

ERASMUS SEEN BY A DUTCH COLLEGIANT:  
DANIEL DE BREEN (1594–1664) AND HIS POSTHUMOUS  
*COMPENDIUM THEOLOGIAE ERASMICAE* (1677)

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*Career*

When the Remonstrants were summoned to the Synod of Dort in 1618 they were accompanied by three like-minded students who were supposed to act in a secretarial capacity. These were Daniel de Breen, Jacob Westerbaen and Gerrit Reus. None of the three entered the ministry. Reus and Westerbaen went on to study medicine,<sup>1</sup> and Westerbaen later distinguished himself as a poet. His achievements include an excellent verse translation of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*.<sup>2</sup> Daniel de Breen became a tutor and proof-reader, and joined the Collegiants, although we do not know when.<sup>3</sup> There are many aspects of his career and his works which have yet to be elucidated. In this article I intend to concentrate on De Breen's views on public office. The *Historie der Reformatie* by the Remonstrant Gerard Brandt contains various pieces of information referring to the 1620's which Brandt had taken from "notes by Daniel de Breen".<sup>4</sup> Where Brandt obtained these papers is unknown. They may have been placed at his disposal by the

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<sup>1</sup> J. Tideman, *De remonstrantsche Broederschap. Biographische naamlijst* (Amsterdam, 1905) p.3, 287.

<sup>2</sup> The Hague, 1659.

<sup>3</sup> On Daniel de Breen (or: van Breen) see B. Tideman Jz., "Daniël de Breen", *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kerkgeschiedenis* 3 (1889), p.73–84 (contains an edition of a letter by De Breen to Rem Bisschop, the brother of Simon Episcopus, Dordrecht, 9.12.1618 and a letter to Simon Episcopus, Haarlem, 4.4.1625). See also J.P. de Bie and J. Loosjes (edd.), *Biographisch Woordenboek van Protestantische Godgeleerden in Nederland I* ('s-Gravenhage, 1903) p.604–606; Leszek Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise. La conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1969, 1987), p.199–206 ("Brenius. Le chiliasme non confessionnel"); id., "Dutch seventeenth-century anticonfessional ideas and rational religion: the Mennonite, Collegiant and Spinoza connections", *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 64 (1990) p.259–297; 385–416 (p.385–392: "De Breen: pseudorationalist chiliasm"); Andrew Fix, *Prophecy and Reason. The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1991) p.67–72.

<sup>4</sup> Geeraert Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie* III (Rotterdam, 1704) p.923; IV (Rotterdam, 1704) p.619–626.

Rotterdam tile-maker, poet and Collegiant Joachim Oudaan<sup>5</sup> whom we shall be discussing, but the notes in question have yet to come to light.

What is certain is that De Breen was born in Haarlem in 1594. The city magistracy enabled him to study theology in Leiden. On 22 February 1612 Breen became a scholar at the Statencollege and on 20 October 1616 he matriculated at the Faculty of Divinity.<sup>6</sup> On 3 March 1618, under the supervision of the Remonstrant professor Simon Episcopus (1583–1643), he defended theses on the rights of the magistracy in ecclesiastical matters (*De iure magistratus circa sacra*).<sup>7</sup> Although De Breen had wished to become a minister, in Hilligersberg or Kralingen, he never did so, doubtlessly as the result of the Synod of Dort.<sup>8</sup> He had already left Dort before the synod had ended and subsequently went to Strasburg where he seems to have encountered a group of Schwenckfeldians. This, however, is no more than a hypothesis first suggested by Tideman.<sup>9</sup> At all events he was back in Haarlem in 1621 and was arrested on 20 November for having attended an illegal Remonstrant meeting organised by Hermannus Montanus, who openly joined the Collegiants in 1639 and had long sympathised with the Anabaptist views on non-violence. After his arrest De Breen refused to give any information about the meeting and simply observed that the participants had never intended to cause a riot. He realised that he had disobeyed the edicts but appealed to “a greater edict of a far mightier Lord who forbids us to forsake the assembling of

<sup>5</sup> Cf. G. Penon, *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde II* (Groningen, 1881) p.130–133, 139–140.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. S. Du Rieu (ed.), *Album Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno-Batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXV* (Hagae Comitum, 1875) col. 105, 127. Our Daniel de Breen should not be confused with the engraver Daniel de Breen (ca. 1599–1665), see I.H. van Eeghen, “Daniel van Breen, ‘schriftsnijder’ te Amsterdam en Beverwijk”, *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 77, no. 3 (Mai-June 1990) p.52–57.

<sup>7</sup> *Theses theologicae de iure magistratus circa sacra, quas ... sub praesidio ... Simonis Episcopii ... defendere conabitur Daniel de Breen Harlemono-Batavus. Ad diem [blank] Februarii horis locoque solitis* (Leiden, 1618). Copy UB Amsterdam, shelfmark 761 D 66, no. 26 (*Februarii* crossed out with ink and replaced by “3. Martii”. Changes like this usually refer to the actual date of the defence). The *Theses* are printed in Episcopus's *Opera Theologica II* (Amsterdam, 1665), second part, p.409–411. For a summary of the *Theses* see Douglas Nobbs, *Theocracy and Toleration. A study of the disputes in Dutch Calvinism from 1600 to 1650* (Cambridge, 1938) p.91–95. P. 95: The *Theses* “mark an important development in Arminian theory: an Erastianism qualified by Toleration”.

<sup>8</sup> G.J. Vossius to H. Grotius, 31.1.1617, *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius* (hereafter *BW*) I, no. 504, p.562–563; Grotius to Vossius, 5.2.1617, *BW* I, no. 505, p.564.

<sup>9</sup> B. Tideman, “Daniël de Breen” (see n. 3 above), p.78.

ourselves together" (cf. Heb 10:25). He argued that it was not permissible to act against one's conscience, thereby proving himself to be a good pupil of Episcopius.

According to De Breen a church which was intolerant and persecuted others was wrong by definition. The Synod of Dort consisted of human beings and was thus fallible. To the charge that the motivation of the Remonstrants was not clear since they had not produced a confession of faith, De Breen replied that a confession had presumably already been drawn up, but since the books of the Remonstrants were prohibited the Haarlem magistracy could not have seen the document.<sup>10</sup> In view of De Breen's later development, what he added is of particular interest: the purest confession is God's word itself. De Breen basically regarded confessions of any kind whatever as unnecessary.

Perhaps we can say that De Breen was already beginning to move away from Remonstrant sentiments at this point. Of course the Remonstrants (like the Counter-Remonstrants) believed in theory that all confessions were inferior to the Bible. But in practice confessions were inevitably the only criterion with which the interpretation of the Bible was judged. In 1623 Hermannus Montanus, the minister whose meeting De Breen had attended two years previously, asked Episcopius whether toleration could be extended so far as to permit the public proclamation of deviant ideas. Episcopius replied that the question was formulated too generally. It depended on what these deviant ideas were. In the case of fundamental truths any deviation was inadmissible.<sup>11</sup> The Remonstrants had disagreed with the Counter-Remonstrants as to what was fundamental, but some Remonstrants also felt their freedom restricted by their own confession and often joined the Collegiants as a result.

