

A blue-tinted portrait of Abraham Kuyper, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. The background is a solid blue color.

ON KUYPER

A COLLECTION OF READINGS ON THE LIFE,
WORK & LEGACY OF ABRAHAM KUYPER

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Kuyper's Philosophy of Science*

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Introduction

It did take some time before I was able to decide to publish this paper that I presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy on *Kuyper's Philosophy of Science*. I hesitated because I had found myself compelled to lay the finger on certain lines of thought in the writings of Kuyper, Woltjer, and Bavinck that are in no way compatible with the *reformational basic conception* as it was developed particularly by Kuyper. The critique of these Calvinistic thinkers that I came to formulate was not something "pleasant" for me. They were my tutors and I have great respect and love for them, as well as for the pioneering work that they accomplished in a time when being at the Free University was still seen as a sign of abdicating the cause of theoretical rigor.

In addition, continuing with the positive elaboration of the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea on the foundations that they had laid seemed more fruitful an endeavor, insofar as these are indeed rooted in their reformational basic conception, than to criticize specific components of their labor that can hardly be reconciled with this conception.

But when the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea was accused by some of "undermining" the work of Kuyper, Bavinck, and Woltjer, and when conceptions of the latter two were repeatedly raised against this philosophy, it became clear to me that it was no longer possible to avoid *rendering an account* of the critical screening to which the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea had indeed subjected their philosophical views. Every misunderstanding in this regard could have in the long run led to disastrous consequences and possibly generated the false impression that the adherents of this philosophy had something to hide regarding their attitude towards the "reformed tradition in philosophical thought."

For that is certainly *not* the case! It is not a lack of piety or respect for the pioneers of the previous generation that occupied the forefront in this critical sifting work. Rather, the latter is actually completely in line with their *reformational orientation*. A lack of *true* piety towards their pioneering work would be at play if, *contrary to one's own best judgment*, attempts were made to maintain some of their philosophical conceptions as *reformed* when it can be demonstrated that they cannot be tolerated by the scriptural-biblical religious basic conception of the Reformation because they *clearly* originate from a pagan or a humanistic *point of departure*. Not even a tradition of centuries is able to eradicate the original mistake present in such views.

When Jan Woltjer Sr.'s philosophy of science, in connection with that of Kuyper, is subjected in what follows to serious critique, this may not be interpreted as us giving Woltjer the boot. The issue merely concerns the philosophical conceptions of Woltjer that are circulating within the current debate and used as weapons against the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea.

To highlight another side of Woltjer's philosophical ideas here, those that had a sound effect on the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, would not be difficult. Woltjer, however, compared to Kuyper, did not publish very much, and it is undeniably the case that epistemological views found in some of his published addresses, against which the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea would raise its most serious objections, have decisively influenced many in the circle of re-

* This translation was prepared by D. F. M. Strauss; edited by John H. Kok.

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formed scholars. He worked these views out in such a complete and consistent fashion that one is inclined to either fully *accept* or *reject* them. This clearly speaks to Woltjer's critical philosophical spirit, who in his epistemological views did not allow for any divergence – once a basic idea is accepted he pursues it with an inflexible logic. But it also, in a much sharper way, highlights the discrepancy between Woltjer's theory of science and his religious/reformational basic conception.

The ensuing critique of certain of Woltjer's views does not mean to lay *blame* on a thinker who was in the forefront in arguing the warrant of reformed scholarship. Doing so would evidence a serious form of ingratitude for a thinker who lived in a period in which, according to Kuyper himself, reformed scholarship was still a sprig, unable to deliver straightaway a sound theory of research and scholarship [*wetenschap*] in which the religious basic conception of Calvinism – defended by him with so much force – had reached complete fruition. Talk of *blame* is called for only when one tries to hold on to these views *during the next period after extensive demonstration and sound argument* has shown that some of these conceptions are no longer useful within a reformed context.

To play the “tradition” off against the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea without giving any consideration to the well-thought-out reasons that led to abandoning those rather traditional philosophical views, all the while ignoring the *positive* contribution of the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea to the construction of a reformational philosophy, quite simply documents a failure to pursue the reformational line of the Kuyper, Bavinck, Woltjer threesome. Though bordering on redundancy, because it has been said so often before: The Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea claims no infallibility, neither for its positive philosophical conceptions nor for its critique of traditional philosophy.

But its adherents are justified in demanding that their work be *taken seriously* and deserves *careful consideration* both by kindred spirits and by those who in principle oppose it.

The same holds for what follows: a discussion of Kuyper's philosophy of science.¹ I will enjoy receiving any critical appraisals of the views presented here if they focus on the real issues and, in the case of like-minded people, if they rest on grounds related to the biblical-reformational starting point. Indeed, such an exchange of ideas will definitely bear fruit.

