

Between the Catechism and the Microscope: The World of Johannes Duijkerius

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Abstract

Johannes Duijkerius (1661/1662-1702) has attracted some scholarly attention as a minor Spinozist. This assessment may well be misconceived. He is best or rather almost exclusively known as the author of the novel *Het Leven van Philopater* (The Life of Philopater), a theological *roman à clef* published anonymously in 1691. A second, and likewise anonymous *Vervolg van 't Leven van Philopater* (Sequel to the Life of Philopater, 1697), has often been ascribed to him as well. Although Duijkerius emphatically denied authorship of this sequel, a plainly Spinozistic work, the suspicion of heterodoxy stuck. A closer look at Duijkerius's career supports the contention that *Vervolg* was indeed not his, and produces a much richer, more intriguing picture of a minor intellectual living in interesting times. Instead of a frustrated candidate for the ministry and reluctant 'radical,' Duijkerius proves to have been an ambitious schoolmaster in Amsterdam, who fully participated in the lively debates of the Early Enlightenment but did not transgress the boundaries of Reformed orthodoxy. His life and works provide a perfect example of the entanglement of religious and intellectual history in the early modern period.

1 The Lay Catechist

Johannes Duijkerius made his career in Amsterdam, but he was probably not born there. He first appears in the records in 1683, when he bought citizenship in Amsterdam and married Janneke de Coster. In the Amsterdam *Poorterboek* [Register of admissions to citizenship] he was registered as schoolmaster.¹ He

1 On Duijkerius, see: Gerardine Maréchal, *Johannes Duijkerius: Het leven van Philopater & Vervolg van 't leven van Philopater: Een spinozistische sleutelroman uit 1691/1697 opnieuw uitgegeven en van een inleiding en noten voorzien* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 11–40; Wiep van Bunge, 'Philopater, de radicale Verlichting en het einde van de Eindertijd,' *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman* 26 (2003), 10–9; Michiel Wielema, *The March of the Libertines: Spinozists and the Dutch Reformed Church (1660–1750)* (Hilversum, 2004), pp. 88–90; Ton Jongenelen,

is usually portrayed as a poor man with a grating voice, frustrated in his ambition to become a minister and forced by circumstance to eke out a miserable, marginal existence. It is true that he was not exactly rich. Also he was not Latinate, and therefore had no access to higher education. Yet in the following decade and a half he proved to be a successful schoolmaster and productive author. These achievements mark him as an ambitious man. All his works were dedicated to prominent ministers and contain dedicatory poems by professional men: a publisher, a painter, and a comforter of the sick, which places Duijkerius in a milieu of self-confident professionals and skilled artisans with specialist knowledge, men who partook in a largely vernacular 'culture of knowledge.'²

As far as we know, in his first years as an Amsterdam *poorter* he was not employed by one of the publicly financed schools but worked as an independent schoolmaster. The burgeoning city of Amsterdam offered such men ample opportunity for employment. School ordinances regulated the more practical aspects of education, such as school hours and discipline, but they did not prescribe a uniform curriculum for the vernacular schools. Moreover, their prescriptions could be enforced only in public schools. Besides reading and writing, catechism was considered an indispensable part of elementary education. Arithmetic was optional. Schoolmasters competed for pupils by offering additional subjects, from the composition of letters to navigation, and parents would pay extra for lessons they considered useful for their children. Some of these teachers published textbooks and primers, both in the basic subjects and on their specialist skills or fields of interest. In this sense there was as yet no sharp distinction between elementary education and vocational training. For the schoolmasters, publishing textbooks resulted in an additional source of income, but these books were also advertisements of what they could teach.³

Initially Duijkerius's specialty was catechism. He had a strong interest in theological matters and to all appearances was stimulated to pursue this interest by the Amsterdam ministers. His first publication, *Regtsinnige harp-stoffe*

'Philopater. Een daderonderzoek,' *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman* 40 (2017), 17–31.

- 2 On skilled artisans and a vernacular culture of knowledge, see: Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 348–51; Patrick O'Brien, ed., *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 287–345; Wiep van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza: An Essay on Philosophy in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 1–9; Arjan van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten: Rederijkers in de Noordelijke Nederlanden (1480–1650)* (Amsterdam, 2009).
- 3 Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *1650: Bevochten eendracht* (The Hague, 1999), pp. 237–44. Schoolmasters who published on several basic subjects including religion were, besides Duijkerius, Barent Hakvoort, P. Bakker, Simon de Vries, and Johannes Hilarides.

(Orthodox lyrics, 1685), was a volume of catechetical material that he dedicated to the Amsterdam minister Gijsbertus Oostrom. He called Oostrom his spiritual father and thanked him for reading and correcting his work before publication.⁴ The volume contained first and foremost a rhymed version of the Heidelberg Catechism, in which questions and answers were set to well-known melodies. For each 'Sunday,' or chapter, he also provided a rhymed meditation and a quotation from the Church Fathers that supported the doctrinal content of that Sunday. Besides short rhymed pieces such as prayers for various times in the day and meditations on the life of Christ, it also contained a versification of the Dutch Confession that could be sung to the tune associated with Psalm 118. The printed text is heavily annotated, with numerous references to the Bible and the Heidelberg Catechism but also to vernacular theological works,⁵ early Christian authors, and occasionally, although in a negative sense, to Catholic writers. It was a compendium intended to help its readers memorize and internalize Reformed doctrine.⁶

A book like this was aimed not exclusively at schoolchildren but also at more advanced readers. By the end of the seventeenth century, advanced instruction in the catechism was in high demand. In this confessional age, all churches had programs to instruct the laity in the tenets of the faith, and the Dutch Reformed Church was no exception. The synod of Dordrecht in 1618–9 had provided concrete guidelines for teaching the catechism, in a systematic review of the decisions of earlier synods. The Heidelberg Catechism was the preferred primer. Small children should memorize a simplified version of the text, whereas schoolchildren in the higher forms would have the entire text of the Heidelberg explained to them. There were crash courses offered to applicants for church membership. Meanwhile, ministers should organize interactive catechism sessions every Sunday afternoon in their parish churches,

4 Joannes Duijkerius, *Regsinnige harp-stoffe, bestaande in Gesangen en Vaarsen over de Heydelbergse Catechismus, verciert met uytgesogte en zinrijke Sententien van de beroemdste Oudvaderen. Nevens een formeel Belydenisse van alle de Grond-Waarheden der Gereformeerde kerke, volgens desselvs Belydenisse en Catechismus. Als mede een Ziel-verquikkende Redemvoering tusschen Jesus en Nikodemus, rakende de Elendigheyd des Menschen, en desselvs wederoprechtinge in de Wedergeboorte. Als noch Eenige By-Dichten* (Amsterdam, 1685).

5 He mentions by name Simon Oomius, *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte Onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*, 3 vols. (Bolsward and Schiedam, 1672–80) and Petrus de Witte, *Catechizatie over den Heydelbergschen Catechismus der Gereformeerde Christelijke Religie* (Hoorn, 1652).

6 An earlier argument for rhymed catechisms that could be sung, after the example of the Jesuits, is given in Johannes Hoornbeek, *De conversione Indorum et Gentilium* (Amsterdam, 1659), p. 242. For rhymed catechisms in relation to religious poetry, see Els Stronks, *Stichten of schitteren: De poëzie van zeventiende-eeuwse gereformeerde predikanten* (Houten, 1996). A rhymed *Confessio Belgica* was a first.

where the Sundays, the fifty-two chapters of the Heidelberg Catechism, were to be explained, and parishioners' doubts and questions answered. So determined the Synod of Dordrecht.⁷ (Fig. 11.1)

In some cities, individual ministers had made systematic efforts to implement the catechetical program of the synod. Gisbertus Voetius and his colleague Johannes Cloppenburg introduced separate catechism classes for boys, girls, and adults in Heusden, and after his move to Utrecht Voetius, as professor of theology at the newly founded University of Utrecht, continued this practice.⁸ In 1651 the Dordrecht ministers jointly wrote a new catechetical primer and drew up a roster for separate catechism classes for orphans, young men, and young women.⁹ In 1659 the ministry of Rotterdam would follow their example.¹⁰ Such experiments aiming for a more thorough reformation of the laity were, however, initially limited to the larger cities. In rural villages, schoolmasters probably taught the catechism to their pupils, but the mandatory sermons on topics related to the Sundays of the Heidelberg Catechism, followed by more interactive instruction of adult church members, were highly unpopular. When faced with empty pews or the attendance only of their own and the schoolmasters' families, ministers gave up. Some even joined their parishioners in Sunday sports and leisure, to the extreme displeasure of classes and synods.¹¹

After the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the war against Spain and recognized the Dutch Republic as a sovereign state with a Calvinist public church, a new drive to build a truly Reformed religious culture seems to have taken hold in the churches. In the Great Assembly of 1651, where the cooperation among the seven sovereign provinces was discussed in the aftermath of the Peace and the untimely death of stadholder William II, with his heir yet

7 *Acta ofte Handelinghen des Nationalen Synodi, inden Name onses Heeren Jesu Christi. Ghehouden door autoriteyt der Hogh. Mogh. Heren Staten Generael des Vereenighden Nederlandts, tot Dordrecht, anno 1618. ende 1619.* (Dordrecht, 1621), pp. 54–7.

