolution’, which was a theory closely resembling Kuyper’s notion of evolutionary creation. It was not, however, until after Warfield’s death in 1921 that theologians at Princeton, along with most other conservative evangelicals (who had since come to be called fundamentalists), began to allow the notion of evolution to take on mythical proportions as the great collective symbol of scientific naturalism, in a way similar to Kuyper and German positivist philosophers before them. Once the transition had been made, it virtually became the defining aspect of their warfare with modern scientific culture. Although, at the time of his visit, the severity of Kuyper’s attack on evolution as a worldview may not have found resonance at Princeton, the level of agreement between Kuyper and Warfield on the value of evolution as a scientific theory but its destructiveness if applied to the realm of metaphysics is remarkable.
A similar level of agreement is apparent in their positions on biblical inspiration. This is worth emphasizing in view of the inaccurate study of biblical authority and inspiration by Rogers and McKim, in which it is argued that Kuyper maintained a much more positive attitude to biblical criticism than did Warfield. The differences between Kuyper and Warfield in this whole area are significant and stem from a basic difference in philosophical background, but they must not be allowed to obscure the fact that their chief bearing is on the value of defending the authority and inspiration of Scripture, rather than on belief in the authority and inspiration of Scripture itself. Kuyper's claim that the Bible is God's Word both as a whole and in its parts corresponded closely to Warfield and Hodge's insistence that 'the Scriptures not only contain, but are the word of God.' In fact, both Kuyper and Warfield assumed that there was only one truly Reformed perspective on this matter, and both failed to provide a rigorous engagement with the critical-historical issues raised by the new scholarship concerning the place of Scripture in the traditional teachings of the church. Settling instead for dogmatically assertive and polemical arguments, both theologians won considerable support for their case - Kuyper amongst the Dutch Orthodox Reformed (the Gereformeerden) and Warfield amongst the mainly orthodox membership of the American Presbyterian Church.

It was the issue of apologetics that constituted the chief practical point of difference between Kuyper and Warfield in the area of biblical inspiration. Warfield engaged in apologetics and endorsed its use with unrivalled vigour, tending in doing so towards the post-Reformation scholastic view that reason could be a preamble. He argued that human reason compelled people to believe the Bible because of evidential or logical proofs of its divine character. The Scriptures had therefore to be vindicated as a technically reliable guide to science and history before a person could trust in them. Kuyper, on the other hand, shunned apologetics, maintaining that the Holy Spirit moved people to accept the authority of the Scriptures because of the message of salvation they contained. The function of Scripture was, in fact, soteriological: it brought people to salvation.

Calvin's doctrine of Scripture provided Kuyper the starting-point for this position. While Calvin's necessitas Sanctae Scripturae (necessity of Holy Scripture) gave Kuyper cause for suspicion towards attempts made by modernistic scholars, such as Albert Schweitzer, to apply techniques of literary criticism to the biblical accounts, Calvin's testimonium Spiritus Sancti (testimony of the Holy Spirit) lent support to his rejection of reasoned argument in the effort to affirm the authority of the Scriptures: the Holy Spirit, who indwelt the believer, bore witness to their truth. Thus he declared at the start of his
Stone Lectures, in words that were no doubt aimed directly at his Princeton audience: 'In this struggle [between the worldviews of Christianity and modernism], Apologetics have advanced us not one single step. Apologists have invariably begun by abandoning the assailed breastwork, in order to entrench themselves cowardly in a ravelin behind it.' The point reached its intended target, Warfield later writing in criticism of Kuyper and his associates: 'Apologetics has its part in Christianizing the world, and this is not a small part: nor is it merely a subsidiary or a defensive part ... It has a primary part to play and a conquering part.' He confessed to finding the Kuyperian aversion to apologetics 'a standing matter of surprise.'

Kuyper's functional view of the Bible differed markedly, therefore, from Warfield's rational or 'philosophical' approach even though the dogmatic positions maintained by Kuyper and Warfield on the authority and inspiration of Scripture bore striking similarities. The difference is partly accountable for in terms of Kuyper's commitment to the social emancipation of the orthodox Protestant sector of the Dutch population. Whilst Warfield looked to the power of reason for confidence in the future of Christianity, Kuyper sought that confidence in the embodiment of Christian (especially Reformed) principles in social institutions, which could only be achieved through the desired emancipation. Apologetics had little part to play in this, as this group were already committed to the authority of Scripture, without the need to be persuaded into believing it by intellectual argument.