* * *

In the recent issue of *De Reformatie* commemorating Abraham Kuyper, I contributed an article titled: “What the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea owes to Dr. Kuyper.” I also intended it to serve as a defense against recurring accusations of some that the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea signifies a diversion from directives for Calvinistic thought drawn by Kuyper as an expression of the reformed tradition. As far as I know no attempt has been made to invalidate this argued defense—which is not to say that I have been able to convince these Reformed-minded opponents.

The crux of the matter is that Calvinistic thought has of late arrived at a crossroads, all be it that both of these diverging approaches lie merged in Kuyper's scholarly work. One could argue that this situation flows from the multiple facets of Kuyper's endeavors and that the unfortunate one-sidedness of his followers is to blame for the current differences of opinion. But doing so would be too simplistic to be true. One would have to show how the said divergence is somehow resolved within Kuyper's thought.

But that is not the case.

The truth is that it can be shown that these two strands are in conflict with each other in Kuyper's writings and that an inner reconciliation is precluded by the fact that they can both be

¹ With an eye to publication, the paper I read at the last Annual Meeting of the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy has been expanded considerably. These elaborations will mainly be found in those text portions that are indented on both the left and the right.

traced back to mutually exclusive starting points.

It is remarkable that this divergence restricts itself in large part to Kuyper's systematic-scientific works, where he frequently tries to connect with traditional philosophical conceptions. But in those contexts where he could just be himself, developing his rich understanding of the Calvinistic world- and life-view, he indeed built upon the reformational religious basic principle and produced work with unparalleled principled sharpness and clarity that was of "one piece." His famous "Stone" lectures, *Het Calvinisme*, are probably the best example in this regard – even though one may take issue with a number of his historical interpretations.

But as soon as Kuyper tries to integrate this religious basic conception of Calvinism into his systematic-scholarly work, it is as though its powerful scope is hampered and its solid direction diffused. Undoubtedly, the reformational basic principle is retained and, wherever Kuyper clings to this line and accomplishes foundational work for Christian thought as a whole, his scientific grasp may indeed also be called "reformational." Yet this principle could not work itself out freely because a second strand manifested itself, namely, the traditional attempt to establish a synthesis between the Christian starting point and that of immanence philosophy. That then leads to the embrace of many traditional philosophical ideas that are not compatible with the religious choice made by Kuyper. The philosophical legacy in question is rooted in part in scholasticism and in part in modern epistemology.

The scholastic line expresses itself mainly in the traditional philosophical view of soul and body, in the theory of the logos, and in idea-realism, while the modern influence manifests itself in the various dimensions of Kuyper's philosophy of science that bear the stamp of critical realism.

One may again be tempted to remark: That Kuyper did not impiously throw the legacy of the scholastic philosophy that reformed thinkers have traditionally embraced overboard speaks to his breadth and his willingness to honor the line of historical continuity. And, that he did not hesitate in his philosophy of science to learn from modern epistemology underscores his openness to the philosophical needs of the modern era.

But unfortunately the issue is again not that simple. I shall consider the second point later, but regarding the first one the following needs to be said. The argument as to the need to honor the historical continuity in Calvinistic philosophy loses its effect in light of the undeniable fact, agreed upon by all who are well-informed about the issue, that a truly Calvinistic tradition of philosophical thought does not exist. The Reformation never succeeded in developing its own philosophy on the foundation of its reformational Christian basic conception.² Philosophical ideas derived from traditional school philosophy have no claim to be acknowledged by us as belonging to a *Christian* philosophical tradition if it turns out to be the case that they cohere irrevocably with a philosophical starting point that is at odds with the religious basic principle of the Reformation.

This lack of a truly Christian philosophy becomes even more important in light of the fact that a large majority of thinkers within scholastic philosophy in principle reject the idea of a Christian philosophy.

This view is justified from the perspective of Roman Catholicism because it completely matches the traditional Roman view regarding the relationship of nature and grace. Nature, after all, is seen as the autonomous portal to the sphere of grace; and philosophy, belonging as it does for this mind-set to the realm of nature, remains philosophy only as long as it follows the light of "natural reason" apart from the Divine Word revelation in Jesus Christ. Even though natural reason (*naturalis ratio*) may harbor an inner longing for knowledge exceeding the limits of its own disposition, the fulfillment of this desire cannot be obtained within the domain of philosophy itself. This higher knowledge lies outside the sphere of philosophy; residing as it does within the

² Compare also the statement of Valentine Hepp in his *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti*: "that Christendom never produced a unique philosophy true to its root" (57). His subsequent exposition shows that my esteemed colleague sincerely regrets this state of affairs.

grace-domain of the church.

The scholastic teachings regarding soul and body, which – as a traditional Thomistic-Aristotelian understanding – were largely taken over by reformed thinkers, may therefore not lay claim to the qualification of a Christian philosophic conception.