8 A. C. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, 4 vols. (Leiden, 1989), 3: 128–30.

9 G. D. J. Schotel, *Kerkelijk Dordrecht, eene bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der vaderlandsche Hervormde Kerk sedert het jaar 1572*, 2 vols. (Utrecht, 1841–5) 1: 304–5; *Kort begriip der christelijke leere, gestelt in korte vragen ende antwoorden* (Dordrecht, 1651).

10 S. D. van Veen, 'Het godsdienstonderwijs en de aanneming van lidmaten in de gereformeerde kerk,' in: idem, ed., *Uit onzen bloeitijd. Schetsen van het leven onzer vaderen in de XVII^e eeuw*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, ca. 1907), 2: 41–86, there 15; *Kort voorbeeldt vande gesonde woorden, gestelt tot oeffeninge vande Christelijke Jeught, besonderlijk tot behulp van de gene, die haer bereyden om op Beleijdenisse hares Geloofs, tot het Heylige Avondmael te werden toe-gelaten* (Rotterdam, 1659), reprinted several times, latest known copy 1729.

11 G. D. J. Schotel, *Geschiedenis van den oorsprong, de invoering en de lotgevallen van den Heidelbergschen Catechismus* (Amsterdam, 1863), pp. 220–1; Wiebe Bergsma, "Zij preekten voor doven": *De Reformatie in Drenthe* (Assen, 2002), pp. 57, 67–90.



FIGURE 11.1 A minister publicly catechizing his parishioners: men, women and children. Title print in Petrus de Witte, *Catechizatie* (Amsterdam, 1657). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, cat. nr. RP-P-1878-A-2283

unborn, religion was high on the agenda. A delegation from the Synod of Zuid-Holland came to plead for resources to build a Reformed church organization in the *Generaliteitslanden*, extensive, almost solidly Catholic territories south of the Rhine and its tributaries that had been won by force of arms but had not been awarded political representation in the form of Provincial Estates. The assembly promised political support for such a policy, although they politely ignored one of the wishes of the synod, namely that the political authorities would compel Catholics to attend Reformed services.¹²

Instead, in 1654 the States of Holland ordered that in every church on Sunday afternoons, after the sermon, ministers would catechize their congregations—not only in the cities but also in rural parishes. Their order came in a letter sent to the provincial Synod of Zuid-Holland and to each of the classes under its jurisdiction, which included the classis Breda in the *Generaliteitslanden*. The letter stated explicitly that the ministers should not limit their efforts to their congregations but should also engage in missionary outreach to Catholics. Drily the letter observed that individual instruction would do more than rigorous placards to guide simple souls, and also papists, on the road to salvation. Therefore the States assembly required individual ministers, in the cities and in rural villages, to teach the tenets of the pure religion not only in church, after the afternoon sermons, but also in private homes, for groups or individuals, to everyone who was willing to listen. Emphatically ‘simple’—probably meaning amenable—Catholics were included among those to be thus approached. Sternly the ministers of the public Church were admonished to show greater zeal and industriousness in this public task than they had displayed so far. The letter ended with the pious expectation that God would certainly bless this endeavor.¹³

The Reformed Church never mustered much missionary zeal. Instead, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it would remind the political authorities of their obligations, reaffirmed at the Great Assembly, to exclude Catholics and other dissenters from public protection and access to public office. The Church itself focused its energies on its own constituency. The 1654 letter from the States of Holland seems to have been the spark that lit a wildfire of catechetical instruction. This is most visible in the market for religious books. In the second half of the seventeenth century a host of companion volumes to the Heidelberg Catechism was published, aimed at what

12 Lieuwe van Aitzema, *Herstelde Leeuw, ofte Discours, over het gepasseerde in de Vereenichde Nederlanden, in 't Jaer 1650 ende 1651* (Utrecht, 1652), pp. 196–208, 504–9, 511; cf. W. P. C. Knuttel, ed., *Acta der particuliere synode van Zuid-Holland*, 5 vols. (The Hague, 1908–16), 3: 241–52.

13 Quoted in full in Johannes Hoornbeeck, *Tractaat van catechisatie. Haare oorsprong, gebrück, ende nuttigheit in de Christen-Kercke* (Leiden, 1654), preface.

apparently was a very lively market. One example among many is the oeuvre of Balthasar Bekker, who would become famous above all as the author of *De betoverde weereld* [The Enchanted World] (1691–3). From the very beginning of his ministry in a small village in Friesland, he designed a series of courses in the catechism. He started with a little book for children who could not yet read. In his *Gerymde kinder-leer* [Rhymed instruction or children] (1661) he reduced the fifty-two Sundays of the Heidelberg to fifty-two very short rhymed stanzas, each containing a question and answer, easy to memorize and reproduce. He followed up with study aids of increasing complexity, *Kinder-melk* [Breastmilk] (1668) and *Gesneden broodt voor de Kristen kinderen* [Sliced Bread for Christian Children] (1668) for schoolchildren, and *Vaste Spyse* [Solid Food] (1670) for professing church members. The latter was an advanced course in Reformed theology of over 700 pages.¹⁴

Many other ministers, noticeably those in the larger cities who were the real career tigers of the Dutch Reformed Church, wrote similar books, often dedicating them to their own congregations but with an eye to wider sales. They were acutely aware that the market for this genre was saturated with catechetical textbooks, among which buyers could pick and choose. Each therefore aimed to satisfy a specific niche: using a more Voetian or a more Cocceian style, combining the Heidelberger with a catechization on providential history, writing in prose or verse, even setting the catechism's questions and answers to music or adapting the treatment of its sections to annual, weekly, or daily devotional routines resembling the traditional Catholic liturgical calendars and hours. Some advised their readers to consult and compare several authors, and so profit from each of their distinctive gifts. Quite a number of these books were frequently reprinted, a few even up through the present.¹⁵

This diversification was a response to market forces, but also to a deeply felt need to make catechization attractive, possibly inspired by the educational works of the Bohemian exile Jan Amos Comenius. Johannes Hoornbeeck, professor of theology first in Utrecht and later in Leiden, wrote a *Tractaat van Catechisatie* [Tract on Catechization] (1654) as a follow-up to the letter of the States of Holland, in which he sketched the history of catechization through the ages and pointed out best practices. He described how instructors should appeal to the natural curiosity of students young and old, as well as to peer pressure, and advised how to seduce them to join the lessons, captivate their

14 Bekker's catechetical oeuvre is reprinted in Balthasar Bekker, *De Friesche Godgeleerdheid. Begrijpende alle desselfs Werken in Friesland uitgegeven, en 't gene daar af geoordeeld, en daarover voorgevallen is* (Amsterdam, 1693).

15 On catechisms and catechisation generally see W. Verboom, *De catechese van de Reformatie en de Nadere Reformatie* (Amsterdam, 1986); on rhymed catechization, Stronks, *Stichten of schitteren* (see above, n. 6), pp. 55–8.

attention, spur their ambitions, praise their efforts, and reward their achievements. Remarkably, however, he also pointed to the example of the Bohemian Brethren, for whom catechism teaching was no mere rite of passage into membership but a form of lifelong learning.¹⁶ The Brethren had been a persecuted minority in Bohemia from long before the reformations of the sixteenth century. Since the defeat of the Bohemian Estates by the Emperor in 1620, they lived as a diaspora community in exile. Throughout their existence, because they often lacked access to academies, they had trained up promising boys and girls for ordained priesthood through graded levels of catechization and in-service training as acolytes, deacons, and deaconesses with the authority to preach and administer the sacraments.¹⁷

All in all, the Bohemian Brethren were a somewhat surprising group to be held up as an example for the Dutch Reformed Church, with its public status and its academically trained clergy. Yet the Brethren model was exactly what prominent theologians like Bekker and Hoornbeeck had in mind. Their aim was to encourage the faithful to become theologically articulate. Through graded catechization courses undertaken in all stages of the lives of the faithful, they wanted to build the Church. They also aimed to create a pool of accomplished church members from which to promote suitable candidates to office as deacons and elders, and from which to recruit readers, comforters of the sick, teachers of the catechism, and *oefenaars* (lit.: trainers).¹⁸ (Fig. 11.2) The most gifted of these could eventually seek ordination without going through the full academic study of theology. In a way, this was the re-introduction into the Reformed Church of the minor orders, even as a career path into the ministry. Remarkably, this did not raise any eyebrows at the time. On the contrary, even Gisbertus Voetius, professor of theology in Utrecht, a pillar of Reformed