In about 1622 Episcopius decided to compose a treatise on whether a Christian was allowed to hold public office.<sup>12</sup> This question received a negative answer from the Mennonites, but also from a number of Remonstrants. They appealed above all to the Sermon on the Mount and rejected any use of force. Such an objection applied not only to

<sup>10</sup> Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie* IV, p.619-626.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. B. Tideman Jz., "Een onuitgegeven brief van Simon Episcopius", *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kerkgeschiedenis* 2 (1887) p.372-377 (= letter from Episcopius to Montanus, 2.2.1624, in reply to Montanus's letter of 26.12.1623).

<sup>12</sup> Printed as *Tractatus brevis in quo expenditur quaestio an homini christiano liceat gerere magistratum* [13 chapters] in S. Episcopius, *Opera Theologica* I (Amsterdam, 2<sup>a</sup> 1678), second part, p.71-95.

offensive and defensive military action but also to the use of force in connection with the administration of justice. Some of them even discussed the issue of whether it was legitimate to seize a man in order to prevent a crime.

De Breen saw Episcopius's treatise in manuscript and provided a commentary on it in the form of an *Examen*. Episcopius, in his turn, furnished this *Examen* with critical notes in the shape of sometimes extensive marginalia.<sup>13</sup> These will be discussed later and it should here simply be observed that Episcopius treated his former pupil kindly in an accompanying letter written when he was in exile in Rouen. "I make no objection to your differing opinion (*dissensio*) which is attended by the greatest modesty and a commendable fervour for what is true and good."<sup>14</sup>

In the 1620's De Breen worked as a tutor, and was at one point in Noordwijk in 1624.<sup>15</sup> His movements in the 1620's and 30's are hard to trace. In about 1624/25 he seems to have had dealings with the Polish Socinian Martinus Ruarus,<sup>16</sup> who purchased Socinian writings for Rem Bisschop (Episcopius's brother) and for De Breen in Germany. De Breen was probably acting for a bookseller, for in one case he received 25 copies of the same work, a book by Crellius against Grotius.<sup>17</sup> He also corresponded with Ruarus<sup>18</sup> and with the Collegiant Frans Oudaan<sup>19</sup> about holding public office, and with the Remonstrant

<sup>13</sup> *D. Brenii examen Tractatus Episcopii de magistratu cum responsione Episcopii*, in S. Episcopius, *Opera Theologica* II (Amsterdam, 1665), second part, p.467-507. The editor, Philippus a Limborch, writes on p.467 that this text was not printed in the first volume of the *Opera* because its editor Curcellaeus was unaware of its existence in 1650.

<sup>14</sup> "Non offendit me dissensio tua, quae cum modestia summa et veri bonique non paenitendo studio coniuncta est", p.467.

<sup>15</sup> J. Kloos, *Noordwijk in den loop der eeuwen* (Noordwijk, 1928) p.180, with reference to J. Tideman, *De stichting der Remonstrantsche Broederschap 1619-1634*, II (Amsterdam, 1872) p.110-111.

<sup>16</sup> J.C. van Slee, *De geschiedenis van het Socinianisme in de Nederlanden* (Haarlem, 1914) p.202.

<sup>17</sup> This book was *Ad librum Hugonis Grotii quem de satisfactione Christi adversus Faustum Socinum Senensem scripsit, Responsio* (Rakow, 1623). Cf. E. Rabbie (ed.), Hugo Grotius, *Defensio fidei catholicae de satisfactione Christi adversus Faustum Socinum Senensem* [= Grotius, *Opera Theologica* I] (Assen-Maastricht, 1990), Introduction, p.44-48.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Martini Ruari nec non aliorum illustrium ... virorum ... epistolarum selectarum centuria altera et ultima* (Amsterdam, 1681) p.266-270: Daniel de Breen to Martinus Ruarus, Amsterdam, 26.8.1627. For a fragment of what looks like a reply see *M. Ruari ... epistolarum selectarum centuria* (Amsterdam, 1677) p.460-461 (printed to fill the blank pages at the end).

<sup>19</sup> See De Breen's *Opera Theologica* (1666) fol. A3<sup>r</sup>-4<sup>v</sup> (from the preliminary

minister in Alkmaar Johannes Polyander<sup>20</sup> about “prophesying” in 1 Cor. 14 — the Collegiant term for the ‘free speaking’ to which all the participants were entitled at the meetings.

De Breen’s first publication was the *Christelijcke Deughden-Spiegel* of 1636.<sup>21</sup> Two years later he was involved in the edition of a number of works by Dirk Rafaelsz Camphuysen, the poet who had had Collegiant sympathies and had died in 1627. This edition includes extracts from letters in which Camphuysen criticised the Remonstrants. Above all he pronounced himself contrary to the formulation of a confession and expressed the view that others, as well as ordained ministers, are entitled to “prophesy” at the meetings. The Remonstrant minister Passchier de Fijne objected particularly strongly to De Breen’s having published these excerpts.<sup>22</sup>

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matter; not extant in the 1664 edition). De Breen tells us that the two letters to Frans Oudaan were originally written ten or eleven years *before* the publication of *De qualitate*, i.e. about 1630. They had been published without his knowledge as a “plenior declaratio de Qualitate Regni Christi”—an unsuitable title indeed. That is why De Breen decided to publish these letters himself, albeit in a revised form (“Idcirco in me suscepi epistolas has de novo examinare, easque eo modo mutare, ut mentem meam melius et clarius declarent, idque salva saniore sententia, ut qui semper paratus sim melius a peritioribus edoceri”, fol. A3<sup>r</sup>). As to the unauthorized publication of the two letters De Breen is probably referring to the Dutch translation of *De qualitate*. De Bie and Loosjes (see note 3 above), p.605, mention Dutch editions of 1640, 1641 and 1657, of which the 1641 and 1657 editions are said to contain, as an appendix, a *Verklaringhe ... gesteld in twee brieven van Daniel van Breen*. I have been unable to locate the Dutch editions of 1641 and 1657. The 1640 edition is probably a ghost.

<sup>20</sup> Ms Amsterdam UB, III E 27. This Remonstrant minister (†1652) should not be confused with the Leyden professor Johannes Polyander (1568–1646), see A.J. Lamping, *Johannes Polyander. Een dienaar van Kerk en Universiteit* (Leiden, 1980) p.152, referring to the confusion in the catalogues of several university libraries. I shall deal elsewhere with De Breen’s correspondence (Mss. in the Remonstrant collections of UB Amsterdam and Gemeentebibliotheek Rotterdam).