According to this doctrine, soul and body are two incomplete substances (*substantiae incompleta*), with the “immortal soul,” as *anima rationalis* (rational soul), designated as the “substantial form” of the body. In the well-known debate between Voetius (Gisbert Voet) and his Cartesian colleague Regius (Henri le Roy) the former explicitly defended this view of the “school philosophy.”³ Traces of this view are clearly evident in the terminology of the *Westminster Confession*. When my honored colleague Hepp therefore appeals to this confession (in the second brochure of the series *Dreigende Deformatie* [Threatening Deformation]), it only demonstrates how careful one has to be with citations when arguing, on the one hand, that those who take issue with the Aristotelian-scholastic view of the soul deviate from the confessions, while denying on the other hand that the *philosophical* conception of scholastic psychology is being given preferential status.

To bind an ecclesiastical confession to scholastic-Aristotelian philosophy would be more than a “threatening” deformation. Such a binding could only take place as the *result* of a process of deformation and therefore, given the current differences of opinion, should not be attributed to anyone. Even such a convinced adherent to scholastic philosophy as Voetius definitely refused – in his struggle against the Cartesians regarding the soul – to bring the whole issue to an *ecclesiastical* forum in spite of the fact that the Cartesian conception of the soul indeed threatened church dogma.⁴

In itself this of course is not to say that this theory could not be useful in a Calvinistic philosophy.

The Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea has never defended the view that a philosophy springing from a non-Christian root cannot contain important elements of truth.⁵

But to my mind the impracticality of accepting traditional views such as these within a reformational philosophy is demonstrated when it can be shown that they are not to be reconciled with the religious basic conception of the Calvinistic reformation.

I have extensively demonstrated the latter as pertains to the traditional view of the soul as a substance centered in reason. This view definitely clashes with the reformational understanding of the radical fallenness of human nature, but does harmoniously fit the Roman Catholic view of nature and grace. Rome indeed constantly rejected the doctrine of total depravity.

Since the scholastic soul-body conception *per se* disallows acknowledging the “heart” in its biblical sense as the center of human nature, it must lead anthropologically to results that can never be incorporated in a Calvinistic philosophy.

It should always be kept in mind that the Aristotelian conception of the soul as *anima rationalis* is intrinsically connected to Aristotle’s metaphysical theological idea of the deity

³ Cf. Voetius, G. *Dispp. Selectae* t. I:870–881, in particular the exposition *De rerum naturis et formis substantialibus*. In particular he here defends the logic, metaphysics, and physics of school philosophy (“nominatim logicam, metaphysicam et physicam” –871–872). Regarding his synthesis point of view, compare his *De errore et haeresi* (*Dispp.* t. V:74): “Est ergo Philosophia (scl. Peripatetica) accomodanda ad Theologiam Christianam, non contra.”

⁴ Regius defended the thesis that the union of body and soul does not produce an entity “per se,” but only “per accidens.” Voetius saw in this theory – undoubtedly rightly so – a threat to the dogma regarding the incarnation of the Word.

⁵ It also never denied the *scientific* character of a philosophical theory merely on the basis that such a theory is rooted in the immanence standpoint. To the contrary, by virtue of its Christian starting point the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea strongly made a plea for *scholarly tolerance* – which in fact is seriously endangered by the dogma of the autonomy of thought.

as “pure” or “absolute Reason.”

Self-knowledge, after all, intrinsically coheres with our knowledge of God.

If “reason” is indeed the essential core of human nature, as it is alleged in the scholastic-Aristotelian theory regarding the “soul” as “substantial form,” then no room is left for the *radical* depravity of human nature as an effect of the Fall. No one has ever located the *root* of sin in “natural reason.”

The scholastic theory therefore referred to the lower “faculty of desire” as sin’s source. It conceived “faith” as a *donum superadditum*, as a supra-natural gift of grace to the *intellect*⁶ – a gift lost owing to sin. The loss due to sin does not corrupt “natural reason” however; it is at most “wounded” by it. As such it remains the *good* essential-core of human nature.