16 Hoornbeeck, *Tractaat van catechisatie* (see above, n. 13).

17 Some recent studies on Bohemian reform movements are Thomas A. Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia* (London, 2010); David R. Holeton, 'The Bohemian Eucharistic Movement in its European Context,' *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 1 (1996), 23–48; on Utraquism: Zdeněk V. David, *Finding the Middle Way: The Utraquists' Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther* (Washington, D.C., 2003); on Hussitism and the early Reformation: Siegfried Hoyer, 'Jan Hus und der Hussitismus in den Flugschriften des ersten Jahrzehnts der Reformation,' in: *Flugschriften als Massenmedium der Reformationszeit: Beiträge zum Tübinger Symposium 1980*, ed. Hans-Joachim Köhler (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 291–307; on the Brethren: Rudolf Řičan, *The History of the Unity of Brethren: A Protestant Hussite Church in Bohemia and Moravia* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1992) and Craig D. Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* (University Park, Pa., 2009). Hoornbeeck on their catechism teaching: Hoornbeeck, *Tractaat* (see above, n. 13), pp. 103–4.

18 *Oefenaars* were lay church members who held advanced catechism classes under the supervision of the local consistory. Their classes often took on the character of religious meetings, which could substitute for regular church services in the absence of a minister.



FIGURE 11.2 Private catechism teacher for the well-to do. Illustration from Hieronymus van Alphen, *Kleine gedigten voor kinderen* (1787). Rotterdam, Atlas van Stolk, cat. nr. 25025

orthodoxy, enthusiastically supported this scheme, explicitly endorsing this reappropriation of traditional spiritual hierarchies.¹⁹

This catechetical movement and the formation of a minor clergy were hugely successful. By the end of the seventeenth century 'knowing one's catechism' had become part of one's decent upbringing, an integral part of civic religion. A market for vernacular theological literature developed for theology students and candidates for the ministry, as well as for comforters of the sick, teachers of catechism, *oefenaars*, and those church members who took their religious studies seriously. Remarkably, these books, for all their pious intentions, boldly popularized the results of biblical scholarship and natural philosophy, some of which had proved so contentious only a generation before. Bekker included in his *Vaste Spysse* many of the hotly debated issues of his day, from the nature of true religion to the question of allowing pawnshops to operate. Such questions had not been addressed in the Heidelberg Catechism itself, but he felt that confirmed church members should be able to have an informed opinion on them.²⁰ The Groningen minister and later professor *honoris causa* of the University of Groningen Abraham Trommius produced his massive Dutch *Concordance* to the Bible between 1672 and 1685, in which he proudly paraded his learning in the Semitic languages.²¹ In 1700 Wilhelmus à Brakel, minister of Rotterdam, published his *Redelijke Godsdienst* [Reasonable Religion], the first compendium of Reformed theology written in the vernacular,²² in which

19 Gisbertus Voetius, *Politica ecclesiastica*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1663–76), 2: 508–27.

20 Announced in the preface to *Vaste Spysse*, reprinted in Bekker, *De Friesche Godgeleerdheid* (see above, n. 14). The same tactic is evident in Henricus Groenewegen, *Betragtingen tot bevordering van Geloov' en Deugd, volgens den Heydelbergschen Catechismus ofte de Hoofstukken der Christelijke God-geleerdheydt* (Rotterdam, 1672).

21 Abraham Trommius, *Volkomene Nederlandsche Concordantie ofte Woord-Register des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments, waarin gevonden worden alle de Nederlandsche woorden na order van 't Nederduytsche ABC; met alle de Hebreusche, Chaldeeusche en Grieksche Grond-woorden daer by gevoegt, mitsgaders de verscheydene Beteekenissen en andere bequame Onderscheidingen der Nederlandsche woorden*, 3 vols. (Groningen and Amsterdam, 1672–85).

22 Wilhelmus à Brakel, *Logikè Latreia, dat is Redelyke godts-dienst. In dewelke de Goddelijke Waarheden des Genaden-Verbondts worden verklaart, tegen allerley partyen beschermt, ende tot de practijke aangedrongen. Als mede de Bedeeling des Verbondts ende Handeling Gods met sijne Kercke in het Oude Testament onder de Schaduwen; ende in het Nieuwe Testament onder de Vervulling vertoont in een verklaringe van de Openbaringe Joannis* (The Hague, 1700); Fred van Lieburg, 'De Redelijke godsdienst van Wilhelmus à Brakel,' in: *Boekenwijsheid: Drie eeuwen kennis en cultuur in 30 bijzondere boeken. Opstellen bij de voltooiing van de Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands*, ed. Jan Bos and Erik Geleijns (Zutphen, 2009), pp. 186–94.

he made frequent references to the discoveries of the current natural sciences and information on exotic peoples and their fascinating customs and religions.

Alongside the more traditional devotional work, the book market, by the end of the seventeenth century, provided interested lay readers with a wide variety of books in the vernacular that informed them about areas of theology that had exclusively been the domain of academically trained scholars. With his *Regtsinnige harp-stoffe*, Duijkerius seamlessly fit the vogue for catechesis and the lay theology of his era. Framing catechetical instruction within the format of a songbook, another hugely popular literary genre, Duijkerius promised to make learning one's catechism both easy and pleasant. Besides the Heidelberg Catechism, it offered additional material for studious and godly readers. He profiled himself as an active member of a 'minor clergy,' as a schoolmaster and perhaps also a teacher of catechism, with the full support of the formal ministry.

2 A Budding Lay Intellectual

After the *Regtsinnige harp-stoffe* Duijkerius branched out. His second book was again a textbook, this time on the history of the Church. Modestly the title announces the work to be a *Korte verhandeling der algemeyne kerkelyke geschiedenissen* [Short treatise on the general history of the Church]. It is, however, a fairly extensive work, published in two volumes in 1686. It covers the period from the ascension of Christ to his own time.²³ In the preface Duijkerius calls knowledge of history a gift of God, in which mankind can discern, as in a mirror, God's providential government of his Church. He even regards Church history as "almost a third source of Revelation, after the Bible and Nature." Moreover, he praises knowledge of history as being very useful for anyone preparing for a career in government or public administration, as well as for philosophers and poets. Its literary form—a presentation of the subject matter in a series of dialogues between a father and his son—suggests a didactic purpose. The book was based on a wide variety of historical works from Eusebius of Caesarea to books of martyrs and Alexander Ross's *Pansebeia, or a View of All Religions in the World*, all obtainable in Dutch. It presents the history of the Church as a succession of challenges to true Christianity that have been

23 Johannes Duijkerius, *Korte verhandeling der algemeyne kerkelyke geschiedenissen, beginnende van Jesu Christi hemelvaart en eyndigende op 't jaar 1686, waerin beknoptelyk werd voorgesteld het voorgevallene van jaar tot jaar in de Kerke Gods over den gantschen aardbo-dem* (1686; repr. Amsterdam, 1688).

overcome in due time. The Papal Monarchy had been one such challenge, as well as Arminianism.

The book also engaged with the challenges of the present. It described, at some length, the recent conflicts over the admissibility of Cartesian philosophy and the 'fraternal strife' between Voetians and Cocceians in the Republic. It concluded by stating that the time of writing polemics had abated, thanks to the level-headed reception of the innovative Cocceian theology by co-religionists abroad and the formal decision to maintain fraternal unity in the Reformed church of Amsterdam. This refers to the situation ten years earlier. In the 1670s tensions over Cocceianism had reached dangerous levels in the Reformed Church. The Synod of Julich in the Rhineland had sent a letter of warning and had urged reconciliation. The theology of both parties conformed to the tenets of the faith contained in the Formularies of Unity: the Dutch Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht. They should tolerate differences of interpretation that left these foundational doctrines untouched. The Prince of Orange had called for unity and concord, and in the synods of Zuid- and Noord-Holland *commissarissen politiek* (representatives of the political authorities) had insisted on compliance with these pious wishes. Thereupon the synods had agreed on a series of pacificatory articles.²⁴ The Amsterdam consistory had been the first to act on these decisions when they put forth a resolution to exactly balance the parties in its consistory by appointing Voetian and Cocceian ministers in equal numbers.

