

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

Johannes Elias Feisser and the Rise of the Netherlands Baptists

IN order to understand the "why, how and when" of the rise of the Baptist Denomination in the Netherlands,¹ it is necessary to sketch in a few words the political and religious background, of which the "Réveil"—the Awakening of the nineteenth century—is the most significant feature.²

After the Emperor Napoleon had been defeated at Leipzig, the House of Orange returned to the Low Lands: William I became the first king of both Holland and Belgium. The French influence on religious life in Holland had been tremendously great: rationalism and latitudinarianism (opposition of theology with the help of Platonism against Deism, though in fact, both often went hand-in-hand) made the foundations of orthodox Christianity shake and the human mind had become extremely critical and liberal. The Réveil now was a reaction against this development: it was a strengthening of confessional consciousness, a representation of orthodoxy as expressed in the Confession of Dordrecht. Leaders of the Réveil were Willem Bilderdijk and Isäac da Costa, the latter having been formerly a believing Jew.

In the middle of the nineteenth century there were three main schools of theology: the Leiden school was modernistic and rationalistic; it maintained contact with men like Baur (Tübingen) and Wellhausen. Representatives of the Leiden school were J. H. Scholten and Abraham Kuenen.

The Groningen school was headed by Prof. Hofstede de Groot, an evangelically-minded man who preferred a "via media"; connected with the Groningen group were the "ethischen" and the followers of Prof. van Oosterzee of Utrecht. The Strict-Calvinists formed the third group; their leader was the well-known Abraham Kuyper, the first rector-magnificus of the Free University in Amsterdam. As the Dutch Reformed Church did not respond to the challenge of the Réveil, that is, since she did not do away with the "liberals" and because she did not attempt to re-establish

¹ A. A. Hardenberg, *The Rise of the Baptist Movement in Holland*, Hengelo/Ov., 1949, p. 1. H. Jut in *European Baptists Today* (ed. J. D. Franks), Ruschlikon, 1952, p. 42.

² For this section I depended partly on Karl Heussi: *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*; Verlag J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1949; pp. 498/499.

orthodoxy in life and doctrine, a separation occurred in the years 1834-36, when a Dutch Reformed pastor by the name of Hendrik de Cock founded a "Christelijke Afscheiden Kerk" (Afscheiding, 1834).

The strongest political faction in the country was the Liberal Party, headed by such men as Jan Rudolf Thorbecke and Van Hall. Parliament passed a bill, by which religious instruction was taken from the Church and put into the hands of the State. The Dutch Reformed Church almost did not react! Thereupon the so-called "Schoolstrijd" (Kampf um die Schule) began: "the school back to the parents," was the slogan in those days and as a result Roman Catholics and Protestants founded confessional political parties. Leaders of the Protestants were Jhr. de Savornin Lohman and Abraham Kuyper; the outstanding representative of the Catholics was Dr. Schaepman. In 1880 the Strict-Calvinists, headed by Abraham Kuyper, founded in Amsterdam the Free University (Vrije Universiteit). Until that time the largest number of separatists was united in the Christelijke Afscheiden Kerk of Hendrik de Cock. But since the Leiden and Groningen schools had the majority in the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church and the people had been influenced by the Réveil, new separations could not be prevented.

In 1886 Abraham Kuyper and his followers broke with the Dutch Reformed Church (called the "Doleantie" from *dolere* = to suffer) and six years later they united with the majority of the members of the Chr. Afscheiden Kerk in the "Gereformeerde Kerken" (1892). Only a small minority remained in the Christelijke Afscheiden Kerk; at present they are known as the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken." What now had the Baptists to do with the Réveil? Though this will become clear later, we can say already now that the Awakening has been a powerful and successful opponent of the liberalistic spirit, so characteristic of the nineteenth century. Those aroused by the Réveil for the most part formed the right wing of the Dutch Reformed Church; the majority of the separatists joined the Christelijke Afscheiden Kerk (1834-36) or broke with the Dutch Reformed Church in 1886 (Doleantie; Abr. Kuyper). Only a small number of the "malcontents" decided for a free church; these men and women established the Vrije Evangelische Gemeenten in Nederland, or became members of the Baptist Church; Johannes Elias Feisser was one of them.