Science

The divergence between Kuyper and Warfield on the relationship between faith and reason manifested itself most clearly in their respective approaches to 'science'. Kuyper used this term to refer not merely to the natural sciences, but to the entirety of human science, including the humanities, in a way akin to the German Wissenschaft (meaning 'learning' or 'knowledge'). Although his ideas ran counter to the dominant agnostic trend in science, he refused to cultivate antipathy for science or any belief in a conflict between science and faith. Apart from a keen interest in and enthusiasm for new scientific and technological innovation, he regarded love for science and the denial of any dualistic withdrawal from science as marks of authentic Calvinistic religion. This had been demonstrated in history, not least in the Netherlands, where in the seventeenth century and under the influence of Calvinism there had been a flowering of scientific enterprise, symbolised by the fact that the telescope, the microscope and the thermometer had all been invented there. Propensity towards science was indeed inherent in Calvinistic doctrine, particularly in the doctrine of decrees and its derivative, foreordination, according to which the cosmos was not subject to the chance and disorder typical of Arminianism but manifested unity, stability and regularity – a belief fundamental to the very possibility of science, and integral to all modern scholarship.
Kuyper’s argument was obviously intended to stimulate scholarly enterprise, but at Princeton he was preaching to the converted. Contemporary American evangelicalism was in general committed to scientific involvement, to the extent that it is possible to speak of the ‘evangelical love affair with Enlightenment science’. Kuyper’s Princeton audience was certainly no exception, even though its academic endeavours were concentrated on a fairly narrowly defined set of theological and ecclesiastical concerns. What would have sounded strange to them was not the denial of any conflict between science and religion but the assertion that within the realm of science there was a fundamental conflict between Christian and non-Christian presuppositions, manifesting itself in a sharp division between those scientists who believed the cosmos to be in an abnormal (fallen) state and those who believed it to be in a normal (unfallen) state. Whereas if there had been no Fall, Kuyper explained, human consciousness would have operated in the same way for all people, the intervention of sin and the need for regeneration had resulted in two kinds of consciousness, that of the regenerate and that of the unregenerate, the former of which held to the abnormal state of things and the latter to the normal. Now, if human consciousness is the starting-point of all knowledge, it must also be the starting-point from which all science proceeds, and due to the twofold division in consciousness, the science of normalists and the abnormalists must be fundamentally different from each other. As he put it in his Encyclopedia, the ‘two kinds of people’ that existed by reason of the divine act of regeneration represented an irreconcilable division in human consciousness, and therefore inevitably produced ‘two kinds of science’.