The then minister of Den Helder and Huisduinen, Salomon van Til, who had mapped out the grounds for accommodation in his book *Salems Vrede* [The Peace of Jerusalem] (1678), published both the resolution aiming for mutual toleration of the Amsterdam consistory and the extensive letter of Julich to the Dutch churches.²⁵ Duijkerius's *Korte Verhandeling* implicitly refers to *Salems Vrede* and testifies to what appears to have been a growing weariness of strife and a desire to overcome the theological infighting. Duijkerius dedicated his own work to his patrons, the Amsterdam ministers Petrus Schaak, Joannes Reeland, Balthasar Bekker—author of a dedicatory poem in Van Til's *Salems*

24 Resolutions of the Synod of Zuid-Holland, held in Woerden 1674, §16, synod held in Leerdam 1675, §24, synod held in Dordrecht 1676, §31, Delft 1677, §32, Knuttel, *Acta* (see above, n. 12), 5, 57–8, 101–4, 151–3, 197.

25 *Salems Vrede, in Liefde, Trouw en Waerheyd behartigt. Waer in de Vrede-weg tot beslissing der Hedendaagsche Kerk-geschillen werd afgebakent, der Broederen eens-gesintheyd in 't noodige vertoont, de weg om in 't overige tot een verstand te komen, bereyd, en de redenen tot voortsetting van soo heylsamen wit met alle beweginge werden aangebonden* 2nd ed. (Dordrecht, 1687), repr. 1698 and 1730. The letter of the Synod of Julich is included in full, pp. 152–88. *Salems Vrede*, like Hoornbeeck's *Tractaat van Catechisatie*, follows up on dictates from the political authorities, and offers an underpinning for the desired course of action in the vernacular, accessible to theologians and laypersons alike.

Vrede—and Adrianus van Wesel, as well as Henricus van Wesel, minister of Bovenkarspel, and the Utrecht schoolmaster, publisher, and author of school-books Simon de Vries. In the preface he announces a soon-to-be-published sequel to the history of the entire world since Creation, within and outside the Church. He may have collected notes for such a book, but in any case he never finished it.

Whether he assigned the *Korte Verhandeling* to his pupils is impossible to verify. History and morality were appropriate subjects for older children, so perhaps Duijkerius taught children of relatively well-heeled parents, who could afford to keep their sons and daughters in school for several years and who could pay for lessons beyond the most basic skills. In a sense, *Korte Verhandeling* presents itself as a rival and successor to the very popular history book *Spieghel der jevght* [Mirror for Youth] (1614). This book related the struggle of the valiant Dutch against the tyranny of Catholic Spain. Later editions added the bloody persecution of the Waldensians of Piedmont in 1656 and the cruelties committed by the French armies in the Year of Disaster 1672. Duijkerius's book both takes a longer view and brings its readers up to speed on the more recent developments, especially the debates on Cartesian philosophy. He endorses the pacification of the controversies, which at the time was seen as a victory for the Cartesians and Cocceians. Again, he puts the Bible, the book of nature, and history side by side as sources of revelation. *Korte Verhandeling* was reprinted once, testifying to a modest success.

In 1687 he published a smaller but still substantial book, in yet another genre: *De Geopende Deure tot de Heylige Godgeleerdheyd* [The Door to Sacred Theology Opened].²⁶ This was a reaction to the works of the merchant in leather goods and lay philosopher Willem Deurhoff. Rather than offering a full refutation, Duijkerius attempts to unveil Deurhoff as a dangerous Spinozist—the *geopende deure* in the title seems to be a pun on Deurhoff's name and Duijkerius's intention of exposing him. After a general lambasting of the frivolous philosophers who dared to attack all that was holy in his time, referring obliquely to Adriaan Koerbagh, Spinoza, and Lambertus van Velthuysen, Duijkerius discusses three themes in which Deurhoff's work impinged on Christian theology: divine Providence, the Bible as revelation, and the moment when the unborn child receives a soul. In an orderly, somewhat scholastic fashion, he demonstrates how Deurhoff's ideas contradicted Reformed doctrine. In the margin of his text he carefully notes references to the places where the

26 Johannes Duijkerius, *De Geopende Deure tot de Heylige Godgeleerdheyd. In zig behelzende een grondige Verhandeling van Over-Natuurkundige Gedagten, afgeleyd door zuyvere Reedeneeringen, van het ingeschaapen Denkbeeld, teegen W. Deurhoffz Beginnselen van Waarheyd en Deugd. En Voorleeringe tot den H. Godgeleerdheyd* (Amsterdam, 1687).

statements he discussed were to be found in Deurhoff's works. In the case of the ensoulment of the unborn child he even proposes a theory of his own, refuting not only Deurhoff but also Antonie van Leeuwenhoek.

Deurhoff had denied that God bestowed each human individual a soul, either from a host of souls created before time or at each individual conception. In his view to do so would detract from God's ineffability. Instead, Deurhoff argued that both body and soul were products of human procreation. In his refutation, Duijkerius points out that this view contradicts both Scripture and reason, and embarked on a review of current theories on the technicalities of fertilization. Van Leeuwenhoek had shown that the semen of both humans and cod contained a very large number of microscopically small but very agile, eel-like creatures (*dierkens*), but his contention that these already contained all the elements of man or fish, as was the case with willowseed, was thereby not proved. How could these little eels grow into human shape? Was it not much more probable that the little eels were ingested with food and ended up in semen through the stomach and the bloodstream? If the little eels were really miniature human beings—that is, beings with both bodies and souls—why would God allow such a multitude of little souls to perish? Would that not make God a Moloch? Trees might disperse many seeds that never grew into new trees, but trees and plants generally had been created to serve humans and animals as food or food sources, so there was no reason to equate vegetative and animal procreative processes. And if souls were the product of procreation, how could they be immortal? Duijkerius also discussed and rejected the alternative theory of procreation put forth by Dionisius van der Sterre in his *Van de Teeling* [On Procreation] (1682), and defended the traditional view that the first observable movements of the human foetus in the maternal womb indicate the moment when it receives its soul. From that moment onward it is a creature endowed with reason.²⁷ Here again, he gives accurate references to the publications of Van Leeuwenhoek and Van der Sterre.

Deurhoff's works, although they gained a reputation of being eccentric and impenetrable, made an extraordinary impression. He attracted academic and lay admirers alike. He emphatically cast himself as a philosopher, arguing strictly from reason in a Cartesian fashion. His ideas on God, man, and matter are of a decidedly deterministic bent, although it is hard to say whether

27 Duijkerius, *De Geoopende Deure* (see above, n. 26), pp. 173–203; cf. the well-known image of the homunculus in the human sperm cell in Nicolas Hartsoeker, *Essay de Dioptrique* (Paris, 1694), p. 230. The tract of Van der Sterre is part of his *Voorstelling van de noodzakelijkheid der Keyserlijke Sneeuw. Daar neven de verhandelinge van de Teeling en Baaring. Briefswijs opgedragen aan den onvermoeiden Genees-Heer Cornelius's Gravesande* (Leiden, 1682).

they really add up to Spinozism.²⁸ At first sight they certainly suggest that a decent religion can be founded on natural theology alone. Yet the ministers kept aloof, leaving the schoolmaster Duijkerius to come forward as the first combatant who dared to refute him. His *De Geopende Deure* was again dedicated to an Amsterdam minister, this time Wilhelmus Anslaer, a prominent Cocceian and son-in-law to Johannes Cocceius. Duijkerius may actually have been the ministers' cat's-paw, to sound out where the slippery Deurhoff might be vulnerable without risking their own reputations in a fight against a vociferous, well-connected opponent. Indeed, Deurhoff hit back hard. He forcefully refuted Duijkerius, insisting that his books were based exclusively on human reason and never on the Bible. In no way, therefore, had he trespassed on the prerogatives of theology. On the contrary, he had always acknowledged the necessity of Christian revelation for salvation and merely presented his work as a philosophical *prolegomena* to theology. Moreover, he slighted Duijkerius as a theological dilettante, who claimed to aspire to the ministry but would have to work long and hard ever to be accepted into it.²⁹

There are several instances where the Amsterdam ministers used theologically educated laymen to speak up against opponents they were loath to handle themselves. In 1688 they again recruited Duijkerius, this time to write a refutation of millenarian speculation in order to bring to his senses Coenraad van Beuningen, one of the Amsterdam burgomasters, who had ruined himself in the pursuit of prophets and prophecies and was generally considered delusional. This work does not survive, nor did it save Van Beuningen.³⁰ In 1693 Balthasar Bekker delegated the answer to Johannes van der Waeyen's refutation of his *De betoverde weerd* to two anonymous but theologically educated laymen. In his preface to these lay assistants' book Bekker sang the praises of such 'Beroans,' who could read the Bible independently, for their ability to give witness to and defend the faith, echoing the advocates of a 'Bohemian style' policy of advanced catechization. He also suggested that he had not wanted

28 There are no specialized studies on Deurhoff. For a short overview of his main ideas see C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme* (Amsterdam, 1954), pp. 212–23; and Wiep van Bunge, 'Deurhoff, Willem,' in: *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, ed. D. Nauta and J. van den Berg, 6 vols. (Kampen, 1978–2006) [hereafter *BLGPN*], 4: 116–7. On his influence: Wielema, *The March of the Libertines* (see above, n. 1), pp. 133–61.