JOHANNES ELIAS FEISSER

Feisser was born on Dec. 10, 1805, the first son of Johannes Feisser and Anna Maria Bouer, at Winsum in the province of Groningen. The early years of his life the young Feisser spent

in Veendam, where his father had become city treasurer. On May 16, 1823, he was registered by the University of Groningen (via media!) as a student of theology, mainly by the influence of his grandmother. After having passed his proponents-exam before the Provinciaal Kerkbestuur van Friesland on May 3, 1827, Feisser went to Leiden, where he studied at the University. Influenced by his teacher, Prof. Th. A. Clarisse of Groningen, he chose Church History as his main subject and on June 21, 1828, he became Doctor of Theology on a thesis, entitled: "De Vita Basili Magni, Caesareae in Cappadocia Episcopi."³ The first pastorate Feisser held was Miedum-Lekkuum in Friesland; here he found a wife, Geertruide Elisabeth Barbara Orck, Baronesse van Heeckeren. Three years later he moved to Winschoten (1831), where he wrote his *Jezus Christus, of Lotgevallen en Lessen van den Zaligmaker der menschheid*.⁴ Its purpose was "the spread of the pure knowledge of the Gospel and the genuine appetite for Christian virtue." Feisser rejects the existence of a personal Devil: *Matt.* vi. 13 he translates for example by "the evil one." In 1833 Feisser went to Franeker, "the Frisian Athens," as Wumkes calls it.⁵ Here two of his children and his wife died, while one of Feisser's eyes did not function properly. This was too much for the poor man: he returned to Veendam, where his parents lived, and here it was that he found rest for his soul, and cure for his sorrow. On March 3, 1839, he became pastor of a small country church in Gasselter-Nijveen in the province of Drente; his entrance-sermon was on *Matt.* xiii. 18 and, with a burning desire to work for the advance of the Kingdom of God, Feisser began his work. Within a short time church life flourished as it rarely had done before.

Soon he discovered, however, "that there were not five true Christians here, not even ten acquainted with the right way of salvation."⁶ But after having worked intensively for about two years, his preaching entered the hearts and the minds of the people. A small circle of faithful church members regularly assembled in Feisser's home and there they discussed on problems of the Christian faith. In order to reach the people outside the church, Feisser took his pen in his hand and wrote a pamphlet, entitled: *Het eene en altoos noodige*,⁷ in which he shares his experiences

³ Groningen, 1828. Feisser's Complete Works are in the Library of the Theological School of the Ger. Kerken in Ned., Kampen; catalogue pp. 239/40; Kampen, 1911.

⁴ Publ. by W. van Boekeren, Groningen, 1832.

⁵ G. A. Wumkes: "De Opkomst en Vestiging van het Baptisme in Nederland"; pub. A. J. Osinga, Sneek, 1912; p. 4.

⁶ J. E. Feisser: *Getrouw Verhaal van mijne werkzaamheden en lotgevallen als dienaar des Heeren te G.N.*; Groningen, 1844; p. 3.

⁷ Groningen, 1841.

with others. Then in autumn, 1841 he read Newman's *Cardiphonia*; this book made him see that a life "sola gratia" is a necessity for salvation. Formerly he had an optimistic conception of the human state, but now he wrote that "nothing good lives in man; his nature is thoroughly sinful, . . . hostile toward God, actively at work to do away with everything well-pleasing to God, to resist Him as long as is possible."⁸ From now on he preached man's inability and God's sovereignty in the plan of salvation, making a sharp distinction between converted and unconverted. This led to the first conflict between the pastor and the board of deacons ("kerkeraad"). On Saturday afternoon, Nov. 27, 1842, the deacons together with the pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church of Gasselter-Nijveen, were assembled to appoint some new deacons. Unfortunately a man by the name of Hendrik Theeuwes was elected, whom Feisser could not accept "because he did not possess the characteristics of grace." Hendrik Reiling was the man he wanted, but the board of deacons decided that Theeuwes be elected. A second conflict between deacons and pastor took place on Wednesday, May 17, 1843, when Feisser required a decision from the board, by which some unfaithful members were to be forbidden to attend the Lord's Supper, "because of lack of right conceptions and opinions which a true Christian needs to have." Also this proposal could not be accepted by the board of deacons. These conflicts and struggles for a pure church made Feisser thirst after a "communio sanctorum." More and more serious became the controversy, because Feisser was not willing "to gain peace at the cost of the truth and the will of God." He sent a letter to the Classicaal Bestuur in Assen, asking to be released from his duty to administer infant baptism, because at the moment his conscience forbade him to do what he thought not to be right. In the same letter Feisser expressed the hope of having a true and apostolic church, as Paul described her in 1 Cor. xii. 12-30. Rejection and abolition of paedo-baptism would be the first requirement.