Aristotle taught – undoubtedly in line with Plato – that only the *nous*, the rational soul-part, is immortal. It is not certain that he also accepted *individual* immortality, since he took “matter” to be the principle of individuation (*principium individuationis*). Aristotle assumed that a human being is engendered as *animal*, that is to say, merely endowed with an animal essential form, the sensitive soul (*anima sensitiva*), and that its “immortal reason” is implanted “from the outside” (θύραθεν). It was not possible for Thomas Aquinas to adopt this theory unaltered, because in this form it would clash with the entire church tradition. He did accept the Aristotelian view that the human being receives from one’s parents only the *anima sensitiva et vegetativa* (animal soul and plant soul),⁷ while the *anima rationalis* is implanted from the outside through a separate act of creation by God (this is the so-called psycho-creationistic conception).⁸ But he accommodated this Aristotelian conception to the church tradition in the sense that by proceeding from the *simplicity* and *unity* of the human soul he ascribed individual immortality to the entire soul with all of its natural (including sensitive) “abilities.” However, this conception could only be carried through when presuming – while again continuing the Aristotelian legacy – that the rational soul as *substantias incompleta* (incomplete substance) at its entry into the human body disrupts (*currumpit*) the already present *anima sensitiva et nutritiva (vegetativa)* in its animal nature, and then of itself develops these “lower” soul-functions in a *typically human* (i.e., in an essentially *rational*) way.⁹

The aforementioned psycho-creationistic view is once again in harmony with the Roman Catholic understanding of “human nature.” In contrast, the reception of this theory by reformed theologians naturally led to the same irreconcilable conflicts with the reformational basic conception regarding radical corruption that we noted above in connection with the view of the soul as *anima rationalis*.

Reformed theology now faced a dilemma: *either* one has to accept that in the separate creation of the *anima rationalis* God created a “corrupted soul,” which is unacceptable, *or* sin must have its origin in the body and *anima sensitiva*, which would contradict the doctrine of the radical nature of the Fall.¹⁰ I cannot delve into the supposed “solutions” to

⁶ Cf. Aquinas, Thomas *Summa Theologica*, II, II q. IV art. II j^o q. VII

⁷ *Summa Theologica*, 1 q. 77 a 7c: “. . . imperfectiores potentiae sunt priores in via generationis, prius enim animal generatur quam homo” (the more imperfect powers precede the others in the order of generation, for *the animal* is generated before *the man*).

⁸ *Summa Theologica*, q. XCVIII a. II: “Et ideo haereticum est dicere, quod anima intellectiva traducatur cum semine” (It is therefore heretical to say that the intellectual soul is transmitted with the semen).

⁹ Aquinas did not come to clarity on the union of this dual generation (namely, the natural abilities resulting “from below” and those flowing “from above” from the essential form of being human). Gustav Siewerth provides an excellent analysis of this tension in his work: *Die Metaphysik der Erkenntnis nach Thomas von Aquin* (Munich and Berlin, 1933: 22ff.).

¹⁰ Whoever knows the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea will understand that rejecting the psycho-creationistic view in its traditional sense does not entail accepting the *traditional* position of traducianism, which for that matter does not question the scholastic conception of body and soul.

this antinomy here. The semi-romanticizing view that since the Fall God creates the rational soul without *justitia originalis* in the sense of a “higher faculty,” though without sin, because sin merely occurs when this faculty is employed in a certain direction, cannot be reconciled with either the doctrine of original sin or the doctrine of total depravity as a *condition*. This antinomy turns out to be even worse when one tries to combine the traditional conception with the scriptural view regarding the *religious* character of the center of human nature.

What is naturally more important for a Calvinistic philosophy than a purely theological investigation of these “solutions” is the search for the *origin* of the antinomy evinced in this attempted synthesis of two soul conceptions that radically *exclude* each other: that of Aristotelian scholasticism regarding the *anima rationalis* and that of the biblical view about the religious *root* of human existence that is corrupted by sin and reborn in Christ.

The entire ecclesiastical doctrine about the “simplicity” of the soul only fits the *heart* in the sense of the *religious center* of human nature, in which we indeed transcend the temporal diversity of functions and where *our entire existence* is concentrated in its religious *root-unity*.

On the standpoint of immanence-philosophy – which gave birth to the theory of the *anima rationalis* as substantial form – this “simplicity” cannot be maintained without inner contradictions.¹¹

The religious root of our human nature, as unity of our self-awareness and consciousness of God, is indeed “simple” and, as such, transcends theoretical concept-formation. But the *anima rationalis* is a theoretical abstraction from the temporal existence of human beings and, as such, remains caught in a theoretical diversity of “functions” or “capacities” (according to the scholastic psychology).

Positing the “simplicity” of the soul necessarily contradicts the view that the “intellect” is its essence and that the “body” is its “matter.”¹² For the intellect after all, within this conception, is not the *entire* soul.

This clearly comes to expression in the Aristotelian-Platonic theory of immortality. Here immortality is only reserved for the *nous* – viewed as the intellect purified from all sensitive functions (the rational part of the soul in Plato).

An after-effect of the scholastic theory regarding the supposed “simplicity” of the *anima rationalis* is found in Kant’s epistemology where he proclaims – in the criticistic sense of a “transcendental unity of apperception” – that the I-ness is the logical form-unity of all theoretical synthesis. This “logical form-unity of the I-ness,” which is supposed also to transcend the diversity of thought’s categories,¹³ must serve as a transcendental-logical unity ABOVE the logical diversity. But this is the embodied self-contradiction, which can only be explained as an after-effect of the metaphysical-scholastic conception of the simplicity and indivisibility of the *anima rationalis* in Kant’s epistemology.