29 Willem Deurhoff, *Overtuigende kracht der Waarheid, of Verantwoording voor de Beginzelen van Waarheid en Deuchd, en Voorleeringen van de Heilige Godgeleerdheid. Waarin die twee verhandelingen teegens de lasteringen van J. Duikerius verdedigd, en van de aangewreeven smette gezuiverd worden* (Amsterdam, 1688). Dedicated to the Amsterdam ministers Balthasar Bekker and Johannes Dooreslaer.

30 Van Bunge, 'Philopater' (see above, n. 1), 14.

to write against Van der Waeyen himself because he considered it unseemly to engage in public discussion with a man who had been his enemy during an earlier stage of his career. His endorsement of his lay helpers' probity was doubtless meant to slight Van der Waeyen's professorial status.³¹ In the same vein, having Duijkerius attack Deurhoff suggests that the ministers considered it beneath them to start a debate with a self-styled philosopher without academic credentials. It is, however, possible that the Amsterdam ministers were divided over the merits or demerits of Deurhoff's ideas: the latter dedicated his refutation of Duijkerius to the ministers Balthasar Bekker and Johannes van Doeslaar, which may well imply that he knew them to be sympathetic to his line of reasoning.

3 *Proponent, Novelist, and Public Schoolmaster*

A few years later Duijkerius sought official recognition for his efforts. As Deurhoff had written in 1688, he had indeed studied theology, albeit not at one of the universities or Illustrious Schools. The Synod of Dordrecht had allowed the ordination of *Duytsche clercken*: men who were literate but not Latinate and had studied biblical languages, exegesis, and theology under the tutelage of a classis or of individual ministers.³² Over the seventeenth century the course of study for the ministry had become increasingly selective, and academic study had become a formal requirement—everywhere except in the classis Groningen. Armed with letters of recommendation from the Amsterdam ministry that he had so faithfully served over the previous few years, Duijkerius went to Groningen and requested the ecclesiastical examination that promoted one to the status of *proponent*, or candidate for the ministry. He passed

31 Balthasar Bekker, ed., *De Leeraar van de Hoge School door Voedsterlingen van de kerk ondersocht en wederleid. Zijnde aanmerkingen van ongestudeerde Personen op het Boek van den Professor Van der Waeyen tegen de Betoverde Weereld van B. Bekker uitgegeven* (Amsterdam, 1694). One of these men was later identified as the Lutheran Zacharias Webber: see W. P. C. Knuttel, *Balthasar Bekker: De bestrijder van het bijgeloof* (The Hague, 1906), pp. 257–8. The inhabitants of Beroa are praised for their open-minded and critical Bible study, Acts 17,10–15. It was not unusual for participants in an extended polemic to delegate part of the work to others; see Martin Gierl, *Pietismus und Aufklärung: Theologische Polemik und die Kommunikationsreform der Wissenschaft am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 177–83.

32 *Handelingen des Nationalen Synodi (...) gemeynelijck genaemt Post-Acta, ofte Nae-Handelingen* ('s-Gravenhage, 1669), Session 159, art. IV, p. 10.

and was admitted.³³ A few months later he requested registration as a 'recommended candidate' in the classis Amsterdam. This registration licensed a candidate to preach publicly, and thus to advertise his abilities in the hope of attracting patronage and getting a call in the churches under the classis of his choice. The procedure again included an exam, which Duijkerius again passed satisfactorily. He requested a recommendation not for work in a congregation but for one of the churches 'abroad.' The classis Amsterdam was the main provider of ministers for the churches in the East and West Indies.³⁴

So far, his studies had made Duijkerius a very successful product of the sort of lay theological education that was advocated by prominent Reformed ministers in the middle of the seventeenth century. As schoolmaster he was a member of the 'minor clergy,' and with the apparent support of tutors and supporters among the Amsterdam ministers he had risen to be a candidate for the ministry itself. His studies and his personal acquaintance with prominent ministers, however, had made him a critic of the rivalry between the theological schools. This had already been apparent in his *Korte Verhandeling*. Duijkerius expanded upon the growing disgust with the *rabies theologorum* in his novel *Het Leven van Philopater* [The Life of Philopater], published anonymously in 1691. He may have been the author of a much earlier, also anonymously published, satirical novella, *Verhael, van een wonderlijck Gesicht* [Recounting of a miraculous vision] (1682). This novella also poked fun at the controversies between Voetians and Cocceians, then raging in Friesland, and extolled the use of human reason as instrumental for attaining true religion. It does show similarities with *Het Leven van Philopater*. In both books the characters are barely veiled impersonations of existing contemporary figures, both ridicule extremes, and both end with a resounding plea for a reasonable religion, presented by a learned and well-spoken, yet modest *proponent*. Rather chaotic and devoid of literary merit, *Verhael*, whether by Duijkerius or not, is clearly the work of a beginner. If he is the author, this would also suggest that he originally came from Friesland.³⁵

33 Acta classis Groningen, Groninger Archieven, Archive classis Groningen, inv. nr. 1, March 11, 1690.

34 Acta classis Amsterdam, Stadsarchief Amsterdam (SAA), Archive classis Amsterdam, inv. nr. 8, July 3, 1690. In 1689 a Johannes Duijkerius asked the classis Utrecht for financial support in preparing himself for work in the mission in the East Indies, Acta classis Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief, Archive classis Utrecht, inv. nr. 6, October 29–30, 1689, §§14, 16, August 12–13, 1690, §11. The classis gave him 10 guilders. This may be 'our' Duijkerius, on his way to Groningen.

35 *Verhael, van een wonderlijck Gesicht, dat eenige dagen geleden een Fijn-man gehadt heeft, meynende Christus met sijn Apostelen en veele Engelen en Zielen op een Olijf-Berg gesien te hebben, rakende Cocceanerye, Cartesianerye, en in 't besonder dontrouw van de Classis van*

Het Leven van Philopater is, on the contrary, a well-executed and hilarious *roman à clef*, peopled by disguised and sometimes caricaturally distorted contemporary figures, that recounts a young man's quest for true piety. Its hero, raised by doting parents, first buries himself in the theological studies of a Puritan bent, and thereby develops an ascetic melancholy that almost carries him to an early grave. Rescued from his immoderate zeal by a level-headed Reformed minister, he radically redirects his interests. Whereas the description of the religiosity of his youth presents an extreme version of Voetian precisianism, in this second phase Philopater is made into the caricature of a Cocceian exegete and millenarian, scouring the Bible for prophecies. Eventually, however, he comes to the realization that true religion is not found by following the lead of the often pedantic and vain schoolmen. The book begins with a eulogy for Balthasar Bekker, who had advocated a reading of the Bible free of preconceived notions derived from medieval and pagan superstitions. It ends with the good advice of 'a *proponent* from Franeker' to the tormented Philopater to do exactly that. '*Proponent* from Franeker' should probably be read as a veiled reference to Bekker. Johannes van der Waeyen, in his refutation of Bekker, had called him an 'alumnus of Franeker', much to Bekker's indignation—he had studied in Groningen and saw this as a denigration of his doctoral degree from Franeker. Bekker also kept aloof from the rival schools, and had written a dedicatory poem to Van Til's *Salems Vrede*.³⁶ The book ends with the liberation of Philopater from the prejudices of theological systems. (Fig. 11.3)

Duijkerius's new status as *proponent* did not lead to an ecclesiastical appointment, but it immediately increased his market value as a schoolmaster. In 1692 he applied for the post of schoolmaster to the girls in the *Aalmoezeniersweeshuis*, the municipal orphanage for children of non-citizen birth. He was by far the most qualified candidate and the fact that his wife, Janneke, was also literate counted in his favor. The trustees of orphanages preferred to appoint couples. The schoolmaster's wife often served as general manager over the orphanage household (*binnenmoeder*), while the schoolmaster could be asked to keep the accounts and discipline the children, so that the couple was cast in the role of surrogate parents to its artificial family.³⁷ We do

Seven-Wouden (s.l., [1682]). Authorship has been ascribed to both Duijkerius and Cornelis Bontekoe.

36 Maréchal, *Johannes Duijkerius* (see above, n. 1), p. 114, proposes identifying the *proponent* from Franeker as the Cartesian *proponent* Gijsbert Wessel Duker. The Spinozism that Van Bunge, 'Philopater' (see above, n. 1), pp. 13–4, reads into the advice the *proponent* gives Philopater and his friend may be overstated.