In the autumn of 1843 Feisser presented his views concerning baptism in a booklet, entitled: *Beknopte Aanwijzing van het ongeoorloofde in den Doop der kleine kinderen, benevens de weerlegging van de voornaamste gronden welke voor den kinderdoop bijgebracht worden*,⁹ in which he gathers the scriptural, historical and ecclesiastical arguments against the practice of baptizing infants. On Sept. 24, 1843, Feisser refused to baptize the child of a disciplined member of the church and in spite of the summons of the Classicaal Bestuur in Assen, Feisser was not willing to baptize

⁸ J. E. Feisser: *Waakt op! Gij die slaapt . . . Eene roepstem tot alle ware geloovigen en begeerigen in Nederland*; Groningen, 1843. pp. 26/27.

⁹ Groningen, September, 1843.

infants or to distribute bread and wine to unbelievers. On Dec. 19, 1843, the Provinciaal Kerkbestuur dismissed him from his office and on January 1 this decision was announced in public. Now Feisser was without a church and without income; yet he was not discouraged, but in a tract on the Holy Spirit he wrote down burning words from a burning heart: *Die den Geest Christi niet heeft, die komt Hem niet toe! Eene noodige waarschuwing voor alle heilzoekende zielen onder de Afgescheidenen en Niet-Afgescheidenen in Nederland.*¹⁰ In this writing he discussed the nature, the names and the work of the Holy Spirit; then he puts some questions: What does it mean not to have the Holy Spirit? What does it mean not to belong to the Lord Jesus? What does it mean to have that Spirit and to belong to that Lord?

But Feisser was not the only one who had a battle to fight. In Zutfen, in the province of Gelderland, a pastor had come into conflict with the board of deacons: this man was Ds. J. de Liefde, pastor of the Mennonite congregation. After his conversion, he preached Christ the Crucified, a folly to the Greeks, a stumbling-block to the Jews, both to the Doopsgezinden. But since the conflict began in 1843, others were attending the small Mennonite chapel, the majority of whom were faithful and believing members of the Dutch Reformed Church in Zutfen. Alongside with de Liefde worked Jacob Benjamin de Pinto, a Portuguese Jew from The Hague who after conversion became a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. Neither there, nor with the Afgescheidenen (1834; Hendr. de Cock) did he find what he wanted—a genuine Christian faith. But after having become friends with de Liefde, both men worked for a purified church. A declaration of war was sent to the Mennonites in the form of a booklet: *Gevaar! Gevaar! en geen Vrede! een woord tot de slapenden en in slaap gewiegeden.*¹¹ Feisser, writing against infant baptism, aroused his attention, and in March, 1844 appeared de Liefde's *Niet de kinderdoop, maar de Doop der Bejaarden is het Bondszegeel des Nieuwen Verbonds.*¹² Feisser in turn happened to read the pamphlet of de Liefde and so contact between the two men was made. In the summer of the year 1844 Feisser visited de Liefde in Zutfen and this was the beginning not only of a fruitful co-operation, but also the time when Feisser's writings were being read by Köbner and Oncken. A new period had come: the time of the rise of the Baptist denomination in the Netherlands!

EARLY LEADERS

In the autumn of 1844 the announcement of Feisser's dismissal

¹⁰ Groningen, February, 1844.

¹¹ Zutfen, 1844.