In a *logical* sense there is only a modal logical unity *within* a logical diversity, but no unity that *transcends* this diversity. In his “Paralogisms of Rational Psychology” Kant rejected the *metaphysical* twist, which is scholastic in origin, given to this theory. What he did not

¹¹ Thomas discusses this issue in his *Summa Theologica* (1 q. LXXVII a. VI) and attempts in vain to resolve it with the scholastic distinction between *forma substantialis* and *accidental*.

¹² Much to the point is the remark of Siewerth (op. cit., 27–28): “What mounts at this point is the question about the possibility of a real, vital, substantial union of a uniform, spiritual actual form – which does not perform any act in itself – with a purely passive substrate. It is the problem of the abilities and activities of what is composite and unified. This uncertainty and lack of clarity in an encompassing and founding manner remains the ground of the fate of a Thomistic theory of the soul in all its parts where on the whole the analogue of the metaphysical composition of the secondary form and matter is encountered.”

¹³ *Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Logic, Second Part, paragraphs 15 & 16.

realize is that its *epistemological turn*¹⁴ must terminate in the same antinomies!

What also properly belongs to the traditional scholastic conception of the soul is the question as to what kind of activity *remains* in the “immortal soul” *after* its separation from the body. This entire problem flows from a soul conception that views the “soul” as a theoretical abstraction from the full temporal existence of the human being.

Once this path of abstraction is chosen the unavoidable question becomes: what remains of the separated *rational* soul when it is *conceived* in isolation from its pre-psychical functions?

The Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, which has demonstrated the *unbreakable* temporal-cosmic coherence of *all* modal functions through an analysis of the *modal structure* of these functions, replies: *nothing* remains!¹⁵ At the moment of natural death the *entire temporal* existence – and not a mere *abstraction* from it – is laid aside.

The traditional substance-concept in the final analysis rests on nothing else than an internally antinomic reification of a particular functional complex, which by virtue of the order of creation is in its self-insufficiency connected to all other functions.

For this reason the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea does not account for the scriptural dichotomy of soul and body in terms of what is temporal, but in terms of the bi-unity of the supra-temporal religious center or root (the “heart” or “soul”) and the entire temporal mantle of functions (the “body”).

The “religious center” is not a theoretical abstraction from temporal existence, but the full, concrete unity of self-consciousness and the awareness of what is divine, the *self-hood* of the human being or the “inner person” in the scriptural sense of the term.

For this reason the question as to which functions or capacities remain for the *anima separata* (separated soul) does not have any meaning from this point of view. The “simplicity” of the religious center of existence lies in its religious nature as concentrated root-unity of existence, which as such also forms the center of all *conscious* life.

By contrast, this question indeed constitutes the crux of the “philosophical psychology” of scholastic natural theology.

When one seriously reads the expositions of Thomas Aquinas in the first part of his *Summa Theologica* in this regard, the artificial and internally contradictory nature of the traditional soul conception is striking.

Thomas Aquinas holds that abilities such as the intellect and the will (according to him the *appetitus intellectivus*) are found in the soul as separated from the body (*anima separata a corpore* – see *Summa Theologica*, Pars I, Questio LXXVII, Art.VIII) and that these *pure* capabilities of the soul *necessarily* continue to be present in the soul after the demolition of the body. By contrast the sensitive and the vegetative functions belong to body and soul together as substances. Therefore, when the body is demolished these functions do not continue in an *actual* way, since they merely *potentially* continue to reside in the soul (*sicut in principio aut radice*– see *Summa Theologica*, I, q. LXXVII, a. VIII). These functions indeed require for their activities a *bodily organ*. At this point a new difficulty arises, namely, how the “separated soul” can still know anything. After all, although according to the Aristotelian-Thomistic epistemology the human intellect can operate independent of the brain

¹⁴ See the *Critique of Pure Reason*, General Remark concerning the transition from rational psychology to cosmology (Edition Groszherzog Wilhelm Ernst, pp. 322–323): “Thought, considered as such, is merely the logical function and therefore pure spontaneity in the combination of the multiplicity of a merely possible intuition. . . . Through it I conceive myself neither as I am, nor as I appear, but I solely think of myself as any object as such, from which kind of intuition I perform an abstraction.”