37 Resolutions of the Trustees, SAA, Archief van de Regenten van het Aalmoezeniersweeshuis, inv. nr. 29, fol. 118rv (May 23, 1692). On orphanage personnel: S. Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes. Zes eeuwen zorg in wees- en kinderhuizen* (Hilversum, 1997), pp. 99–111.



FIGURE 11.3

Two sisters. De Hooghe represented Voetian and Cocceian piety as two calm ladies, encouraging each other in a sisterly way. Detail H–I from *Van de Gereformeerde Godsdienst* [On Reformed Religion], plate 61, in: Romeyn de Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* (Amsterdam, 1735). Private collection

not know what Duijkerius and Janneke earned, but the combined salary for the schoolmaster and his wife in the boys' wing of the *Aalmoezeniersweeshuis* at this time was 700 guilders. The personnel of the girls' wing were usually paid somewhat less. Even so, Duijkerius's income in his new position was about equal to that of a village minister in Holland.³⁸ During their time in office the couple lived on the premises, along with Mara, their one surviving daughter.³⁹

Although the *Aalmoezeniersweeshuis* housed a large number of children, Duijkerius's work apparently still left him time to write. In 1693 a new book of his was published under the title *Voorbeeldzels der oude wyzen* [Moral examples from ancient sages]. It proudly proclaimed his status as candidate for the ministry on its title-page and was dedicated to the board of trustees

38 List of salaries for the various classes of personnel for the year 1667. The schoolmaster for the girls then earned 350 guilders over and above bed and board, the schoolmaster for the boys 450 guilders, whereas several types of *binnenmoeder* earned salaries ranging from 260 to 500 guilders, Resolutions of the Trustees, SAA, Archief van de Regenten van het Aalmoezeniersweeshuis, inv. nr. 29, fol. 31rv (January 1st, 1667). In 1682 the combined salary of the schoolmaster of the boys' wing and his wife was raised from 600 to 700 guilders, *ibid.* fol. 38r. The guaranteed minimum salary of a minister in a village in Holland at that time was 650 guilders; in other provinces this minimum was lower.

39 An unnamed child of 'Joannes Duijkeris' was buried on May 29, 1685. The records of the Reformed Church mention the baptisms of Joanna (14-7-1686), another Joanna (3-8-1687), Mara (4-11-1688), and Alida Hillegonda (10-4-1691). Electronic database of burial and baptismal records on the website of SAA.

of the orphanage. The book was an expanded version of the eponymous work by the humanist engraver, publisher, and author Zacharias Heyns, which in turn was a very free adaptation of translations from an medieval Sanskrit book of virtues that had become popular in Europe through Arabic translations.⁴⁰ (Fig. 11.4) *Voorbeeldzels der oude wyzen* may have been used as reading material for the orphan girls, but it also sold well. It was reprinted several times up through 1765.

Public-office appointments were usually for life. Unfortunately for Duijkerius, Janneke died in 1694, and since they had been hired as a couple he had to leave the orphanage. For some time he courted the daughter of the woman who kept the orphan girls' heads free of lice (*kammoeder*), coming in evenings to smoke tobacco with her and sometimes staying the night. The *regentessen*, the female trustees who administered the girls' wing, allowed their former schoolmaster's comings and goings until the male *regenten* forbade the doorkeepers to let him in, afraid that such hanky-panky would reflect badly on the institution.⁴¹

4 Decline and Fall

Duijkerius seems to have returned to his former way of life as an independent schoolmaster and author. The last work to appear under his name, in 1696, was a school textbook, *Schouburgh der Needer-Duytsche Letter, Spel- en Leeskonst* [Theatre of the Art of Writing, Spelling and Reading in Dutch]. It was presented as the first installment of a complete course in elementary and more advanced education, addressing not only the finer points of reading and writing but also theology, history and antiquities, geography, chronology, astronomy, physics, mathematics, mechanics, arithmetic, algebra, and even acupuncture. Only the *Letter, Spel- and Leeskonst* appeared in print, with a privilege that protected its copyright. Duijkerius sold the privilege to the printer, a fellow schoolmaster.⁴² A later, hostile pamphlet written by the medical doctor J. Rodenpoort

40 Joannes Duikerius, *Voorbeeldzels der oude wyzen, waar in op een Zinryke voet, en bevalige zwier, de Menschelyke Hartstogten, en daar uit ryzende deugden en gebreken, behandeld werden. Uit meest alle de Oostersche, Grieksche en Romeinsche Taalen vergaderd* (Amsterdam, 1693).

41 Resolutions of the Trustees, SAA, Archief van de Regenten van het Aalmoezeniersweeshuis, inv. nr. 30, p. 61, 62, 79 (January 21, 28, August 15, 1695).

42 Johannes Duijkerius, *Schouburgh der Needer-Duytsche Letter, Spel- en Leeskonst. Geschied na de natuur der Taal, Kracht der Woorden, en Uyt spraaken. Zeer dienstig om op Vaste*



FIGURE 11.4 The title print for Joannes Duikerius, *Voorbeeldzels der oude Wyzen* (Amsterdam, 1693) promises animal fables and wisdom from the ancient Orient. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, call nr 25 C 13

suggested that Duijkerius indeed made a living by teaching children, curiously enough adding that he also made lenses, through which—for a fee—he let his pupils look at lice and fleas.⁴³ This unexpected picture of the use of naturalistic observations in early modern elementary education is not corroborated elsewhere. It may have been a cynical sneer, referring both to the arguments from microscopy in his much-maligned refutation of Deurhoff, his rumored adherence to the ideas of that other lens-grinder Spinoza, and to the lowly status of his current clientèle. Yet it would actually nicely fit Duijkerius's profile as a widely read lay intellectual and dedicated schoolmaster, who all his working life had been engaged in introducing youngsters to the latest intellectual developments.

A year later, in 1697, Duijkerius married Elisabeth Schouten, with whom he fathered a son, Johannes. This second marriage was not, however, a happy one. The couple was given to fighting and soon separated. Duijkerius, who was seen in lowly neighborhoods on the remotest outskirts of the city, was now drinking heavily. *Vervolg van 't Leven van Philopater* [Sequel to the Life of Philopater] appeared in 1697 as well, again an anonymous publication. Whereas the first Philopater novel had been well received, this sequel was immediately identified as barely veiled Spinozist propaganda. When the Amsterdam authorities initiated a search for the author, several witnesses testified that Duijkerius had not only acknowledged authorship of *Het leven van Philopater* but had also boasted that a sequel was ready for the press. Balthasar Bekker, a former patron of Duijkerius, was one of these witnesses. Perhaps they had fallen out, or else Bekker distanced himself from his former client and admirer at this moment to protect his own reputation.

The pamphlet by Rodenpoort gave a very unfavorable account of Duijkerius as the author of both Philopater novels. He ridiculed Duijkerius as a social upstart, a grubby schoolmaster who had managed to achieve *proponent* status but had since been brought low, a poor alcoholic who could not quite make ends meet by teaching poor children, who borrowed heavily from his friends and did not shrink from occasional embezzlement. Rodenpoort suggested that his failure to gain church employment had caused resentment against the ministers, which in turn had inspired his Spinozism and his anticlerical

gronden alle Letteren, tot Lettergreepen (of Sillaben) en de Sillaben tot Woorden zaamen te voegen. Opgesteld, soo voor Bejaarde, als Jonge Persoonen, om op de Schoole te gebruyken (Amsterdam, 1696).

43 J. Rodenpoort, *Gedragh en Naam des Schryvers, van Philopater. Stukx wijze geschetst* ('s-Hertogenbosch, s.a.).

novels—an image that would be repeated in later historiography.⁴⁴ The consistory summoned Duijkerius, but he emphatically denied authorship of *Vervolg* and called those who had testified against him liars. The consistory placed him under censure—for drinking and living apart from his wife, but not for Spinozism. The classis confirmed this censure, and also deprived him of his license to preach.⁴⁵ Under secular law, authors of forbidden books could not be prosecuted, and there seems to have been no further inquiries. The publisher of *Vervolg*, Arent Wolsgrijn, denied knowledge of the author or authors and shouldered the burden of the heavy penalty alone.⁴⁶

From that moment forward, Duijkerius vanishes from the records. His situation cannot have been quite as bad as Rodenpoort painted it. To all appearances he was able to support not only himself but also his daughter Mara. He died in 1702, leaving her no assets but no debts or pawned goods either. The girl, now thirteen years old, had been living with her maternal grandparents since the death of her mother. She had not yet learned a trade. Two days after her father was buried, she was accepted into the *Diaconieweeshuis*, the orphanage for children of Reformed Church members. She was entitled to the support and schooling offered by the orphanage because she was now a full orphan and her father had been a full member of the Church.⁴⁷

The hapless Duijkerius is usually considered to be a failed theologian, unable to gain a ministry because of a stutter, and the anticlerical and fully Spinozist author of both Philopater novels. His authorship of *Vervolg* seems to me open to doubt. If he even had a speech impediment, his Amsterdam patrons and the classes of Groningen and Amsterdam did not consider it so bad to be disqualifying for the ministry. His reputation as a miserable loser rests solely on the hostile testimonials of the enemies he made over the course of his career, notably because of his refutation of Deurhoff. This career becomes quite respectable if he is considered to be what he was: an ambitious schoolmaster and the author of a series of textbooks for older pupils; a product of and contributor to the theological education of the laity as advocated by

44 Rodenpoort, *Gedragh* (see above, n. 43). The successful surgeon Monnikhoff (1707–87) also left manuscript notes on Duijkerius, in a comparable vein: see Maréchal, *Johannes Duijkerius* (see above, n.1), p. 11. The latter was an admirer of Deurhoff, whose polemic against Duijkerius may have colored his account.