¹² Zutfen, March, 1844.

reached Hamburg. Under the triumvirate Oncken, Köbner and Lehmann, the Baptist witness spread slowly but certainly, particularly in Oldenburg, Jeverland and Ost-Friesland, all in the N.W. of Germany. The movement found much sympathy and a large following. Feisser's booklets aroused Köbner's and Oncken's attention and interest.¹³ Oncken sent Julius Köbner from Hamburg and A. F. Remmers from Jever to the Netherlands. In November, 1844 the two men arrived in Gasselter-Nijveen; they told Feisser about the Baptist work in Hamburg and district and this made such an impression on Feisser that he asked them to send him more information, books, pamphlets, etc. Answering a letter of Feisser, Köbner wrote from Hamburg on December 27, 1844: "O wie herrlich ist es denn, dass der Herr sich hier und da Häuflein seiner Geringen, deren Herzen Er gedemüthig that, sammelt, um ihnen sein Wort wieder, als ihres Fusses Leuchte, in die Hand zu geben. Er thut ihnen die Augen auf und schenkt ihrem Herzen Einfalt. Er führt sie nicht nach Dordrecht, und nicht nach Augsburg, sondern nach Jerusalem, wo er seinen Geist ausgoss und seine Gemeinde bildete. . . . Was Holland betrifft, so wollen wir freudig in die Zukunft blicken; denn mit der unverfälschten Wahrheit des Wortes Gottes, zu welcher der Heilige Geist seine Kraft geben wird, lassen sich grosse Dinge anfangen, und das Feld scheint in der That, wie Sie auch bemerken, weiss zur Ernte."¹⁴

About January 12, 1845 Feisser, accompanied by his friend Roelof Reiling visited de Liefde in Zutphen: they spent quite a bit of time in discussing the problem of baptism and, as de Liefde wrote in a letter to Köbner in Hamburg,¹⁵ Feisser told many things about the Baptists in Hamburg and about the visit of Köbner and Remmers in Autumn, 1844. "How a man is rich, when he may spend a few hours with those who in Christ are of one heart and soul with him," de Liefde wrote to Feisser in a letter.¹⁶

That Feisser lived under unfavourable circumstances from the material point of view, we know from a letter which de Liefde wrote to Feisser on April 9, 1845. As a friend and brother de Liefde admonishes Feisser to make known unto God all his needs and troubles and to pray for divine aid. In the same letter de Liefde expresses the view that the Hamburg Baptists (he means Köbner, Oncken, etc.) seem not yet to be free from the Mosaic Law: "We must not be baptized, because the Lord commanded

¹³ J. H. Rushbrooke: *The Baptist Movement in the Continent of Europe*; Kingsgate Press, London, 1923; p. 55.

¹⁴ Cited by Wumkes, *op. cit.*; pp. 274ff.; more letters reprinted here.

¹⁵ February 2, 1845

¹⁶ February 2, 1845; De L. urges Feisser to buy a printing-press.

it (as the Hamburg brethren actually do), for we are free from the law. We must be baptized, because baptism is necessary for salvation, though God certainly 'per exceptionem' can save a believer who is not baptized." On April 11, 1845 Köbner wrote in a letter to Feisser that Oncken had invited him to come to Hamburg to get acquainted and to have a discussion. The cost of travel would be paid by the German brethren, if Feisser had no money. Consequently at the beginning of May, 1845, Feisser travelled to Hamburg, where he met both Oncken and Köbner. Oncken was soon convinced that they were dealing with a man whose faith was thoroughly evangelical, whose doctrine was purely Biblical. Köbner accompanied Feisser on his way home in order to found the first Baptist Church in Gasselter-Nijveen. On May 15, 1845 he baptized in a ditch Johannes Elias Feisser from Gasselter-Nijveen, Arend Speelman from Nieuwe Pekela, Roelof Reiling and his wife Geertruida Teissens, and the brothers Willem, Jannes and Hendrik Kruit, all of Gasselter-Nijveen. Great was their joy, and with a thankful heart Feisser wrote: "It seemed to us, as if we had entered through the right gate, of which Bunyan speaks in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, that we had not climbed over the wall, though this habit is already more than 1,000 years old."¹⁷ Of this first Baptist congregation in the Netherlands, Feisser became the pastor, while Roelof Reiling was made a deacon. The next day Köbner and Feisser visited de Liefde and de Pinto in Zutfen, when Feisser insisted that both brethren should be baptized; he aroused the anger of de Liefde and de Pinto. The latter said that—though Feisser had been baptized and the congregation in Gasselter-Nijveen had been established—he did not yet see a church of Jesus Christ in the Netherlands.¹⁸ In a letter, written on May 22, 1845, Feisser accuses the Zutfen leaders that, by being disobedient in the question of baptism, they had dishonoured God and His Word. De Liefde, who was very angry with Feisser, answered, "But you, when you came, were a baptizer from top to toe; you even wanted to speak about nothing else but baptism and baptizing. Indeed, you did not need to bear that name at all, you were Baptists from the skull of the head to the sole of the foot"¹⁹; de Pinto, however, repented and in a letter to Feisser he asked for pardon.²⁰

Meanwhile Feisser and Köbner had left Zutfen and made their way to Amsterdam: there since 1840 a group of believers, belonging to various denominations, was studying the Bible for private instruction. When they discussed the question of baptism, they

¹⁷ Cited by Wumkes, *op. cit.*; pp. 27-28.