¹⁵ This statement should not be misinterpreted. The answer “nothing” only refers to an *abstraction* from the temporal function-complex of the soul, an abstraction that was elevated by scholastic psychology to a “substance.” The “soul” certainly is not a theoretical abstraction. It is a concrete unity. This does not in the least entail a rejection of the confession of the “resurrection of the body” and the fundamental identity of the mantle of functions after resurrection.

as bodily organ, it nonetheless is a *tabula rasa* (a clean slate). Concepts are first abstracted from the sensory *phantasmata* and in order to absorb the latter senses are required. In *questio* LXXXIX, art. I Thomas discusses this issue extensively. The many “difficulties and counter-arguments” discussed there already demonstrate the extent to which this issue was an embarrassment for him. He cannot find a solution other than holding that the “separated soul” could neither know through inborn concepts nor through “abstracted species,” nor also not only through the recollection of species, but only through species that are communicated through an “in-flowing of the light from the divine intellect.” Whereas this divine illumination would be the “natural knowing mode” of the angels, and therefore amongst them would lead to a perfectly clear knowledge, with the human being it is “*praeter rationem suae naturae*” since natural knowledge here entails the connection between body and soul and therefore merely yields a general and confused cognition (*cognitio confusa et communis*).

This solution, however, immediately generated a new problem. Does this knowledge still belong to human *nature* (see *Summa Theologica* LXXXIX a. 1)? This is indeed a crucial issue for the traditional scholastic conception regarding the “immortal soul,” for according to this view the “soul” is the “substantial form,” the *ontic form* of the human being.

If the knowledge of the *anima rationalis separata* (separate rational soul) is no longer “natural” then the theory regarding the unchanged persistence of this “part” of human nature is seriously challenged. Thomas Aquinas solves this difficulty with a short statement: “*Nec tamen propter hoc cognitio vel potentia non est naturalis: quia Deus est auctor non solum influentiae gratuiti luminis, sed etiam naturalis.*” (Nor is this way of knowledge unnatural, for God is the author of the influx both of the light of grace and of the light of nature.)

But this “solution” does not touch the cardinal question. Indeed the question was not – in terms of the Thomistic scheme of nature and grace – whether the intended knowledge belongs to the sphere of “grace,” but if it can still be counted as part of *human nature*. In an earlier context Aquinas denied the latter when he remarked that this knowledge falls “*praeter rationem naturae suae (scilicet humane)*,” even though he accepts divine illumination within all intellectual substances (*substantiae intellectiva*).

Moreover, *actual* knowledge derived purely from the influence of divine illumination belongs exclusively, according to Thomas, to the essential nature of angels. What he attempts to argue, nonetheless, is that the “*praeter rationem naturae*” is not yet the same as the “*extra*” or “*supra naturam*” and that the combination with the body only concerns the “*modus essendi animae rationalis*,” from which it follows that sense-based knowledge is merely the intellectual *mode* naturally belonging to the bond between body and soul. With this a comparison is made with those entities that are “light by nature,” whose nature, according to Aristotelian physics, does not alter when they find themselves outside their “natural place” (*Summa Theologica*, q. LXXXIX a. 1). But this comparison derailed since q. LXXXIV a. III extensively argues that the human soul by nature, in contrast to that of the angels, can acquire *actual* knowledge *only through the mediation of the senses*; this is done with an appeal to the same comparison with the “natural upward movement of light bodies.” In the case of the “light bodies” the “*esse levium*” is still “*solum in potentia*” (only potential).

Similarly human knowledge consisting exclusively in species concepts would be purely *potential* in nature. It can only become *actual*, that is active, through the mediation of the “*phantasmata*” in sensory perception. But can this knowledge, *without* this mediation, suddenly become *actual* after the separation from the body? This constitutes an antinomy within the argumentation of Thomas Aquinas.

Equally artificial is his answer to the question whether or not the separated human soul can still experience sadness and joy: “*tristitia et gaudium sunt in anima separata non secundum appetitum sensitivum, sed secundum appetitum intellectivum sicut etiam in angelis*” (In the separate soul, sorrow and joy are not in the sensitive, but in the intellectual appetite, as in the

angels.) (*Summa Theologica* 1 q. LXXVII a. VIII).

But what kind of knowledge is it then actually that this speculative metaphysics about the continued existence of the soul intends to furnish? It is a speculative construction on the basis of empty concepts that, given its purely antichristian origin, can be maintained neither in a Christian theology nor in a Christian philosophy.

The same applies to the so-called idea-realism insofar as it would, in connection with the metaphysical logos theory, attempt to construct the temporal world order via the theory of the so-called *analogia entis* (analogy of being) out of human reason and to then transpose scriptural revelation to fit that conception. The dilemma nominalism-realism is unacceptable on the Christian transcendence standpoint.

A truly Calvinistic philosophy realizes that a reformational *and* a scholastic way of thinking are operative within the tradition of reformed thinking and can therefore not accept *both* of them.

The first insight necessary for the erection of such a philosophy is that *this ambiguous attitude lies at the root of Calvinism's past impotence within the field of philosophy*. And exactly the same applies to attempts to accommodate modern humanistic epistemology with its typical problems and method to the reformational basic conception.

