

Book Reviews

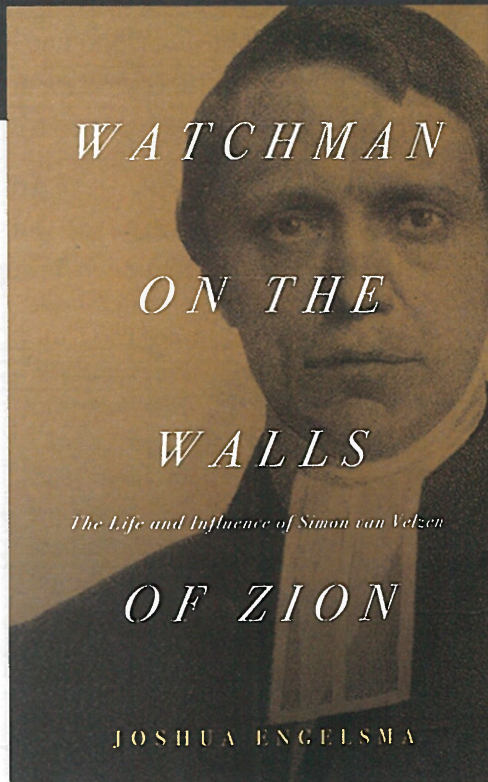


Rev. Jerome Julien

Watchman on the Walls of Zion: The Life and Influence of Simon van Velzen, Joshua Engelsma. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2021. 229 pages. Hardcover. \$26.50.

RFPA: <https://rfpa.org/products/watchman-on-the-walls-of-zion>

Who was Simon van Velzen? Unfortunately, there are many who might ask this—even many in western Michigan! Of those who led in the original secession from the Dutch church (*Hervormed*) in 1834, the names of Albertus van Raalte and Henry P. Scholte are known, but few know much about the other men used of God: Brummelkamp, de Cock, van Velzen, along with leaders who in some way had a part in the earlier years leading up to the Afscheiding of 1834: Schotsman, Witsius, and even a Brakel. (RFPA recently published a volume by



Marvin Kamps on Hendrik de Cock.) As yet, as the bibliography included in this volume shows, at least for van Velzen very little is available in English. With this fine volume by a pastor in his first charge, another small but excellent step has been taken to provide material in English on this man. Engelsma has introduced us to this man of God who so many have misunderstood. This is not a ponderous book that many readers will put away as being too difficult to read. Rather

it is one that is easy to read—and informative for God’s people today.

Simon van Velzen (1809–1896) was used of God to give confessionally Reformed people in the Netherlands and here in North America a place to worship God in spirit and truth. The times of the Secession were not easy—they were years of trials on every hand, years of fear. Yet God used men like van Velzen to proclaim his truth. Van Velzen was a man known for his faithfulness to God’s truth. Of course, he was a man who knew the weakness of men, for he was but man, but God anointed his lips and directed his life for God’s use.

We owe it to ourselves to read this short volume. Some love to sing “Faith of Our Fathers.” The writer of this so-called hymn was writing about the fathers of the Roman Catholic Church. Van Velzen was not one of these, but rather a father in on the Reformed faith. Read and learn what the fathers of the true faith did for God’s church!

Thanks, brother Engelsma, for your dedication and great interest. We look forward to other volumes about our church fathers.

Please visit www.rfpa.org/outlook to purchase or learn more.

Rev. Jerome Julien

is a retired pastor and a member of Walker United Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI.

CONTENTS

Preface.....	1
PART 1: YOUTH (1809–34)	
Chapter 1 HOME.....	9
Chapter 2 IN THE KING’S SERVICE.....	19
Chapter 3 THE CLUB.....	29
PART 2: REFORMER (1834–35)	
Chapter 4 MARRIAGE AND MINISTRY.....	35
Chapter 5 WATCHMAN ON THE WALLS OF ZION.....	45
Chapter 6 SECESSION.....	55
PART 3: CHURCHMAN (1836–54)	
Chapter 7 THE EARLY YEARS OF THE AFSCHIEDING.....	54
Chapter 8 THE YEARS OF YOUTH.....	64
Chapter 9 THE AMSTERDAM TWIST.....	74
Chapter 10 THE AFSCHIEDING.....	84
PART 4: PROFESSOR (1854–96)	
Chapter 11 A NEW BEGINNING.....	151
Chapter 12 THE PROFESSOR.....	163
Chapter 13 WAR AND PEACE.....	177
Chapter 14 UNION.....	193
Chapter 15 THE SWORD FOR THE SCEPTER.....	203
Bibliography.....	213
Index.....	221