<sup>21</sup> Not 1630, as stated by De Bie/Loosjes, p.605. Copies in UB Amsterdam and Codrington Library, All Souls College Oxford. The latter copy is misbound (p.1–48; 129–174; 49–128).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. J. van Vloten, *Paschier de Fyne naar zijn leven en schriften (uit gedrukte en ongedrukte stukken)* (’s-Hertogenbosch, 1853) p.281–285 (letter of Paschier to De Breen, Haarlem, 27.8.1638; on p.283 De Breen’s *Christelijcke Deughden-spiegel* is mentioned) and *Aantekeningen*, p.71–72. Cf. also L.A. Rademaker, *Didericus Camphuysen* (thesis Utrecht; Gouda, 1898) p.130–133. The 1638 edition of Camphuysen’s works contained six letters, of which two were extracts; the 1639 edition had nine letters, of which three were extracts. De Breen, however, omitted a letter in which the young Camphuysen had shown a certain sympathy for the Socinian concept of the final annihilation of the godless, see Rademaker, *Camphuysen*, p.149–150 and cf. D.P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell. Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London, 1964) p.86–91.

In about 1640 De Breen earned his living by reading proofs for the Blaeu firm. In this capacity he had to deal with Hugo de Groot's *Annotationes* on the New Testament.<sup>23</sup> At the time Grotius was living and working in Paris. His brother Willem de Groot supervised the editing of his works and the publication of the *Annotationes* was a laborious business. Grotius complained again and again about the delays and the many printing errors and even had certain pages reprinted at his own expense. He was most dissatisfied with the proof-reader Etienne de Courcelles (Curcellaeus), the future professor at the Remonstrant Seminary.<sup>24</sup> Willem de Groot attempted to excuse him: the man had far too much work and was hardly paid anything for it. But there was another proof-reader, De Breen, who was much more accurate.<sup>25</sup> De Breen had sufficiently good Greek, for he had taught Greek to the children of Gerard Vossius. Besides, Willem de Groot added, he was also devoted to the Remonstrant cause.<sup>26</sup> At first Grotius seemed satisfied with this new development. Since the publisher wanted the Hebrew and Greek quotations to be accompanied by a Latin translation, Willem suggested that the task be entrusted to De Breen. But Grotius did not agree. He had evidently seen certain samples which did not make a favourable impression on him. In the end he translated the quotations himself. He also noticed that the index contained all sorts of mistakes and arbitrary alterations for which he believed that De Breen was responsible.<sup>27</sup>

De Breen's social position was hardly impressive: as a tutor and proof-reader he led something of a marginal existence. He did not have a bad reputation as a proof-reader — he also compiled indexes for Gerard Vossius — but he did not meet the standards set by Hugo de Groot.

De Breen may have continued to perform menial tasks for various printers between 1640 and his death in 1664. According to Van Slee he

<sup>23</sup> Willem de Groot to Hugo Grotius, 3.9.1640, *BW XI*, no. 4816, p.492–493; id. to id., 10.9.1640, *ibid.*, no. 4826, p.504.

<sup>24</sup> Hugo Grotius to Willem de Groot, 22.9.1640, *BW XI*, no. 4845, p.525.

<sup>25</sup> *BW XI*, p.492–493.

<sup>26</sup> Willem de Groot to Hugo Grotius, 1.10.1640, *BW XI*, no. 4860, p.544–545. De Breen instructed the poet Vondel in about 1625 in logic and Greek, see Geeraardt Brandt, *Het leven van Joost van den Vondel*, P. Leendertz Jr. (ed.) ('s-Gravenhage, 1932), p.19. When Vondel's brother Willem died a certain "D.d.B." wrote one or more Latin elegies, *Ibid.*, p.21. In the index of his edition Leendertz identifies him with Daniel de Breen.

<sup>27</sup> Letters from Hugo Grotius to Willem de Groot, 12.1.1641, *BW XII*, no. 5005, p.21 and 2.2.1641, *ibid.*, no. 5039, p.68–70; see esp. the references p.70, n. 27.

participated in the monumental edition of Socinian writings in the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum* (8 volumes). This extensive work was probably printed by Blaeu, and the publisher was De Breen's nephew Frans Kuyper (1629–1691), a former Remonstrant minister who had settled in Amsterdam as a book-dealer.<sup>28</sup>

We have already seen that De Breen was closely connected with the Collegiants. In 1646 he is supposed to have taken part, together with that remarkable figure Adam Boreel, in the foundation of a college. The Mennonite doctor and minister Galenus Abrahamsz de Haan too joined the college.<sup>29</sup> In a pamphlet of 1655 these Collegiants were accused of enthusiasm and Socinianism. The importance of the place held by De Breen in this circle is illustrated by the fact that the Amsterdam Collegiants were called "Breenisten" in this pamphlet besides "Boreelisten" and "Galenisten".<sup>30</sup>

#### *De Breen's Works*

In 1664, the year of De Breen's death, his most important writings, either in Latin or translated into Latin, were edited by Frans Kuyper. If we open the folio volume the first to meet our eyes is the *Breves in Vetus et Novum Testamentum annotationes*. This is the title under which Kuyper's edition of De Breen's works must usually be sought in library catalogues. In 1666 an edition appeared with the title *Opera Theologica*.<sup>31</sup> This has eight pages of preliminary matter containing an

<sup>28</sup> Cf. J.C. van Slee, *De geschiedenis van het Socinianisme in de Nederlanden* (Haarlem, 1914) p.245. Van Slee supposes that Frans Kuyper was the printer of the *Bibliotheca*. The traditional view that the *Bibliotheca* began to appear in 1656 (in fact, the title page has "post annum Domini 1656") has now been abandoned, see Jeroom Vercruysee, "Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum, tables et index", *Tijdschrift voor de studie van de Verlichting* 5 (1977) no. 4, p.379: Kuyper "launched" the in-folios in 1668/69. H. de la Fontaine Verwey says that the *Bibliotheca* was probably printed by Joan Blaeu and published in the years 1665–1668. Kuyper was not a printer, but he was a member of the Amsterdam booksellers' guild from 1663 to 1673, "Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen" in *Uit de wereld van het boek III* (Amsterdam, 1979) p.168; cf. also note 39 below. On Kuyper see Jeroom Vercruysee, "Frans Kuyper (1629–1691) ou les ambiguïtés du christianisme libéral hollandais", *Tijdschrift voor de studie van de Verlichting* 2 (1974) p.231–241.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Walther Schneider, *Adam Boreel. Sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Inaugural-Dissertation Bonn (Teildruck); Giessen, 1911), p.41 n. 142; 54–56; 63. For Boreel see also E.G.E. van der Wall, "The Dutch Hebraist Adam Boreel and the Mishnah project. Six unpublished letters", *Lias* 16 (1989) p.239–263, esp.242–251.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. J.C. van Slee, *De Rijnsburger Collegianten* (Haarlem, 1895) p.145; id., *De geschiedenis van het Socinianisme*, p.153.