Here too the irreconcilability of starting points obstructs in principle every attempt at synthesis.

It is my intention to elaborate these theses more extensively through a critical assessment of Kuyper's philosophy of science.

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As is known Kuyper developed his philosophy of science in the second volume of his "Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology" (*Encyclopaedie der Heilige Godsgeleerdheid*). It is important to note that the first impression of this work appeared in 1894, that is, three years after Professor Woltjer, Sr., presented his well-known oration on "The Scholarly Knowledge of the Logos" (*De Wetenschap van den Logos*). This is of importance because the conceptions of Woltjer did influence Kuyper in a demonstrable way.

Two years after the appearance of the second part of Kuyper's *Encyclopedia* Woltjer published his oration "Ideal and Real" (*Ideëel and Reëel*), in which he more fully develops his epistemological ideas. It is highly intriguing for his progeny to see how Woltjer, as rigorous logical thinker, resolutely pursues in these two orations a uniform line of argument to its final destination; whereas in the thought of Kuyper, by contrast, owing to a dual line of argumentation, one observes a persistent inner divergence and contradiction. Although Woltjer presents us with explanations that are from a formal philosophical point of view on a higher level, this advantage was bought at the cost of almost completely relegating the religious basic conception, which Kuyper summarized in such powerful ways, to the background. But please do not misunderstand me. In no way do I mean to suggest that Woltjer did not accept that religious conception – I am convinced that he did. But in Woltjer's *philosophy of science* these all-determining basic ideas did not come to expression because Woltjer consistently constructed his philosophy on the basis of his logos theory. In the thought of Kuyper the latter plays only a secondary role. That these two eminent Calvinistic thinkers differ, in principle, in their appreciation of science and scholarship is closely connected to this difference.

Woltjer allows himself, in the context of his logos theory, to be tempted to come to an appraisal of science (in his *Ideëel and Reëel*) that borders upon an *overestimation* of science. He writes there that "science, according to the idea enclosed within it, as it is enclosed within every thing and every relationship of things, constitutes a treasure, more precious than anything else." He traces the all-surpassing value of science to the creation of the human being in God's image: The divine Logos has expressed itself within the human logos: "The human spirit is from God and

knows in the created things its Creator and flourishes therefore in that knowledge.”¹⁶

Kuyper expresses himself in a totally different manner in his well-known views on “Twofold Science” in the second volume of his *Encyclopedia*. Here he states that

palingenesis does not primarily impel to scientific labor. It stands too high for this, and is of too noble origin. Let us be sober, and awake from the intoxication of those who have become drunk on the wine of science. . . . Mention only the name of Jesus Christ, and you perceive at once how this entire scientific interest must relinquish its claim to occupy the first place in our estimate of life. . . . There is human development and expression of life which does not operate within the domain of science, but which, nevertheless, stands much higher. There is an adoration and a self-abasement before God, a love and a self-denial before our fellow-men, a growth in what is pure and heroic and formative of character, which far excels all beauty of science. (PST 164-65)¹⁷

Also consider the following remarkable passage:

Bound as it is to the *consciousness-forms of our present existence*, it is highly improbable that science will be of profit to us in our *eternal* existence; but this we know, that as certainly as there is a spark of holy love aglow in our hearts, this spark cannot be extinguished, and the breath of eternity alone can kindle it into the brightest flame. And experience teaches that the new life which springs from palingenesis, is much more inclined to move in this bolder direction than to thirst after science. This may become a defect, and has often degenerated into such, and thus has resulted in a dislike or disdain for science. (PST 165; emphasis HD)

This difference in the appreciation of science between Kuyper and Woltjer is remarkable and is hardly to be brought back to a mere difference in *emphasis*.

For even though Woltjer too gives a good deal of attention to sin and re-creation, nowhere does this Christian line of thought lead him to a depreciation of the central position that his logos theory occupies in his assessment of science and scholarship.

Moreover, nowhere in Woltjer’s philosophical conception of the human soul do we find any room for the “heart” in the sense of the religious root of human existence. Rather he adheres to the traditional theory of the two faculties of the soul: the intellect and the will. Once again in line with this tradition, he assigns the primacy to the former. Although he acknowledges that the logos is actually merely a function, namely, the highest function of our cognizing capacity, he believes that as such it includes all prior functions within itself and that it has to govern the will as a separate function.¹⁸ He gives prominence to the *unity* of the soul and calls it, remarkably, the *I*. However, it cannot be denied that according to this conception the center is located in the logos as the unity of thought and word-expression.

One finds this conception of the soul and the logos as its center in Kuyper’s *Encyclopedia* as well. Just like Woltjer, Kuyper explicitly mentions that this view represents the traditional reformed understanding, defended in particular also by Calvin.