¹⁸ Cf. Wumkes, *op. cit.*; p. 60.

¹⁹ May 25, 1845.

²⁰ May 24, 1845.

came to the conclusion that only believers should be baptized. The leader of this circle was Hendrik Gerardus Tekelenburg, with whom Feisser had entered into contact. In May, 1845, following their visit to the Zutfen group, Kőbner and Feisser spent a few days with the brethren in Amsterdam.²¹ But unlike as in Zutfen, the word was received by these brethren and Kőbner baptized four of them, among them Tekelenburg.

Yet also in Zutfen Baptists made progress: de Liefde had withdrawn from Feisser and the Germans, but de Pinto was willing to maintain contact with the church in Gasselter-Nijveen. On June 24, 1845, three brethren were baptized. First de Pinto was baptized and thereupon he baptized the other two. Triumphantly he wrote to Feisser in one of his many letters: "Your sister-church shakes you the brother-hand, gives you the brother-kiss, be it from a distant place. The body of Jesus Christ lives still in our Netherlands. At the same moment it has been revealed in two places, and now through the grace of God, we walk in newness of life."²² One more letter was sent to Feisser in the beginning of July, 1845: "If the works of Menno Simons happen to come in your hands, buy them, if you can, for they contain the profound and powerful expression of faith of a beloved brother. When reading them, I had to think of you constantly. And that is, because there exists a remarkable similarity between you: a great mildness, alongside with a cutting sharpness."²³

Now de Liefde broke with de Pinto,²⁴ as he did with the Menonite Church in Zutfen. For a short time he was pastor of the Apostolisch-Christelijk-Afgescheiden Gemeente, of which he was the founder.

Feisser had a battle to fight and he was often so discouraged that he asked himself: "Why in the world did I give up my pastorate to become leader of such a small group of people? Have I really done that which God wanted me to do?" But his friends encouraged him, urging him to go straight forward, without looking back. Oncken wrote: "Die Wahrheit . . . hat zu allen Zeiten dieselben Kämpfe zu bestehen gehabt, und in dem Kirchlich-orthodoxen Holland muss dies ganz besonders der Fall sein. Die Taufwahrheit greift so tief in das Wesen aller Staatskirchen und anderer Kirchengemeinschaften ein die den Apostolischen Standpunkt verlassen haben, dass wir nichts als den kräftigsten Widerstand erwarten dürfen."²⁵ In September, 1845, Oncken visited

²¹ Rushbrooke: *op. cit.*; p. 58.

²² June 26, 1845.

²³ Cited by Wumkes, *op. cit.*; pp. 333ff.

²⁴ Letter of De Pinto to Feisser, September 6, 1845.

²⁵ September 12, 1845.

Feisser and his family in Gasselter-Nijveen; then Feisser's second wife, Karsina Hovingh Wichers, was also baptized.

Feisser's health grew worse and finally he decided to go to the "Wasserheilstalt" Geltschberg near Leitmeritz beyond Dresden, Germany, as de Liefde had advised him long before.²⁶ On May 15, 1846, exactly one year after the first Baptist Church had been established in the Netherlands, Feisser went to Hamburg, via Weener, Leer, Aurich and Jever; from there he travelled to Lewin near Dresden, where steam baths proved to be very helpful and curing. During the time of his absence, Roelof Reiling, and Hendrik and Johannes Kruit led the church in Gasselter-Nijveen. On July 20, 1846, Feisser was back again, though not yet cured completely.

Meanwhile de Pinto had baptized a number of persons, but the movement did not make much progress though: "The development among the believers in my presence, is very slow; yea with some there seems to be more progress backward than forward," he wrote to Feisser.²⁷ When in May, 1848 de Pinto went to The Hague, the small group could hardly maintain itself; some of the members went over to Mormonism, others became Darbists and in spite of the fact that Feisser travelled more than once to Zutfen he could not prevent the downfall of the Zutfen church.