<sup>31</sup> No copies extant in Dutch libraries (according to the Central Catalogue in the

introduction by Frans Kuyper, a list of contents, and a short declaration by De Breen followed by the text of two Latin letters of his about whether a Christian is entitled to hold public office. The second letter, addressed to Frans Oudaen, is very extensive.<sup>32</sup>

The *Opera* does not include the theological theses on governmental authority in ecclesiastical matters of 1618.<sup>33</sup> As is so often the case, these theses were drawn up by the presiding professor, Simon Episcopus, and were also reprinted later in the *Opera* of Episcopus. We must remain briefly with Episcopus's *Opera*, for only here do we find De Breen's criticism of Episcopus's treatise on the office of the Christian magistrate.<sup>34</sup> De Breen's *Examen* is printed in parallel columns together with Episcopus's reply. The latter is of some interest for the editor of Episcopus's works, and De Breen's text is only printed for the better understanding of Episcopus's reaction. De Breen himself did not actually regard the *Examen* as suitable for publication. Thanks to Frans Kuyper<sup>35</sup> we know that he found the *Examen* too radical on closer inspection and that he thought he had expressed himself more clearly in a work entitled *Over de hoedanigheid des Rijks Christi*. Here too he opposes the idea that a Christian should hold public office, albeit in more moderate terms. We know that this little book appeared in 1641 and that a second edition was issued in 1657, for both editions are quoted by Kuyper in *De recht weerlooze christen* with an indication of the pages,<sup>36</sup> but the book has not yet come to light in any library. We thus have to fall back on the Latin translation of 1657 (*De qualitate regni Christi*).<sup>37</sup> What we do not know is whether this translation differs

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Royal Library, The Hague). Copy used: Oxford, Bodleian Library.

<sup>32</sup> See n. 19 above.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 7 above.

<sup>34</sup> See n. 13 above.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. his "commonitio ad lectorem" in De Breen's *Opera* (1666), fol. A2r; cf. *De recht weerlooze Christen* (see next note), p.1.

<sup>36</sup> *De recht weerlooze Christen, of verdediging van het gevoelen der eerste Christenen, en gemartelde Doops-gezinden wegens het overheijds-ambt, oorlog en geweldige tegenstand. Hier is bijgevoegt een lijk-reeden over het leeven en afsterven van Jan Hartichveld en het lijk-gedicht van Joachim Oudaan* (Rotterdam, 1678) p.119-120. This work is sometimes ascribed to Hartigveld (e.g. by Van Slee, *De Rijnsburger Collegianten*, p.100), but Kuyper claims to be its main author. *De recht weerlooze Christen* is written against Samuel Przyrkowski's critical observations on *De qualitate* (see also n. 39 below).

<sup>37</sup> *De qualitate regni Domini Jesu Christi, sive An cum spirituali eius natura terrenae dominationes convenient. Tractatus ex Belgico in Latinum versus*. This is part of a book containing 1. *Tractatus de Regno ecclesiae glorioso per Christum in terris erigendo. E Belgico ab authore, nonnullis mutatis, in Latinum sermonem conversus* (p.1-234); 2. *Annotata in librum Apocalypsios S. Johannis* (p.237-374); 3. *De qualitate* (p.375-444); 4. *Brevis*



substantially from the original Dutch text,<sup>38</sup> so some caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions. *De qualitate* played an important part in discussions among the Polish Socinians about the right of the magistrates to wield the sword.<sup>39</sup>

De Breen's best known work is *Van 't geestelijke triomferende Rijk onzes Heeren Jesu Christi* which appeared in 1653. It is to this that De Breen owes his reputation as a chiliast.<sup>40</sup> Chiliastic views, of course, can range from realism to a complete spiritualisation. In the first case the belief was that Christ would rule in person upon earth in the millennium preceding the Last Judgement; in the second Christ could be thought, for example, to rule spiritually in the souls of the believers. De Breen chose the latter view.<sup>41</sup> But however that may be there remains an element of realism in so far as the Kingdom of Peace is localised on earth and not in heaven. God's enemies, moreover, are to be annihilated in a very concrete manner at the end of time, as were His enemies in Sodom and Gomorrah. In 1657 De Breen himself translated the work into Latin,<sup>42</sup> and it was in this form that it was included by Kuyper in the *Opera theologica*.

Besides the extensive *Breves annotationes*<sup>43</sup> these *Opera* also include

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*explicatio in caput 5.6.7 Matthaei et partem sexti capitis Lucae* (p.445-485) (Amsterdam, 1657). These tracts (except no. 4) are also to be found in De Breen's *Opera*.

<sup>38</sup> The subtitle does not inform us about this matter in contrast to the *nonnullis mutatis* in the title of the *Tractatus de regno ecclesiae glorioso*.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton N.J., 1972) ch. 4 "The Polish Antitrinitarians", esp.p.148-155. The Austrian baron Johann Ludwig von Wolzogen translated *Van de hoedanigheid* into German (p.148), whereas the antipacifist Samuel Przytkowski wrote *Animadversiones in libellum cui titulus De qualitate regni domini nostri Jesu Christi*. The *Animadversiones* circulated during the author's lifetime in manuscript in Poland and in Holland (p.153). They were printed afterwards in Przytkowski's *Cogitationes sacrae ... nec non tractatus varii argumenti*, ([Amsterdam], 1692 (sometimes considered as vol. 9 of the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*), p.619-681.

<sup>40</sup> De Breen's millenarianism was refuted by the Collegiant Pieter Langedult (ca. 1645-1683) in *De nietigheid der Chiliasterye van Daniel de Breen* (Haarlem, 1676) cf. S.B.J. Zilverberg, "Pieter Langedult: A contribution to an understanding of his life and works", *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (July 1967) p.269-276, esp.p.271-272. See for another refutation M.L. Sattler, *Dissertatio historico-theologica errori chiliastarum et praecipue tractatui scriptoris anonymi (quem tamen postea cognitum est esse Danielelem Brenium Socinianum) de Regno ecclesiae glorioso ... opposita ...* (s.l., s.a. [1670?]), copy British Library. The refutation of *De regno* begins at p.29, after an introductory "historia chiliarum".

<sup>41</sup> Sattler admits on p.35 that his opponent does not advocate *chiliasmus crassus*.

<sup>42</sup> See note 37 above, no.1.