Warfield regarded Kuyper’s position as seriously misguided. He saw no reason to challenge the prevailing scientific consensus that science was an objective, unified and cumulative enterprise of the whole of humanity, and he insisted that there was no difference in kind between the work of regenerate and unregenerate scientists. The two types of scientists did not construct separate buildings, as Kuyper had argued, but worked ‘side by side at the common task and the common edifice takes gradually fuller and truer outlines’. Although Warfield agreed with Kuyper that there was a difference between the results of Christian and non-Christian scientists, he insisted that this was not a difference in type, but in quality: ‘It is not a different kind of science that they are producing ... It is only a better scientific outlook, and the better scientific product’. Whatever differences there might be between them, both sorts of scientists were striving towards erecting ‘one edifice of truth’. This belief in a unified corpus of knowledge adds to the reasons already suggested as to why Kuyper and Warfield differed so strongly on the value and effectiveness of apologetics: without the unity of knowledge, apologetics was futile.
Aside from the need to supply an epistemological basis for arguments for or against apologetics, why should Kuyper and Warfield have disagreed so sharply about the unity or otherwise of science? The chief reason lay in their difference in attitude towards the Enlightenment and revolution. Following G. Groen van Prinsterer (1801–76), his predecessor as leader of the anti-revolutionaries, Kuyper associated the Enlightenment with the increasing secularization of European society. He insisted that the sweeping intellectual and cultural changes that had taken place in the wake of the French Revolution were characterized by 'unbelief', even though some of them were to be welcomed for their immediate practical benefits. There was, as a consequence, a fundamental antithesis between two competing worldviews, that of Calvinism on the one hand, grounded on the principle of God's sovereignty, and that of the Enlightenment on the other, grounded on humanistic and naturalistic principles. In the United States, in contrast, evangelicals had supported the American Revolution, and this inclined later generations to view Enlightenment thought in a more positive light, despite their rejection of certain elements. This attitude was aided by the fact that neither radical revolution nor Enlightenment scepticism had taken deep root in American culture. The American Revolution was in fact led mainly by advocates of the moderate strand of the Enlightenment that was associated with Newton and Locke. In addition, Scottish Common Sense thought which maintained its influence in nineteenth-century American academia, had helped to encourage a synthesis between modern scientific theories, the principles of the American Revolution and evangelical Christianity. In contrast, therefore, to Dutch Calvinists who contended against more radical forms of Enlightenment scepticism, American evangelicals generally accepted the Enlightenment idea of an empirically based rationality. Indeed, they embraced objective science as an ally of Christianity because the laws it sought to discover procured evidence of God's benevolent design. Although this auspicious relationship between science and Christianity underwent severe challenge in the upheaval that followed the publication of Darwin's The Origin of Species in 1859, the Princeton Theologians maintained their confidence in the possibility of objective, neutral science and in its value in supporting orthodox Christian doctrine.

The epistemological question which lay at the heart of the division between Kuyper and Warfield was whether or not the acquisition of knowledge was exactly the same in principle for the regenerate and the unregenerate mind. Kuyper, who was influenced by the Idealist tradition, conceived of knowledge in terms of the organic relationships it involved between creator, cosmos and the knowing subject. For this reason, all human knowledge presupposed certain givens about the way the universe was held together: knowledge, independent of religiously held presuppositions, simply did not exist. Warfield,
in contrast, was schooled in the Baconian tradition with its insistence that knowledge was gained by considering the evidence and reaching conclusions based on that evidence. Accordingly, human knowledge was independent of the belief system held by the investigating subject. Warfield’s argument suited his context in the United States, a country that was founded on principles derived chiefly from the moderate Enlightenment, but it differed markedly from Kuyper’s fiercely critical attitude to the Enlightenment which in the Netherlands presented itself as a much greater threat to orthodox Christian belief than in the United States. 

Against this background, Kuyper’s insistence on a twofold division of science during his visit to Princeton was designed to encourage American evangelicals to cease being enamoured of Enlightenment science. Instead they were to develop their own kind of science within their own, independent institutions of learning, as the only effective way of providing principled opposition to the modernistic worldview. Again, it was an argument closely tied to his programme of emancipating the orthodox Protestant sector of the Dutch population, reflected in the fact that his call for a university in the Netherlands with an explicitly Reformed constitution was simultaneously a call for a university for a specific social group – the orthodox Protestant lower middle classes (the kleine luyden). Not surprisingly, therefore, Kuyper’s vision for science failed to find resonance at Princeton, and was partly responsible for the divergence between Warfieldian and Kuyperian trends in American evangelicalism which still persists today. His application of the notion of the antithesis, which was relevant to the situation in the Netherlands, was not fitted to the American scene, where Christian and Enlightenment traditions co-existed without open conflict.

Kuyper’s impact

It might be fair to conclude from the above that Kuyper’s visit to Princeton failed to have any impact on Warfield. This is not, however, the case. Warfield was delighted with Kuyper’s Lectures, and was disappointed that he was unable to attend one of the series of six on account of an ulcerated tooth. He praised them for ‘expounding with the utmost breadth and forcefulness the fundamental principles of Calvinism’, and claimed that since his visit to the United States Kuyper had become ‘one of our own prophets to whose message we have a certain right’. Although he valued in particular the breadth in scope of Kuyper’s thought, he claimed also to be in agreement with its general drift. The points on which he differed were, he claimed, of no particular consequence:

I have always delighted in your theological writings: the point of view from which you survey doctrine is so high and the prospect you take is so wide, – the richness of
your thought, the comprehensiveness of your grasp, and the broad sweep of your mind, as you deal with these high themes, are ever my delight and admiration. There are minor matters, of course, in which I should take issue with your constructions: but these are mere nothings. – I rejoice I feel myself in full accord with the great march of your thought and I never consult your books without deriving from them both instruction and inspiration." 