In 1849 Feisser moved to Nieuwe Pekela, where he hoped to be able to do more.²⁸ There he and Arend Speelman meditated on the Word of God each Sunday morning. Feisser engaged in missionary work and soon a congregation was established. In September, 1850 Feisser went to Amsterdam, invited by Tekelenburg and other brethren to become the leader of the church there. Since the congregation lacked evangelistic zeal, Feisser went back to Nieuwe Pekela by the middle of October, 1850. The Amsterdam congregation was very much disturbed by the influence of the Darbists, especially in the years 1854-58. From 1861 Tekelenburg was again leader of the church and soon he drew up a confession of faith²⁹; noteworthy is Art. 11 that forbids the taking of the oath on the ground of *Matt. v. 34, 37* and *James v. 12*.

In April, 1863 Charles Haddon Spurgeon visited Holland,³⁰ but because of lack of time, he could not visit the brethren in Amsterdam; yet shortly after his return he wrote from England: "When you are faithful, you will be the salt of this country in the coming years. If all are eager in planting and promoting the Truth, your

²⁶ Letter of De Liefde to Feisser, April 13, 1845.

²⁷ In 1846/47; cf. Wumkes, *op. cit.*; p. 72.

²⁸ Rushbrooke, *op. cit.*; p. 55.

²⁹ *Proeve eener beknopte Belijdenis van Geloof*; cf. Wumkes, *op. cit.*;

p. 93.

³⁰ Cf. *Weekblad De Christen*, no. 390, October 11, 1894.

number will certainly increase. Our brother Oncken in Germany may be an encouraging example to you. His success may inspire you to zeal and steadfastness."³¹ With great joy Feisser came to read the letter. The tie with the Germans was no longer as strong as it was before: their confession of faith he could not approve of and he felt more attracted by English Baptists toward the end of his life³²: "I do not think that the fellowship with them (the Germans) can be maintained in the end . . . they stand wholly on the 'Afgescheiden' (i.e. Calvinistic) point of view, as it is here in our country and they do not distinguish sufficiently between Old and New."³³

Because of his weak health Feisser withdrew more and more in the last years of his life and on June 2, 1865, he died. That Baptists in Holland still do regard him as their spiritual father and distinguished pioneer no one can deny: his life and work were of great importance.

RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND AND GERMANY

The Baptists in the Netherlands have been called "a plant from their own soil," that is: their origin is essentially "Dutch."³⁴

³⁴ Hardenberg, *op. cit.*; p. 5. Cf. also Wumkes, *op. cit.*; p. 1. We have already seen that men like Feisser and de Liefde had come to doubt the validity of infant baptism, indeed had done away with the practice, before they came into contact with the German Baptists. It has been noticed also that German Baptists were too "narrow" in life and doctrine for de Liefde. Feisser himself at the end of his life turned more and more from his German friends, whose confession of faith he could not approve of; he sympathised more with the Baptist tradition as found in America and England, where he found a spirit of freedom that seemed to be more in accordance with the teachings and practices of the New Testament. Yet, German influence cannot be denied; but Feisser was not the representative of the "German" school. German influence definitely entered the Northern Netherlands, when Peter Johannes de Neui came to Holland³⁵; de Neui was a native of Ditzumerverlaat near Weener in Ost-Friesland, a few kilometres east from the Dutch border. He studied half a year in Hamburg, where Oncken and Köbner became his teachers and then went to Franeker in Friesland,³⁶ where he founded a Baptist

³¹ Letter to Amsterdam; cited by Wumkes, *op. cit.*; p. 91.

³² Cf. Wumkes, *op. cit.*; p. 37.

³³ Letter to Tekelenburg in Oct./Nov., 1864; cited by Wumkes, *op. cit.*; p. 37.

³⁵ A biographical sketch has been written by Wumkes in his *It Fryske Rêueil yn portretten*, Sneek, 1911; pp. 195ff.