<sup>43</sup> On the *Breves annotationes* see Richard Simon, *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament, depuis le commencement du Christianisme jusques à*

an *Amica disputatio adversus Judaeos*<sup>44</sup> and a very short *Colloquium inter duos de veritate religionis christianae*, followed by a treatise "incerti authoris": *Brevis demonstratio religionis christianae veritatis*.<sup>45</sup> I shall not, however, be dealing with these works but should simply point out that there was always a strong interest in the ultimate conversion of the Jewish people in chiliastic circles, and accordingly also in discussions with learned Jews.

But what does De Breen say about public office, the administration of justice and warfare? In 1618, as we saw, he defended Episcopius's theses in Leiden. These maintained that a Christian was entitled to public office, indeed that a Christian was particularly suited to it. This last idea preceded the theses as a sort of axiom and was regarded by the author as obvious.

A few years later De Breen could no longer accept such statements. He had reached the conclusion that a Christian could not, in conscience, hold a public office. For this view he appealed to New Testament texts which maintain that the true disciple must not rule but serve. One of these is of especial importance, Matthew 20: 25–6: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ..." The words "it shall not be so among you" are,

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*nôtre tems* (Rotterdam, 1693) p.862–864: De Breen is a Socinian; his annotations are almost a summary of those of Grotius; in dealing with Christ's Kingdom on earth his views are more Jewish than Christian.

<sup>44</sup> *Amica disputatio adversus Judaeos continens Examen scripti iudaici a lusitanico in latinum versi*, the translation of a work by Saul Levi Mortera, provided with a refutation by De Breen. The translator of Mortera's work was De Breen himself according to Peter van Rooden, "A Dutch adaptation of Elias Montalto's *Tractado sobre o principio do captiulo 53 de Jesaias*. Text, introduction and commentary", *Lias* 16 (1989) p.189–238. Van Rooden supposes that it was also De Breen who translated the *Tractado* from the Portuguese into Dutch, p.197–199. The *Amica disputatio* was translated into Dutch by Joachim Oudaan: *Vriendelicke disputatie tegen de Joden* (Rotterdam, 1664).

<sup>45</sup> The *Brevis demonstratio* was written by Joachim Stegmann the younger, see J.A. Fabricius, *Delectus argumentorum et syllabus scriptorum qui veritatem religionis christianae adversus atheos ... asseruerunt* (Hamburg, 1725), p.554. A Dutch translation of both *Colloquium* and *Demonstratio* appeared at Rotterdam 1664 (Harlingen, 2<sup>o</sup> 1685): *t' Zaaenspraak aangaande de waarheid der christelijke religie*. An English translation was published ten years later (with the *Demonstratio* preceding the *Colloquium*): *Brevis Demonstratio. The Truth and Excellency of Christian Religion demonstrated. To which is added, A short Discourse concerning the Truth of Christian Religion by way of Question an Answer ...* (London, 1674). The "Advertisement" is signed by "E.J."

according to De Breen, a precept which applies to all Christians. They must live together in reciprocal and voluntary service. In this connection De Breen, altogether exceptionally, quotes a profane classical text, the verses which Ovid devotes at the beginning of his *Metamorphoses* (I, 89–93) to the original golden age, *aura aetas*, when everyone did what was good without there being any law.<sup>46</sup>

Episcopius was annoyed by this quotation and observed: "When and where has that age ever existed? Perhaps in the time of Cain and Abel? Perhaps in Utopia? Those are poetic fantasies and just like Plato's Republic and Cicero's Orator".<sup>47</sup> That Episcopius should here refer to the first fratricide, and not to the Paradise of which De Breen was undoubtedly thinking, is significant. Unlike De Breen and his friends, Episcopius believes that the original peacefulness cannot be restored on earth. The magistrate must protect the good against the wicked, when necessary with the use of force.

In seventeenth-century discussions such as the one between De Breen and Episcopius upholders of the traditional view always claimed that a world without authority would end in chaos or worse. How did De Breen defend himself against so important an objection? In his opinion a Christian should not become a magistrate but there was nothing to prevent a heathen from doing so. What St Paul says about the bearing of weapons in Romans 13 does not apply to a Christian magistrate.<sup>48</sup> This interpretation implies that a certain degree of order can be preserved in the world, but the ideal Christian, as De Breen imagines him, does not contribute actively to it. For Christians are mere wanderers on this earth for whom the *pax externa* is not the highest good.<sup>49</sup> Opposite the *ius naturae* stands the *ius caeleste* which forbids us to requite evil with evil.<sup>50</sup> The task of the authorities is to protect the citizens from injustice and to punish those who have committed an injustice. But Christian charity does not concern itself with "such lowly matters" (*res tam humiles*).<sup>51</sup>

Episcopius reacted to De Breen's statements with surprise and distaste. He had particular objections to the manner in which De

<sup>46</sup> *Examen*, p.470–475.

<sup>47</sup> "Quando et ubi viguit aetas ista? An tempore Caini et Abelis? An in Utopia? Fisiones hae sunt poeticae et idem sunt quod Platonis republica et Ciceronis orator", p.475.

<sup>48</sup> *Examen*, p.475, 505.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.475.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.482.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.504.

Breen interpreted the Bible and managed, with the help of artificial arguments, to find passages to support his views even in the Old Testament.<sup>52</sup>

As we have seen, De Breen later distanced himself from his *Examen*. In *De qualitate* he is far more moderate — indeed, too moderate for the taste of his nephew Frans Kuyper. The latter was to reproach De Breen for being inconsistent in 1678. For in *De qualitate* he effectively proves that a Christian cannot hold public office, but he does not draw the conclusion that he who does so places himself outside the Kingdom of God. De Breen allows some space to Christians who have not yet attained perfection. He calls the precepts of the Sermon of the Mount the basic laws of Christ's Kingdom,<sup>53</sup> but how, wonders Kuyper, can a man call himself a Christian without obeying these fundamental laws to the full?<sup>54</sup>

#### *The Compendium*

The *Compendium theologiae Erasmi*<sup>55</sup> appeared in 1677 in Rotterdam where it was published by François van Hoogstraten. Judging from the subtitle the *Compendium* had been compiled a long time earlier (*pridem*) by De Breen on the basis of writings by Erasmus, but the edition of 1677 was the *editio princeps*.

The man who edited the posthumous edition of the *Compendium* and provided it with a short introduction was the well-known Rotterdam Collegiant and poet Joachim Oudaan.<sup>56</sup> Oudaan gives us the following information about how the edition came into being.<sup>57</sup> In the literary estate of their maternal grandfather Johannes van der Kodde (Coddaeus),<sup>58</sup> the Oudaan brothers came across two manuscripts written in different hands. One was a manuscript entitled *Theologia Erasmi*, the other, written by Van der Kodde, the *Compendium theologiae Erasmi*.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. *ibid.*, p.498–500.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *De qualitate* (ed. 1657), p.400: "fundamentales regni Christi leges".

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *De recht weerlooze Christen*, p.120, 123–124.