This positive evaluation of Kuyper’s work is reflected in the fact that in 1912 Warfield, on behalf of his Princeton colleagues, invited him to attend the centenary celebrations of the founding of the Seminary later that year and to give an address. Kuyper was obliged to turn down the request due to prior commitments, but the invitation to be a platform speaker at such an important moment in the life of the Seminary and in the tradition it represented could hardly have been possible had Kuyper been regarded as being significantly at odds with Princeton dogma. Even in 1919, twenty-one years after the event, Warfield was still praising Kuyper’s ‘thoroughly admirable and wide-minded Stone Lectures’.

The influence of Kuyper’s Stone Lectures on Warfield’s thought is evident in the latter’s most important treatments of Calvinism. Here he almost plagiarises the Lectures, especially in his argument that Calvinism represented a broad movement in culture and society; that it was rooted in a particular kind of religious consciousness, from which it emanated; that this religious consciousness represented the purest and most advanced stage in the development of religion; and that Calvinism offered the best prospects for the future of Christianity. These ideas are key ones in Kuyper’s thought and are most poignantly expressed in his Stone Lectures.

We may conclude, in fact, that Warfield’s understanding of Calvinism was largely indebted to Kuyper’s exposition of it in the Stone Lectures. It is a conclusion that goes some way to explain why Kuyper’s influence in North America has worked partly through the Princeton Theology, even though in some important respects it is opposed to it. There are even hints, despite the fundamental epistemological differences, that Warfield was partially persuaded by Kuyper’s insistence on the radical influence of worldview on science, and on the importance of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in affirming the authority and inspiration of Scripture. In a review he wrote of Orr’s Stone Lectures for the year 1903–1904, for instance, Warfield commended Orr’s notion of an irreconcilable conflict between the Christian and the modernistic (or ‘evolutionary’) view of the world, and applauded Orr for setting out to show that ‘the Christian view in the forum of science is the only tenable one’. By 1910 he was prepared to accept that true Christian conviction was able to exist without rational grounding in external evidences, and that ‘the supreme proof to every Christian of the deity of his Lord is ... his own inner
experience of the transforming power of his Lord upon the heart and life. Only a few years after publishing his criticisms of Kuypers, therefore, there are at least indications that Warfield began to incline towards Kuypers views, which, as we have seen, were indebted to James Orr in the way he formulated the concept of worldview at Princeton. It is possible, therefore, that there was a certain tentative rapprochement—a convergence of minds—sometime after Kuypers visit to Princeton. Warfield never went so far as to assert the existence of two kinds of science, and he continued to defend the value of apologetics, albeit in more level-headed, less triumphalist tones.

Kuypers Stone Lectures are more important for gaining an understanding of his thought than has previously been recognized in Kuypers scholarship. The very fact that they represent a concise summary of his ideas addressed to a foreign audience may even be one of the reasons why their importance has been overlooked. Dutch-speaking scholars with an interest in Kuypers ideas, who through the language have access to the entire body of his work, tend to concentrate their analysis on his lengthier and more specialized works, while those with an interest in his career focus on his journalism, correspondence and public discourses in the Netherlands. The usefulness of a short summary originally designed for people far removed from the Dutch situation who had little or no access to his more detailed monographs has not been immediately apparent. Add to this the highly generalized, imaginative and prophet-like genre in which they are written, which, though not peculiar to the Stone Lectures, adds to a sense of their detachment from concrete debates, and it is no wonder that these lectures have not been regarded as particularly significant by the majority of Kuypers scholars. It is hoped that this paper has provided sufficient reason why the importance of Kuypers Stone Lectures should now be fully recognized, a century after the event. Their importance becomes apparent in any serious attempt to understand the overall shape not only of his ideas, but of his career and of his influence outside the Netherlands. This is closely tied to the fact that it was in these lectures that Kuypers first made deliberate, thorough-going and comprehensive use of the worldview concept. This concept is so fundamental to his thought, so important to his career and so central to his international legacy that Kuypers and worldview are virtually inseparable, even though it is inaccurate to assume that the whole of Kuypers career can be interpreted as an attempt to articulate a Calvinistic worldview. It is only fitting, therefore, that the centenary of Kuypers Stone Lectures should be marked by a range of international conferences and publications that aim to assess the range and scope of his legacy.
This article is a reworked version of a paper due to appear in a
collection derived from the centennial Kuyper conference at
Princeton Theological Seminary in February 1998, edited by
Luis E. Lugo. Both papers are based on the contents of my book
Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on
Calvinism (Eerdmans/Paternoster: Grand Rapids/Carlisle, 1998).

