But more than that, Grisez proposes that the husband reason to himself as follows:

My wife is entitled to the truth about her condition, so that if she must die, at least she will not be unprepared. Moreover, if I lie now, I will be treating her differently than I ever have before and than she has ever treated me. I will be acting as if survival were the most important thing in our relationship. But it isn’t. We are committed to the same things, and being truthful with each other is one of them. We believe that if we remain faithful to each other and to what God wants of us, our faithfulness will be rewarded in the long run. For me—and for her—it is a greater good to do what we believe to be right. But it is a greater moral good, determined by moral standards, not by trying to calculate selected short-term benefits and harms of particular options which can’t really be weighed and measured against one another anyway.

The choice appeared to be “truth plus death” versus “lying plus life.” But that dichotomy does not exhaust the full set of ways in which the person can understand his options. We might even say that one of the primary tasks of moral reasoning is to help people to discover different ways of understanding their situation so that they have more options for acting. David Schmidtz’s theory of moral dualism, the interweaving of the personal with the interpersonal strands of moral reasoning, is one way to help people find ways out of apparent moral dilemmas. We can hope that he will apply himself to more examples of apparent conflicts between moral rules and self-interest in future works.

Nonetheless, readers of this journal are likely to find this work a useful attempt to bridge the apparent gap between rationality and morality. The greater the number of such bridges and the more compelling the arguments that underlie them, the better off we all will be. If our journal had existed in 1995 when this book was first published, we surely would have reviewed it at once. This kind of work, and dialogue with secular scholars like David Schmidtz, are exactly the goals of this journal and the Center for Economic Personalism.

Notes

Following a short introduction to the context and work of Abraham Kuyper, James Bratt collects primary source material under the following rubrics: Beginnings (a narrative of Kuyper’s conversion and an early cultural critique), Church and Theology (including sermons against modernism and critiques of unorthodox theology of the day), Politics and Society (with essays on Calvinist political principles and a variety of political discourses), and Culture and Education (with an essay clarifying the dangers of evolutionary thought, an epistemology of common grace, and his 1880 inaugural address at the Free University on sphere sovereignty). These selections are well-chosen and representative; already one professor has told me that he had identified many of these as the most exemplary samples of the Kuyper corpus—only heretofore had he had to provide his own Dutch translations.

Especially intriguing for their thrust are Kuyper’s early social critique (“Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life”), which shows a surprisingly Romantic side of Kuyper; his brilliant “Modemism: A Fata Morgana in the Christian Domain” (which could serve as a prophylactic against the seduction of neolibrary); “Common Grace” and “Common Grace in Science” (for Kuyper’s own formulations of his distinctive contribution to neo-Reformed systemics); and “Evolution,” which both skewers naturalism more than some would expect while also respecting organic development more often anticipated.

Most enjoyable for those delivered from what Kuyper called “politicophobia” are the seminal political essays: “Maranatha” (the keynote at the formation of the Antirevolutionary Party); “Our Instinctive Life” (on the interface of human nature and practical politics); and the champion pièce de résistance: “Calvinism: Source and Stronghold of Our Constitutional Liberties,” a straightforward manifesto of the history and philosophy of Calvinistic political principles.

Regarding technical aspects of Bratt’s volume, pictures grace the book well, the selected bibliography is worthwhile even if short, footnotes are insightful and reserved, and an index would have been helpful. Bratt supplies a brief, unobtrusive introduction to each selection, and occasional sidebars provide useful supplements. This should become the leading text for studies in Kuyperianism if the original voice is valued.