<sup>55</sup> *Compendium theologiae Erasmi, pridem ex D. Erasmi Roterodami scriptis concinnatum per Dan. Brenium. Nunc primum in lucem editum* (Rotterdam, 1677) (240p.) Copies Gemeentebibliotheek Rotterdam and Paris BN.

<sup>56</sup> On Oudaan see C.C. de Bruin, *Joachim Oudaan in de lijst van zijn tijd* (Groningen-Djakarta, 1955); J. Melles, *Joachim Oudaan. Heraut der verdraagzaamheid 1628–1692* (Utrecht, 1958); Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, p.77–81.

<sup>57</sup> *Compendium*, fol. \*2r–\*3v.

<sup>58</sup> He was a brother of Gijsbert van der Kodde and a fellow founder of the Collegiant movement, see Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*, p.77, 172–173.

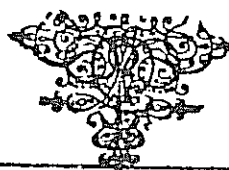
The second of these titles seemed the most suitable. Oudaan goes on to say that when Daniel de Breen was shown the work — we are not told when and on what occasion — he recognised it as his own. He had compiled the *Compendium* when he was working as a tutor for the Lord of Langerak. He thought it had been lost and was delighted to recover the autograph.

COMPENDIUM  
THEOLOGICÆ  
ERASMICÆ,

Pridem ex D. Erasmi Roterodami Scriptis concinnatum

Per DAN. BRENIUM.

*Nunc primum in lucem editum.*



BIBLIOTHEEK EN LEESZAAL  
DER GEMEENTE ROTTERDAM

ROTTERDAMI,

Typis Francisci van Hoogstraeten.

M. DC. LXXVII.

Daniel de Breen, *Compendium theologiae Erasmi*, Rotterdam, 1677  
(Gemeentebibliotheek Rotterdam 8j5)

What Oudaan writes after this is not altogether clear. After saying that De Breen was pleased to establish that the manuscript he thought had been lost had again come to light — an event which must have occurred many years earlier — Oudaan, without any transition,

THE OLOGIA ERASMICA,

Dat is :

Beschrijving van de

CHRISTELIJKE  
RELIGIE,

Eertijds uyt al de wercken van *Desiderius  
Erasmus*, voor verſe het grootſte ge-  
deelte, t'ſamen geſtelt door

D. van B R E E N ;

En volgens des ſelſs eygen gevoelen vervult.

In het Nederduyts bertaelt

door

DANIEL van BREEN.



Tot ROTTERDAM,

By FRANSOIS van HOOGSTRAETEN.

Anno 1679.

BIBLIOTHEEK EN LEZSALEN  
DER GEMEENTE ROTTERDAM

proceeds: "levem autem aliquam diversae lectionis varietatem, aut menda quaedam, quae ... interdum textui irrepere solent, ex diverso hoc exemplari, si non omnino tollere, saltem maiori ex parte emendare, facile fuit". There was thus no difficulty in correcting deviating or incorrect readings, which had crept into the text owing to carelessness or haste, with the help of "this other copy".

KORT BEGRIP  
VAN  
ERASMUS  
GODGELEERTHEYT.

Overlang uit de Schriften van *D. Erasmus*  
*opus* opgesteld, Door

DANIEL DE BREEN,

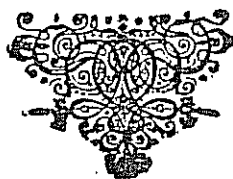
*Nu uit het Latijn vertaelt, door*

F. DE HAES.

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BIBLIOTHEEK EN LEESZALEN  
DER GEMEENTE ROTTERDAM

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Gedrukt by ISAAC NÆRANUS,  
Boekverkooper op't Steyger. 1679.

Daniel de Breen, *Kort begrip van Erasmus Godgeleertheyt* (transl. by F. de Haes), Rotterdam, 1679 (Gemeentebibliotheek Rotterdam 13G25)

Here Oudaan is apparently referring to his own editorial activity: he seems to have used the manuscript of the *Compendium* (i.e. Van der Kodde's manuscript) as a basis and to have emended it with the help of De Breen's autograph. The editor had also considered the title which De Breen himself had given to the work (*Theologia Erasmica*) less suitable. Oudaan then adds that the correction of the text would have been easier had De Breen stated from which of Erasmus's works he had taken his quotations. It was up to the reader to correct any further errors.

Bibliographies mention a Dutch translation of De Breen's *Compendium* which appeared two years after the Latin edition and was published by the Rotterdam printer and book-seller Isaak Naeranus. The title runs: *Kort begrip van Erasmus Godgeleertheyt. Overlang uit de Schriften van D. Erasmus opgesteld, Door Daniel de Breen. Nu uit het Latijn vertaalt door F. de Haes* (1679).<sup>59</sup> The work opens with a translation of Oudaan's introduction followed by a short report by the translator who says that he embarked on the translation in order to practise his Latin and his Dutch. De Haes hoped to do more translating in the future.

Curiously enough, in the same year of 1679 a second Dutch translation appeared, also in Rotterdam, and, according to the title-page, translated by Daniel de Breen himself. The printer was François van Hoogstraten, who had also issued the Latin *Compendium*. The translation is entitled *Theologia Erasmica, dat is: Beschrijving van de christelijke religie, eertijds uyt al de wercken van Desiderius Erasmus, voor verre het grootste gedeelte, t'samengesteld door D. van Breen; En volgens des selfs eygen gevoelen vervult. In het Nederduyts vertaelt door Daniel van Breen*.<sup>60</sup>

This translation seems to have remained entirely unknown. One copy is to be found at the Gemeentebibliotheek in Rotterdam and was shown at the *Rotterdam en Erasmus* exhibition held by the Rotterdam Gemeentearchief from 7 November 1986 to 4 February 1987.<sup>61</sup> The present location of a second copy, sold at auction by Van Gendt in 1981,<sup>62</sup> is unknown. The interest of this translation, which was

<sup>59</sup> Copies i.a. Gemeentebibliotheek Rotterdam and UB Amsterdam.

<sup>60</sup> Shelfmark 8 J 8; not in the *Catalogue of the Erasmus Collection in the City Library of Rotterdam* (New York/Westport/London, 1990). Mrs. J.J.M. van de Roer-Meyers, the Keeper of the Erasmus Collection, kindly informed me that the book was acquired in 1935.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. A.M. van der Woel, [Catalogue] *Rotterdam en Erasmus. Tentoonstelling in de Archiefwinkel 7 november 1986 t/m 4 februari 1987* (Rotterdam, s.a.), no. 179.