This is especially the case in the area of social ethics. See Peter
Sedgwick, 'Theology and Society' in The Modern Theologians: An
Introduction to Christian Theology in the Late Twentieth Century,
(295); Ronald H. Preston, Church and Society in the Late Twentieth
Century: The Economic and Political Task (London: SCM Press,
1983), 81. Those influenced by the Kuyperian tradition in Britain
include the well-known theological writers N. T. Wright,
Oliver O'Donovan, Alister McGrath, Graham Cray, Jeremy Begbie,
Eilat Storkey and the late Lesslie Newbigin.

Benjamin B. Warfield, 'Introduction', Encyclopedia of Sacred
Theology: Its Principles, by Abraham Kuyper (New York: Scribner;
London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), xi–xix (xii). This book is the
English translation of the second volume of Kuyper's three-volume
Encyclopaedie der heilige godgeleerdheid (Amsterdam: Wormser,
1894).

See Warfield's introduction to Witsius H. de Savornin Lohman,
'Dr. Abraham Kuyper' in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, 36
(1898): 561–609 (562). This is a translation of De Savornin
Lohman's booklet Dr. Abraham Kuyper (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink,
1889). Warfield handed Kuyper a copy of the newly published
English version during his stay at Princeton. See the Kuyper
Archive (hereafter KA), letter 6271 (19 October 1898).

B. B. Warfield, 'Introduction' to The Work of the Holy Spirit, by
A. Kuyper (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), xxiv–xxxix (xxviii).
This volume was republished under the same title by Eerdmans,
Grand Rapids, in 1975.

George M. Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and
Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 151.

Although only those ideas Kuyper presented at Princeton will be
considered, supplementary material from his earlier work will be
used wherever it sheds light on those ideas.

Hendrikus Berkhoef, Two Hundred Years of Theology: Report of a

Ernst Troeltsch referred to Kuyper's Stone Lectures as the 'Manifest
des modernen Calvinismus', in his Die Sozialehren der christlichen
Kirchen und Gruppen, 16 vols (Tubingen: Mohr, 1922), vol. 1, 732.

Both J.C. Rullman and W.J. van Welderen Rengers consider the
years immediately surrounding 1898 as the zenith of Kuyper's
career. See J.C. Rullman, Abraham Kuyper: een levensschets
(Kampen: Kok, 1928), 178–79; W.J. van Welderen Rengers,
Schets eener parlementaire geschiedenis van Nederland sedert 1848,
The well-known Kuyperian philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd maintained that Kuyper's Stone Lectures are perhaps the best example of the 'principal clarity and sharpness' that characterized Kuyper's work. See Dooyeweerd's 'Kuyper's wetenschapser'. *Philosophia reformata: orgaan van de vereniging voor calvinistische wijsbegeerte*, 4 (1939): 193-232 (197).

Sec. for instance, Kuyper's 'Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries', Methodist Review 75 (1893): 520-37, 762-78. This is translation of Kuyper's *De verflawing der grenzen: rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit, oktober 1892* (Amsterdam: Wormser, 1892).

See Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University Under Auspices of the L.P. Stone Foundation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931): 11 (note 1). Orr's lectures were published in 1893 under the title *The Christian View of God and the World* 4th ed. (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1897). In them Orr argued that Christianly possessed an independent, unified and coherent worldview derived from a central belief or principle - an argument almost the same as Kuyper's on behalf of Calvinism.


