

Missing Quotations

Van Til on the Trinity and Covenant

Ralph Allan Smith

When I discussed Van Til's views on the Trinity and the covenant,¹ I was unaware of statements by Van Til that prove my interpretation of his views beyond any doubt. I discovered the quotations reading Mark Karlberg's *Covenant Theology in Reformed Perspective*, and offer them below, quoting from Karlberg, since I do not have access to the *New Schaff-Herzog Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.

Covenant theology sprang up naturally as the most consistent expression of Calvinism, in which the idea of the self-sufficient, ontological Trinity is the final reference point in all predication. It is this idea that lies at the center of covenant theology. *The three persons of the Trinity have exhaustively personal relationship with one another. And the idea of exhaustive personal relationship is the idea of the covenant.* (emphasis added)

[S]ince the internal relationship of the triune God is covenantal, God's relation to mankind is also covenantal.²

Karlberg's quotations from Van Til's article demonstrate beyond doubt that Van Til held Abraham Kuyper's view that the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity is essentially covenantal. Therefore, man, as God's image, exists inescapably as a covenantal being. Note also that on Van Til's formulation quoted here, a covenant is a relationship. The fullest and most perfect, personal relationship enjoyed by the Three Persons of the Trinity is the fountain from which the covenant idea flows. What it means for creation and man is derivative.

¹ <http://trinitarianism.com/> See: *Van Til's Insights on the Trinity*.

² Karlberg, p. 105. Both quotations come from an article by Van Til on "Covenant Theology" in *The New Twentieth Century Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.