<sup>62</sup> *Catalogue Van Gendt Amsterdam*, auction 29 June – 2 July 1981, no. 1167 ("Lacks pp.145/146"), sold at f240-.



published by De Breen's nephew Frans Kuyper, is obvious. In the first place we now have a translation made by the author himself. More important still, the reader is already warned by the title that not everything he will read is by Erasmus. Whoever takes up the *Compendium* or the *Kort Begrip* will certainly recognise Erasmus's voice: with a little effort it is possible to discover passages from Erasmus's *Enchiridion*, the *Ratio seu methodus*, the *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*, the *Modus orandi*, and the *Ecclesiastes*.<sup>63</sup> But we also repeatedly encounter sections which are nowhere to be found in Erasmus. This applies above all to the extensive discussions of non-violence which do indeed remind us of Erasmus but the sense of which is unerasmian. The title-page of the *Theologia Erasmica* tells us what has happened: De Breen has derived "by far the greater part of his work" from Erasmus, but has supplemented the material with his own views ("gevoelen").

In his foreword Frans Kuyper provides information which is not available in any other source. He begins by criticising the edition of the *Compendium* which, in his opinion, wrongly claims to give a true and living image of Erasmus. Kuyper says that the Collegiant Reynier Roleeuw had once discussed an edition of the work with De Breen. But on that occasion De Breen said that the work should not be called *Theologia Erasmica* unless a number of passages which did not refer to Erasmus were omitted. De Breen had crossed these passages out in his manuscript. An edition was never produced. In 1677, however, Roleeuw sent the manuscript to the printer François van Hoogstraten, instructing him to include the deleted passages. Indeed, those very passages on Christian defencelessness ("lijdzzaamheid") were the best. Frans Kuyper comes to his uncle's defence: De Breen would never have presented his own views as if they were taken from Erasmus. Kuyper knows that Erasmus was averse to war and violence, but that he accepted a defensive war in extreme cases (i.e. when all other means had failed). In this connection Kuyper refers to a couple of unequivocal declarations by Erasmus in his *De bello Turcico* (1530) where he says, amongst other things, that the view that a Christian may never wage war "is too absurd to be refuted".<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> *Enchiridion*, cf. *Compendium*, p.30-35, 55-57, 58-61, 69, 175-177; *Ratio*, cf. *ibid.*, p.106, 117-118, 127; *Annotationes*, cf. *ibid.*, p.122-124, 128, 160-161; *Modus orandi*, cf. *ibid.*, p.14-23; *Ecclesiastes*, cf. *ibid.*, p.223-234.

<sup>64</sup> *Theologia Erasmica*, fol. \*2<sup>r</sup>, cf. *De bello Turcico* (ed. A.G. Weiler), ASD V, 3, p.54, 11. 415-420.

But Kuyper disagrees with Erasmus: he presents himself as a kindred spirit of De Breen and appreciates his additions so much that he keeps them. In order to differentiate them from the text that is indeed based on Erasmus, however, Kuyper places them between quotation marks. According to him the just, Biblical view of non-violence is not to be found in Erasmus but rather in De Breen's treatise *Van de hoedanicheyt des Rijhs Christi* (here Kuyper is not charging De Breen with inconsistency) as well as in *De recht weerlooze Christen* (1678).

The conclusion of Kuyper's foreword should also be mentioned. Kuyper there says that he possesses a collection of 'Breniana' consisting of printed works in Latin and Dutch with autograph corrections and additions by the author, as well as various manuscripts which have never been printed. With this remark Kuyper makes it clear that he regards himself as the spiritual heir of De Breen and implies that editions such as the *Compendium* and the *Kort Begrip* should not have appeared in that particular form.

Can we ascertain from the quotation marks in the translation edited by Kuyper which passages are by Erasmus, and which have been added by De Breen? Up to a point this can be done, but there is no infallible method of distinguishing. For as soon as the quotation marks appear for the first time we have a passage which ends as follows: "...for always to do the same thing is no proof of constancy: we should, rather, at all times and in all things, have the same goal before our eyes".<sup>65</sup> This is strongly reminiscent of Erasmus's statement "non est constantiae semper eadem loqui, sed semper eodem pertendere".<sup>66</sup> These words are so typical of Erasmus that they are even used as the text on a commemorative coin struck in his honour (1969).<sup>67</sup>

We do not know whether Kuyper acquitted himself well of his task: it is even uncertain whether De Breen distinguished properly between Erasmus's statements and his own additions. It looks as if the

<sup>65</sup> *Theologia Erasmica*, p.56-57: "want altijd eenerley dingen te doen streckt geen bewijs van stantvastigheyt, maer altijd ende in alle saken eenerley wit ende oogherck voor oogen te hebben" = *Compendium*, p.80-81: "Nec enim constantiae est semper eadem agere, sed semper eodem modo pertendere, semper et in omnibus eundem scopum prae oculis habere". De Haes translates (*Kort begrip*, p.68): "Want 't en is geen teken van stantvastigheyt altijd een en 't zelve te doen, maer altijd op eene wijs daer na te staen, en in alles altijd een wit te beoogen".

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Spongia* (ed. C. Augustijn), ASD IX, 1, p.192, l. 674: "Non est constantiae semper eadem loqui, sed semper eodem pertendere". (I owe this reference to the kindness of Mr. N. van der Blom).

<sup>67</sup> Designed by J.C. Hekman (the legend has *constantia* with LB X, 1663 EF).

*Compendium* contains far more non-Erasman material than Kuyper (or perhaps even De Breen) suggests. However this may be, two passages between quotation marks are undoubtedly by De Breen. These are also the longest: in the translation they cover two and ten pages respectively.<sup>68</sup> Both refer to non-violence. Here too De Breen presents his familiar view that the evangelical precept of non-resistance (*non resistere malo*) should not be interpreted in too limited a sense. That one should not be motivated by vindictiveness or other evil tendencies is obvious — even Erasmus says this repeatedly — but De Breen goes much further: all “resistentia” (a Latin term which Erasmus himself would not have used) is forbidden. A Christian should have no part in military activities or in the administration of justice which is connected with the use of force against criminals. This attitude naturally raises questions. Authority exists: how should a Christian react to it? Here too the principle of “offering no resistance” should be observed.<sup>69</sup> Authority is thus not abolished, but acknowledged as existing. It might even be the means by which God exercises his justice on the wicked world.<sup>70</sup>

De Breen is aware that his ideas of complete non-violence are not suited to this imperfect world. This does not distress him unduly since Christ intended his precepts in the Sermon on the Mount for the perfect. That the perfect were very few in number appears not to bother him.<sup>71</sup>

Whoever wants to be a perfect Christian must observe to the letter the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount concerning the use of force, the swearing of oaths and divorce — the last two subjects are also discussed extensively in the *Compendium*.<sup>72</sup> But, unlike men such as Frans Kuyper, De Breen regarded those who failed to live up to these

<sup>68</sup> *Theologia Erasmica*, parts of p.79–83 and 97–106 = *Compendium*, p.119–121 and 144–156 = *Kort begrip*, p.99–103 and 123–133.