45 Minutes of the consistory, SAA, Archief kerkenraad, inv. nr. 16, January 23, February 6, 1698; inv. nr. 17, May 20, 27, April 10, 1698; Acta classis Amsterdam, SAA, Archief classis Amsterdam, inv. nr. 8, April 21, June 1st, 1698; Register of Interrogations, SAA, Archief van schout en schepenen, inv. nr. 345, pp. 214–215 (March 1, 1698).

46 Marechal, *Duijkerius* (see above, n. 1), pp. 32–4.

47 Inventories of Pupils' Assets, SAA, Archief van het Diaconieweeshuis, inv. nr. 495 (May 16, 1702). (Database at the website of SAA.).

prominent theologians at the time; a man who made it to the candidacy for the ministry without academic training, after the then-much-admired customs of the Bohemian Brethren; and a trained amanuensis for the established ministry in their refutation of the materialistic natural philosophy of Deurhoff and the chiliasm of Van Beuningen.

5 A Legacy of Sorts

The problems raised by Deurhoff's and other freethinkers' philosophical approaches toward theological matters forced Reformed theologians into a re-evaluation of natural theology. In a way, Duijkerius also contributed to this effort, which would eventually redirect Reformed theology and religious practice. Repeatedly, he used human reason as an independent source of true knowledge, alongside Scripture. A mature example of the growing appreciation of natural theology is offered in the later work of Salomon van Til. In 1702, despite a documented speech impediment, Van Til had risen from minister to professor of theology at the University of Leiden and was also serving as *regent* of the *Statencollege*, a boarding school for theology students.⁴⁸ He was a productive author and engaged extensively with the controversies of this time. His popular *Salems Vrede*, in which he had defused the tensions between the opposing theological schools and insisted on the necessity of uniting forces against the enemies of the Reformed faith, has been mentioned above. After Duijkerius, Van Til was the first theologian to refute Deurhoff: in 1698 he argued against the latter's interpretation of the trees of Paradise and the meaning of God's interdiction to Adam against eating the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge.⁴⁹ In 1704 he argued more systematically in his *Theologiae utriusque Compendium*.

48 On Van Til: J. van den Berg, 'Toch een wegbereider? Salomon van Til (1643–1713)', in: *Verlichte geesten: Een portrettengalerij voor Piet Buijnsters*, ed. Kees Fens (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 107–18; idem, 'Til, Salomon van,' in: *BLGNP* (see above, n. 28), 4: 424–8; Ernestine G. E. van der Wall, 'Til, Salomon van (1643–1712)', in: *The Dictionary of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Dutch Philosophers*, ed. Wiep van Bunge et al., 2 vols. (Bristol, 2003), 2: 981–3; Elsin Groenenboom-Draai, ed., *Oog om oog: De karaktermoord van Hoogstraten op de Dordtse coccejaanse predikant-theoloog Salomon van Til* (Zoeterwoude, 2013), pp. 91–156; Matthias Mangold, 'Salomon van Til (1643–1713): His Appropriation of Cartesian Tenets in His Compendium of Natural Theology,' *Church History and Religious Culture* 94 (2014), 337–57.

49 Salomon van Til, *Eerste Weerelds Op- en Onder-gang. Na Moses oogwit en beschrijving ontvouwt, betoogt en verdedigt. Sijnde een grondige verhandeling over de VIII. eerste Hoofdstucken van Moses I. Boek* (Dordrecht, 1698), pp. 71–4; cf. Willem Deurhoff, *Volslaagen Afhankelykheid aller Schepselen van de Eeuwige Oorzaak, beweerd teegen de uitvluchten*

This, his main work, was an innovative juxtaposition of two distinct parts: an essay on natural theology, followed by a second part on revealed theology. It was intended to provide students of theology, his pupils in the *Statencollege*, with ammunition in the defense of Reformed doctrine against atheists, Spinozists, and freethinkers. In the dedication of his work to the trustees of his university, Van Til argued that the conflation of philosophy and theology, out of which theology had been born, had led to empty rhetoric and vain contestation. He praised the States of Holland, which already in 1656 had ordered a strict separation between philosophy and theology. Yet some had indiscreetly made their own philosophies the interpreter of Scripture, while others, in their eagerness to philosophize, had at least neglected the arguments from Scripture, and eventually had come to scorn and despise the Bible. Here we may recognize the author of the *Philosophia S. Scripturae Interpres* and the likes of Deurhoff.

Van Til emphasized that reason and Scripture were independent sources of truth, and that both were valuable. Yet their respective results should always be compared and weighed. Whereas philosophers tended to come to a variety of conclusions, eventually Scripture was needed as an umpire, to determine the truth of the matter and to provide theological knowledge out of the reach of unaided reason. Consequently, in the first part, Van Til demonstrated how natural reason, rightly applied, inevitably leads to certainty with regard to the existence and properties of God, the need to love and adore him, the awareness of human insufficiency, and the necessity of a mediator to bring about a meaningful relationship between God and man. A short introduction to Cartesian philosophy served as *prolegomena* for this part. Unlike Deurhoff, Van Til not only praised Cartesian philosophy for gaining insight into the nature of God, man, and Creation, but also demonstrated, by means of Cartesian reasoning, how the truth of the Christian religion necessarily followed from this natural theology. In the second part, Van Til offered his readers a very schematic overview of Reformed theology, providing proof-texts for each point of doctrine. As *prolegomena* for this part he defined the terms 'theology' and 'religion,' and presented the Reformed views on the composition, dignity, and right use of Scripture.

In the *Compendium*, translated into Dutch shortly before Van Til's death, he encouraged his students to examine the most authoritative theologians and, rather than follow one authority or another, to come to their own conclusions and arrive at an inner conviction of the truth of the basic teachings of the Reformed Church. For curious minds he added a survey of the main arguments against Papists, Lutherans, Mennonites, and Socinians. However, he strictly refrained from polemics against contemporary authors. He seems

van de Hoog-geleerde Heeren Paulus Buchius, Geneesheer, en Salomon van Til, Leeraar in de Kerk en Doorluchtige Schoole van Dordrecht (Amsterdam, 1702), pp. 115–43.

to have expected his students to measure the teachings of atheists and free-thinkers against the standard repertoire of heresies, superstitions, and anti-christian maxims of the historical enemies of the Reformed faith. In the part on revealed religion he also argued for the use of reason and against implicit faith, the blind following of the authority of the Church, as a remnant of popery and unbecoming for true Protestants. Van Til extended the right to study and interpret Scripture first of all to the clergy, but no less to the common faithful. (Fig. 11.5) As we have seen, this was fully in line with the opinions of prominent theologians at the time, and probably reflected part of his biography: his father the distiller Johannes van Til had been promoted to the ministry as *Duytsche clerck*. It is not known whether Van Til authorized the translation of his *Compendium* himself, but it certainly was in the spirit of his views that not only students but also studious laypersons would profit from his teaching.⁵⁰

Van Til, in separating theology and philosophy, followed in the footsteps of Cocceian theologians before him.⁵¹ Here, however, he also created a division *within* theology, between natural theology—what humans could know about God from the observation of nature and the deductions of human reasoning—and revealed theology. Thereby he made the realm over which revelation was the ultimate arbiter even more circumscribed than his predecessors had, limiting it to the ‘mysteries of the faith’: those doctrines beyond the reach of human reason that taught God’s plan about salvation. He thus widened the space for not only the natural sciences but also an accommodation of biblical studies with secular philology and antiquarianism and of theology with reason and natural philosophy. In his biblical commentary on the gospel of Matthew, the fruit of catechetical exercises with his congregation in one of his earlier postings, he placed the biblical text squarely in the cultural world in which it was written. In another earlier work he had not hesitated to use scientific theories. Thus to explain the creation of light on the first day, before the creation of the Sun on the fourth in the account of Genesis 1, he offered his readers an up-to-date essay about the nature of light.⁵²

With Deurhoff, he acknowledged that reason could yield true knowledge of God, Creation, and the nature of humankind, especially when using the

50 Salomon van Til, *Theologiae utriusque Compendium cum Naturalis quam Revelatae* (Leiden, 1704); idem, *Kortbondig Vertoog der beyder Godgeleerdheyd, zoo der Aangeborene als der Geopenbaarde*, trans. Antoni de Reus (Dordrecht, 1712).