³⁶ See on De Neui in Franeker: Wumkes, *op. cit.*; pp. 142ff.; chapter vi. "De opkomst der Franeker Gemeente."

church, thoroughly Calvinistic in doctrine. After the church had been firmly established, de Neui entered into contact with the brethren in Amsterdam with whom he wanted to be united. The Amsterdam church, however, wanted to wait, until de Neui had translated the German confession of faith that had already been accepted in Franeker. Also with Stadskanaal—now one of the biggest congregations in Holland, and more or less the direct result of Feisser's work in Gasselter-Nijveen—contact was made; ultimately de Neui hoped to unite Franeker, Stadskanaal and Amsterdam in the German Union.

De Neui found an opponent in Hendrikadius Zwaantinus Kloekers; he had been a missionary in Shanghai. Under the influence of English Baptists he was baptized (1858) and went to London. There he was appointed a missionary by the Baptist Missionary Society and sent back to China. After a few years he returned to Holland, where he became pastor of the Baptist Church in Stadskanaal in December, 1866. Kloekers now opposed the attempts by de Neui to bring Franeker, Amsterdam and Stadskanaal into the German "Bund," and seriously warned the brethren against the German Baptists' Calvinism and their doctrine of predestination, "as it has been established and accepted by the Reformed Fathers, following Calvin who in turn was a follower of Augustine. . . ."³⁷ He felt attracted more by American and English Baptists, where the doctrine of general or unlimited atonement had become "opinio communis" more than in Germany.³⁸

On May 26, 1869, a conference of the Baptist churches of Amsterdam, Franeker and Stadskanaal was held in Franeker; the congregations of Hanswehrum and Ihren, both in Ost-Friesland, had also sent their representatives. Item 16 on the agenda was a proposal by these German churches: they asked the Dutch Baptists to approve of the German confession,³⁹ but Stadskanaal, represented by Kloekers, declared that, though they highly esteemed such men like Köbner and Oncken,⁴⁰ they wanted to remain independent. So Dutch Baptists refused to sign the German confession, while they did not become members of the "Bund"; only a kind of alliance was established, leaving, however the Baptists in Holland and in Germany entirely independent from one another.

Kloeker's heart's desire was fulfilled, when on January 26, 1881, in Foxhol the Union of Baptist Churches in the Netherlands was

³⁷ *Weekblad De Christen*, September 15, 1883.

³⁸ Cf. Wumkes, *op cit.*; pp. 172/173.

³⁹ *Glaubensbekenntnis und Constitution*; translated by De Neui into Dutch and published at Franeker, 1870.

⁴⁰ Cf. Wumkes, *op cit.*; pp. 173/174.

founded.⁴¹ The Union ultimately became a member of the German "Bund" for a time, though she kept her independence.⁴² From that time on Dutch students have been partly educated in the Hamburg Predigerseminar. At present nearly half of the Dutch pastors received their education in Hamburg, the other half in Scandinavia, England, America, or at Dutch universities.

JAN A. BRANDSMA.

German Protestants Face the Social Question. Vol. 1. The Conservative Phase, 1815-1871, by William O. Shanahan. (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, \$6.75.)

This substantial volume of over 400 pages is the first part of a study which the author, an Associate Professor of History in a Roman Catholic University, hopes to carry forward to 1933. It is concerned with the revolt against Christianity which has occurred in Europe since the French Revolution and seeks to provide a detailed account of how German Protestantism reacted to the effects of industrialism. Clear, objective and well-documented, it will prove a useful reference book for those who would know more of the work and background of men like Johann Heinrich Wichern (1808-71), the founder of the *Rauhe Haus* and the Inner Mission, and Friedrich von Bodelschwingl (1831-1910), as well as of Wilhelm Weitling (1808-71), the most eminent German socialist prior to 1848. Full treatment of the Blumhardts, father and son, and of the influence of Bismarck, is reserved for later treatment. In the nineteenth century a tragic gulf developed between the churches and the continental proletariat, but it cannot be said that Lutheranism did not produce those who tried to make the religion of the state church more living, effective and relevant to changing social conditions. Why did they fail? The sequel to this volume and the author's conclusions will be awaited with interest.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

⁴¹ Cf. Wumkes, *op. cit.*; p. 245.

⁴² *Protokoll und Referate der 15. Bundes-Konferenz gehalten von den Abgeordneten der Deutschen Baptistengemeinden zu Hamburg-Eilbeck* (from 24/27 August, 1891); Hamburg, 1891; pp. 13/14.