<sup>69</sup> *Compendium*, p.130.

<sup>70</sup> *Compendium*, p.151.

<sup>71</sup> *Compendium*, p.158 (context: a discussion of the oath): “Nec iam refert an tales sint in mundo; satis est quod tales depingit et optat Christus”. De Breen translates: “En offer misschien [= perhaps] soodanige nergens te vinden waren, daer en leydt niet aen gelegen. 't Is genoeg dat Christus soodanige wenscht ende begeert”, *Theologia Erasmica*, p.107. F. de Haes has as usual a more literal translation: “En nu en doet het 'er niet toe of 'er zoodanige in de werelt wel zijn: het is genoeg dat Christus ons zoodanige afmaelt, en vereyscht”, *Kort begrip*, p.134–135.

<sup>72</sup> On “resistentia”, *Compendium*, p.117–156; oath, *ibid.*, p.156–163; divorce, *ibid.*, p.163–173.

exalted principles not as hypocrites or unbelievers but rather as weaker brethren who needed to be educated and tolerated as long as they were unable to advance any further. The only condition was that there should be no question of ill will, for "he who does not wish to be perfect can never even be good", as De Breen wrote in the revised version of the second letter to Frans Oudaan, one of the writings in which he exposes his views most clearly. The Christian faith, he says in the same letter, does not consist in a mathematical point which loses its name when something is added to it or removed from it. Christianity knows various degrees, starting with a belief in Christ and the readiness to live according to his commandments.<sup>73</sup>

De Breen must have felt particularly attracted by Erasmus's utterance: "Piety like other things has its infancy, it has its periods of growth, it has its full and vigorous adult strength. But every man according to the measure that is given must strive upwards towards Christ".<sup>74</sup> These words appear in the *Compendium* in a section which consists largely of quotations from the letter to Volz which has served as a preface to the *Enchiridion* since 1518.<sup>75</sup> Whoever knows this letter will understand that De Breen entirely overlooks the context of Erasmus's statement. For Erasmus is here evoking the image of the three circles around Christ: the first is that of the priests, bishops, cardinals and popes; the second that of the princes; and the third and outermost circle is that of the common people. The common people too belong to the Body of Christ; their weaknesses must be tolerated. It is in this connection that Erasmus wrote the passage that has just been quoted. As far as Erasmus is concentrating on the first two "circles", however, he is clearly no source of inspiration for De Breen, especially when he says such things as: "Let the second circle be for the lay princes,

<sup>73</sup> *Opera*, fol. A4<sup>v</sup>: "Christiana religio non consistit in puncto aliquo mathematico tam stricte sumto, ut nil prorsus ei addere vel demere liceat, nisi statim Christianismi nomen amittat; sed suos diversos habet gradus. Primus est eorum qui in Christum credunt et ex corde parati sunt secundum eius mandata vivere, quae si non omnia statim observant, id non ex  $\Phi$ bedientia, sed ex ignorantia, aut defectu cognitionis et exercitii oritur; etenim Christus ipse ex iis quae passus est et egit obedientiam didicit [cf. Hebr. 5,8]"

<sup>74</sup> Erasmus, *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. H. Holborn (München, 1933), p.11, l. 35 – p.12, l. 2: "Habet enim et pietas suam infantiam, habet aetatis accessus, habet perfectum et vegetum robur. Omnibus tamen pro sua cuique portione ad Christum est enitendum". Translation taken from *Collected Works of Erasmus* 6, transl. by R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson, annot. by P.G. Bietenholz (Toronto, 1982), p.82, l.321–324.

<sup>75</sup> *Compendium*, p.30–33; the quotation on p.31.

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who with their armies and their laws serve Christ after their fashion, whether in a just war they defeat the enemy and preserve the public peace or by lawful punishments keep crime in check".<sup>76</sup> When, as De Breen argues repeatedly, Christianity refers to stages of development, it is obvious that not every believer can be treated in the same manner. Each stage of development, rather, entails an approach of its own. This explains De Breen's preference for *prudencia* and his admiration for the cautious attitude of the apostle Paul on the Areopagus as described in Acts 17. Here De Breen could draw on Erasmus unreservedly. For pages on end he quotes what Erasmus wrote about Paul's *prudencia* in his last great work, the *Ecclesiastes*.<sup>77</sup>

De Breen is well aware that his ideal of a life lived according to the Sermon on the Mount can hardly be achieved on this earth. His awareness of the tension between ideal and reality might have induced him to pin his hopes on the millennium. But in the *Compendium*, a work of his youth, and the *Christelijcke Deughden-Spiegel* which is in some respects connected with it, there is no mention of eschatological expectations, let alone of any sort of chiliasm. The reading of Erasmus had led him to believe that whatever did not correspond to his ideal did not have to be rejected out of hand but could be regarded as imperfect and susceptible to improvement.

The Latin *Compendium* did not appear in 1677 by chance. In that year the statue of Erasmus in Rotterdam was placed on a new pedestal. When the statue was again set up, after spending a couple of years in storage, the new stand was decorated with some gilded inscriptions, four in all. The Latin and Dutch texts were devised by Nicolaas Heinsius and Joachim Oudaan. The texts were published in a booklet that appeared in 1677 and was printed by Isaak Naeranus with the title *Den grooten Rotterdammer in zijn Geboortestad herstelt, en met nieuwen Luyster verheerlijkt*.<sup>78</sup> There is no doubt that Oudaan's publication of De Breen's *Compendium* was also intended to "embellish (Erasmus) with new lustre". It seemed a suitable homage, especially when we remember

<sup>76</sup> Ed. Holborn, p.9, l. 34 – p.10, l. 1; *Collected Works of Erasmus* 6, p.80, 1.249–252.

<sup>77</sup> *Ecclesiastes*, LB V, 1064 B, quoted in *Compendium*, p.223–234 and *Christelijcke Deughden-Spiegel*, p.161–167 (here the same translation is to be found as in the *Theologia Erasmica*, p.152–159). Cf. also the extensive note on Acts 17, 34 in De Breen's *Breves ... annotationes* (1664), second part (*notae* on the Gospels and Acts), fol. 120–121 (not based on Erasmus's *Annotationes* but on his *Ecclesiastes*).

<sup>78</sup> See N. van der Blom, "Latijn in Rotterdam" in *Florislegium. Bloemlezing uit de Erasmiaanse, Rotterdamse en andere opstellen van drs. N. van der Blom, J. Smit and J. Spoelder* (edd.) (Leiden, 1982), p.1–10.

that Erasmus himself was convinced that he could be known best from his writings. But the Erasmus presented to the public in the *Compendium* was such a pacifist that he would not have recognised himself. It was Frans Kuyper who made it clear two years later that De Breen had supplemented the Erasmian heritage with his own ideas. For Kuyper these additions in the spirit of the Collegiants could only be regarded as a change for the better.