Peter Heslam’s volume will fill in some of the gaps that Bratt’s primary sources cannot address. Heslam’s book is an excellent analysis of Kuyper’s Lectures on Calvinism. It is indeed, as James Bratt assesses, the most comprehensive English treatment available. Heslam, an Anglican curate and Oxford scholar, has provided a fine analysis of Princeton’s 1898 Stone Lectures. Heslam defends his choice of Kuyper’s Lectures on Calvinism as the best exposition of Kuyperian thought because: (1) it is a summary of Kuyper’s thought; (2) it reflects his peak performance, occurring at the high point of his career; (3) occurring in a foreign context, it demanded that he enunciate his findings in universalistic rather than particularistic categories (“it is therefore of singular value … to interpret Kuyper’s ideas in a context wider than that of the Netherlands alone”); and (4) it had the greatest international influence. Heslam has selected the “manifesto of Kuyperian Calvinism” to exhibit “the most complete, cogent, and visionary expression of Kuyperian thought.”

His intent of analyzing some of Kuyper’s motivation is attained without stretching the textual fabric too thin. Among the other goals of Heslam’s volume are: to explore “the way in which America and Calvinism were related in Kuyper’s thought” (15); “to contextualize Kuyper’s school of thought” (16) within its international setting; to compare Kuyper’s thought with Calvin’s (17); and to provide a sympathetic but realistic appraisal of Kuyper’s life, work, and impact.

Heslam offers three preliminary chapters—the first is an elaboration of the historical importance of the Stone Lectures, the second includes a lively biography of Kuyper based on primary sources, along with pertinent discussions of religious and cultural factors at the time, and the third sets the Stone Lectures in the context of American evangelicalism and especially the Princeton tradition. Heslam’s doctoral work that compares Kuyper and Warfield (also James Orr to some extent) is useful and illuminating at points.

Chapters 4–9 each discuss one of the six 1898 lectures. Each chapter provides summary, analysis, scholarly documentation, and perspective. The final chapter discusses the public and academic reception of the Stone Lectures, and contains Heslam’s own concluding assessments. An excellent bibliography (complemented by the first chapter’s review of the secondary literature) and index round out this book, which will certainly become a standard for classroom use and research.

Among the few points that might be disputed: Heslam may have slightly overstated Kuyper’s inclination toward progressivity (e.g., p. 4, especially when compared with his Fata Morgana piece), and at times may reflect an
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Among the few points that might be disputed: Heslam may have slightly overstated Kuyper’s inclination toward progressivity (e.g., p. 4, especially when compared with his Fata Morgana piece), and at times may reflect an
attempt to tailor an historical figure to modern contexts. The volume could be strengthened by showing the continuity of Kuyper’s thought with that of Groen van Prinsterer, while the connection to Burke is noted several times. However, Heslam has not marred the image of Kuyper in these attempts to render him intelligible to a later audience. To the contrary, he has provided a very literate and useful replica. It may even prove that future studies of Kuyper will be held up against Heslam’s icon.

This volume also indicates the pragmatic efficacy of Roman Catholic and Reformed cooperation in social issues, it accurately displays Kuyper’s philosophy of education (and founding of the Free University) against the Dutch relief, it explicates Kuyper’s emphasis on the difference palingenes makes for scientific theorizing, and it illustrates the affinity between Kuyper and fin de siècle American evangelicalism—a nexus that is frequently overlooked, minimized, or miscast. Heslam also perceptive notes that differences of interpretation of Kuyper stem from the interpreter’s own choice to focus primarily on either common grace or antithesis as the core dynamic of this thought (18). The author has also clarified Kuyper’s limited appreciation for and repudiation of Marxism (99).

Moreover, the enduring significance of Kuyper’s views will remain important, as Heslam suggests, while “postmodern people of today find much to agree with in Kuyper’s critique of modernity, especially its core beliefs in human progress and autonomy” (ix). With the ubiquity of the notion of worldview, and with the continuing need to critique pantheism in modern and future discussions, Kuyper’s thought will remain an important part of the arsenal of public theologians.

Such analysis of a Dutch Calvinist by a British Anglican must surely bring a smile to Kuyper in Abraham’s bosom as a vindication of his belief in common grace. It also will become necessary material for discussions about the future of Calvinism. Both volumes are contributions that will help unveil one of the most influential hidden hands of our time.