See the copy of the Lectures held in the archives of the Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary. The 1899 English-language version referred to was published by Fleming Revell, New York.


Their disagreements appear not to have jeopardized their cordial relations. A year before Kuyper's death on 8 November 1920, Warfield spoke warmly of the bond of friendship between them - a bond begun in a devotion to the theology which you have taught with so much distinction through so many years; strengthened through a happy acquaintance with you when you were good enough to visit us in Princeton'. KA, letter 8620 (letter from Warfield to Kuyper, 7 November 1919).


'In memoriam Prof. B.B. Warfield', *De Heraut*, 27 March 1921.

Lectures, 11, 18; *Evolutie*, 11.
21 Evolutie, 14, 47.

22 Lectures, 132; Evolutie, 48.


24 Lectures, 18–19; Evolutie, 50.


28 Marsden, Understanding, 147.


30 See Kuyper's, De hedendaagse Schriftkritiek in hare bedenkelijke strekking voor de Gemeente des levenden Gods: rede, bij het overdragen van het rectoraat der Vrije Universiteit, gehouden den 20sten oktober 1881 (Amsterdam: Kuyt, 1881). English translation: The Biblical Criticism of the Present Day, Bibliotheca Sacra, 61 (1904): 409–42, 666–8 (430). This was Kuyper's most notable contribution to the debate on biblical inspiration and was given in the same year as the position of the Princeton Theologians on the same issue received classic expression in an article by Warfield and A.A. Hodge. See A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield, 'Inspiration', Presbyterian Review, 2 (1881): 225–60. Republished in book form

See, for instance, Warfield’s ‘Introduction’ to Francis R. Beattie’s *Apologetics: Or the Rational Vindication of Christianity* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903).

*Lectures*. 56–57.

*Lectures*, 11. In his rectorial address at the Free University in 1892, Kuyper engaged in virulent polemics against those who resorted to apologetics in the struggle against modernism. They had allowed the enemy to prescribe the plan of campaign, and had thus fallen into hopeless confusion. A. Kuyper, *Panthems’s Destruction*, 31–32 (31).


Marsden, *Understanding*, 122.

This was of course typical of theological education in the nineteenth century. Mark Noll has noted, however, ‘the Old Princeton weakness in cultural analysis and the concomitant lack of effective Christian outreach in society’. Mark A. Noll, 'The Spirit of Old Princeton and the OPC', in Charles G. Dennison and Richard C. Gamble (eds), *Pressing Toward the Mark: Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: Committee for the History of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986), 241.

*Lectures*, 137–38.

Kuyper took pains in his *Encyclopedia* to point out areas that were common to both kinds of science, such as those concerned primarily with empirical investigation. Nevertheless, his emphasis on the role of underlying religious presuppositions in science is one of the chief defining characteristics of Kuyperian or ‘neo-Calvinistic’ thought. In North America it became known as ‘principled thinking’, because of its penchant for exposing and engaging with the presuppositions and starting-points of contemporary theoretical thought. See Albert Wolters, ‘Dutch neo-Calvinism: Worldview, Philosophy and Rationality’, in *Rationality in the Calvinist Tradition*, ed. by Hendrik Hart (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1963), 113–31 (123–24); James D. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 17.


Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*:

44 In 1871, for instance, Charles Hodge claimed that the solution to the apparent conflict between science and religion was simply to ‘let science take its course, assured that the Scriptures will accommodate themselves to all well-authenticated facts in time to come, as they have in the past’. Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology (New York: Scribners, 1872-73), vol. I. 57.


46 KA, letter 6271, from Warfield to Kuyper, 19 October 1898.


48 KA, letter 7053, from Warfield to Kuyper, 15 April 1905.

49 KA, letter 8620, from Warfield to Kuyper, 7 November 1919.


51 See especially the first, second and sixth Stone Lectures. The extent of Warfield’s borrowing from Kuyper is illustrated by comparing 353-56 of Warfield’s ‘Calvinism’ article in his Calvin and Calvinism with 17 of Kuyper’s Lectures.

52 Berkhof, Two Hundred Years, 109.