51 Ernestine van der Wall, ‘De coccejaanse theoloog Petrus Allinga en het cartesianisme,’ in: *Een richtingensrijd in de Gereformeerde Kerk: Voetianen en Coccejanen 1650–1750*, ed. Frits Broeyer and Ernestine van der Wall (Zoetermeer, 1994), pp. 131–45, there 141–4.

52 Salomon van Til, *Het Euangelium des H. Apostels Matthaei* (Amsterdam, 1683), reprinted up through a 6th edition in 1726; idem, *Eerste Weerelds Op- en Onder-gang* (see above, n. 49), pp. 33–4.



FIGURE 11.5 The educated believer. She reads the Bible and other religious texts, and uses a touchstone to determine their value. Detail D from *Van het Verval tot Ketterij* [On Decline into Heresy], plate 39 in: Romeyn de Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica* (Amsterdam, 1735). Private collection

Cartesian method. He thus drew the teeth of libertines and freethinkers like Deurhoff by taking them at their word that they did not practice theology. At the same time, he undercut the pretensions of partisan theologians to exclusively represent the orthodox form of Reformed Protestantism by empowering the laity to study Scripture for themselves and put the systems of professional theologians to the test, advocating *libertas prophetandi* in all but the most narrowly circumscribed essentials. He could have referred here to another resolution of the States of Holland, the Resolution toward the Peace of the Church of 1694, which ordered theologians to focus on their pastoral offices only and to refrain from polemicizing outside the walls of the academy about topics not contained in the Formularies of Unity.⁵³

53 Text of the edict and its acceptance by the Zuid-Holland synod and the corresponding synods in Knuttel, *Acta* (see above, n. 12), 3: 517–9 and 4: 35–42.

By the end of the seventeenth century the more ambitious students of theology, or those among them that could afford it, lingered in their theological studies beyond what was necessary to become ministers. They took the time to immerse themselves in philological studies as well as in the various theological systems, studied at several academies under representatives of different schools of thought, and in their later careers they eclectically combined these systems. Such men also kept abreast of developments outside the theological world, which were integrated into their published work and their teaching. Van Til was one such figure, but by no means the first or only one. Educated lay persons, like the schoolmaster Duijkerius, who had been stimulated to study Scripture themselves to arrive at a well-founded assurance of their professed faith immersed themselves just as easily in philosophy, philology, the study of history and antiquities, or the sciences, and eventually in theological speculation. This was the fertile soil in which Enlightened freethinking and a variety of separatist movements flourished.⁵⁴ Yet that was not the only way Enlightenment could go.

Theological schooling and vernacular theological literature remained in demand among laypersons who, like Duijkerius, never considered leaving the Reformed fold. As yet, not much work has been done on the market for books on vernacular theology in the eighteenth century. My impression is that whereas the seventeenth century saw the production of a richly varied genre of study aids on the catechism, the eighteenth century shows an even more diversified catechetical landscape. For youngsters, new companions to the Bible were developed. Yet another schoolmaster, Berend Hakvoort, pioneered the Bible for children, and picture bibles offered help in memorizing biblical texts and histories.⁵⁵ The primer by Abraham Hellenbroek came to dominate the market for those preparing for admission to full membership. For further study, volumes of sermons by popular ministers took up their place beside the more traditional companion volumes to the catechism. The sermons of Johannes van der Kemp on the catechism were repeatedly reprinted over the course of the century, as were those of Bernardus Smytegeld. The layman Bernardus Nieuwentijt created a defense of Reformed Christianity on the basis of the newest Newtonian natural-scientific insights in his *Het regt gebruik der wereldbeschouwingen* [The right use of philosophy] (1715) and *Gronden van zekerheid* [Foundations of certainty] (1720).⁵⁶ The minister and professor of theology Wilhelmus van

54 Wielema, *The March of the Libertines* (see above, n. 1).

55 Willem van der Meiden, *Zoo heerlijk eenvoudig: Geschiedenis van de kinderbijbel in Nederland* (Hilversum, 2009), pp. 46–86.

56 Rienk Vermij, *Secularisering en natuurwetenschap in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw: Bernardus Nieuwentijt* (Amsterdam, 1991); idem, 'Nieuwentijt en de physico-theologie,' *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* 20 (1988), pp. 215–29.

Irhoven composed his *Gronden van het verzekerd Christendom* [Foundations of Christian certainty] (1730) in the form of questions and answers, on various topics concerning the religious life, spiritual growth, and assurance of faith, based on his catechism classes on these topics with his parishioners in Ede.⁵⁷

The availability of vernacular literature, on theology and on secular subjects that could touch on theology, forced students of theology to lay a broad and solid groundwork of general knowledge during their stay at the university, and to keep themselves informed about recent developments once they were in office. One can see these new demands reflected in a handbook for the clerical profession like one such book by the minister Henricus Ravesteyn, *Nasireer Gods* [Nazirite of God]⁵⁸ and in a spectatorial critique like the *Zeedemeester der Kerkekyken* [Ecclesiastical Moralist].⁵⁹ Both the minister and the critic abhorred ministers who parroted the doctrinal system of their professors. Both demanded for prospective ministers an all-round education, not only in theology but also in the humanities and the sciences. The book trade supplied lay church members with an ever-growing supply of vernacular works, from historical-critical biblical commentary to physico-theology, as well as on history and the sciences, enabling them to judge the learning of their ministers. The latter had to be familiar with current developments in many fields to preserve their authority among the laity and, above all, to keep them on their toes in their studies, to develop independent theological positions for themselves, and to sustain a well-grounded inner conviction of the truth of what they preached.

6 Conclusion

The histories of Enlightened philosophy, the emerging natural sciences, and theology in the later seventeenth century were entangled and should not be studied separately.⁶⁰ Perhaps nowhere do they cross more clearly than in

57 Enlarged editions of this work were published in 1737 and 1744. Willem van Asselt, 'Irhoven, Wilhelmus van,' in: *BLGNP* (see above, n. 28), 4: 225–7.

58 Henricus Ravesteyn, *De Nasireer Gods tot den Heiligen Dienst toegerust, of Heilzame Raadgeving aan Studenten, proponenten, en Jonge Leraren, hoe zy in het Huis Gods met vrugt kunnen verkeeren* (Amsterdam, 1731), reprinted with several supplements in 1743 and 1765.

59 Philippus Aletophilus [= Philippus Ludovicus Stadius Muller], *De Zeedemeester der Kerkekyken, onderzoekende, op een vryen trant, waarom, onder een zoo groot aantal van Leeraaren inde Nederlandsche Kerke, hedensdaagsch zoo weinig de Waare Godsdienstigheid bloeiende bevonden, veel min eene algemeene Kerkevreede bevorderd wordt*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1750–2).

60 'Entangled history' is usually seen as the study of the interrelationship between histories of the Western and non-Western worlds: Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung: Der Ansatz der Histoire croisée und die

the work of lay intellectuals like the schoolmaster Johannes Duijkerius. As a schoolmaster he was necessarily something of a generalist. In a competitive market he popularized new knowledge produced in a variety of fields, from theology and history to civic morality and the natural sciences. Confessional culture could and did intersect with the advances of humanist scholarship, the introduction of Cartesianism, and the emerging natural sciences. As a layman he worked closely with the Amsterdam ministers. The ministers and educated lay persons such as Duijkerius himself entered into the continuous discussions among philosophers and theologians, among political authorities and synods, among Voetians and Cocceians, innovators and traditionalists, proponents of orthodoxy (however defined) and freethinkers. The battle-lines are usually represented in a rather static way, pitting progressives against conservatives and the philosophers, freethinkers, and politicians against the theologians. Intellectual history often studies either philosophers or theologians, Voetians or (more sparingly) Cocceians, clergy or (seldom) laity. In practice, however, the parties in the debate cannot be cleanly separated. Moreover, arguments brought forward changed the minds of the discussants as well as the direction of the debates—in Reformed theology as well. The result was an Enlightened religious culture in which secular knowledge unproblematically complemented revealed truths, and in which theologians and laypersons were expected to form their personal convictions rather than follow the dictates of ecclesiastical authority.

Herausforderung des Transnationalen,' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), 607–36; idem, 'Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity,' *History and Theory* 45 (2006), 30–50.