But while Woltjer in the two aforementioned publications further develops this trend of thought without impediment, this is not at all the case with Kuyper, and, for that matter, also not with Calvin.

In order to understand these diverging lines of thought in Kuyper’s philosophy of science properly it is necessary first of all to highlight the religious basic conception that served as the foundation for his Calvinistic world- and life-view.

As is known, in 1898, four years after the appearance of the second volume of his *Encyclopedia*, Kuyper presented his Stone Lectures in Princeton. The religious basic conception essentially

¹⁶ *Verzamelde redevoeringen en verhandeling*, p.219. [VRV]

¹⁷ [PST—this is the standard abbreviation/reference used in the anthology] Abraham Kuyper *Principles of Sacred Theology* [1898]. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. (First published in 1898 by Charles Scribner’s Sons, under the title *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*.) Kuyper, Abraham 1899. *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles*. Translated by John Hendrik De Vries. London: Hodder and Stoughton.]

¹⁸ “De Wetenschap van den Logos,” VRV, 23. The generation also of the “lower” functions from the *logical* essential center of the *anima rationalis*, as we have noted earlier, is completely in harmony with the Thomistic concept of substance.

found in the *Stone Lectures* is already present in the *Encyclopedia*.

In the first Stone lecture Kuyper explains that Calvinism indeed entails its own life- and world-view. He states very generally that such a life- and world-view has to find its point of departure in a specific view regarding our relationship to *God*.

Then an important passage follows – a passage apparently currently forgotten by some, but actually worth memorizing:

If such an action is to put its stamp upon our *entire* life, it must start from that point in our consciousness in which our life is still undivided and lies comprehended in its unity, – not in the spreading vines but in the root from which the vines spring. This point, of course, lies in the antithesis between all that is *finite* in our human life and the *infinite* that lies beyond it. Here alone we find the common source from which the different streams of our human life spring and separate themselves. Personally it is our repeated experience that in the depths of our hearts, at the point where we disclose ourselves to the Eternal One, all the rays of our life converge as in one focus, and there alone regain that harmony which we so often and so painfully lose in the stress of daily duty. (LC 20)¹⁹

When Kuyper comes to a closer development of the religious starting point of Calvinism he writes:

But just as the entire creation reaches its culminating point in man, so also religion finds its clear expression only in man who is made in the image of God, and this not because man seeks it, but because God Himself implanted in man's nature the real essential religious expression, by means of the "seed of religion" (*semen religionis*), as Calvin defines it, sown in our human heart.

God Himself *makes* man religious by means of the *sensus divinitatis*, i.e., the sense of the Divine, which He causes to strike the chords on the harp of his soul [*hart*]. (LC 45–46)

Without any doubt Kuyper has in mind here the heart in the sense of the religious root of the entire life of a person. Elsewhere he expresses it as follows: "the heart, certainly not understood as sense-organ, but as that place within you where God works and from whence He also affects your head and brain."²⁰

Kuyper alone made this mighty move: radically turning the anthropological perspective around in a scriptural sense with one stroke. Neither in the mentioned writings of Woltjer nor in Bavinck's *Beginselen der Psychologie* (Principles of Psychology) is this conception found. Both remained fully ensconced in the scholastic theory of the abilities of the soul, with the intellect as the central leading part of the soul.

In discussing the Proverbs 4:23 statement that the heart is "the wellspring of life," Bavinck, in his mentioned work, explicitly identifies the heart with the seat of the affects or with the in-born drives as arranged under "desire."

And how does Woltjer explain the word of Ecclesiastes that eternity was set in the human heart?²¹ He interprets this completely in the sense of his scholastic soul conception as well as his logos theory with its *idea realism*: "The idea of the infinite is laid in our spirit," so he writes in his *Ideëel en Reëel* (Ideal and Real), "through it our *thought* transcends *finite matter*."

No further argument is called for to realize that there is an *abyss* between Kuyper's reforma-

¹⁹ [LC Standard notation in the Anthology =Kuyper, Abraham. 1931. *Lectures on Calvinism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (various identical reprints over the years).]

²⁰ *Honig uit rotssteen* (*Honey from Rock*), II, Amsterdam 1883, p.35.

²¹ *Translator's note*: The translation of Ecclesiastes 3:11 has generated different interpretations, such as that the phrase translated as "set eternity in the heart(s) . . ." ought to be translated with the word "history," implying an awareness of past, present, and future; see J.M. Spier: *Tijd en Eeuwigheid* (Time and Eternity) (Kampen: Kok, 1953), 141ff. Dooyeweerd's rebuttal to similar examples of an alternative "theological exegesis" is found in his article on "Creation and Evolution" ("Schepping en Evolutie." *Philosophia Reformata*, 1959: 116–117, note 3). Here he argues that the central religious meaning of the term "heart" is at stake if the term "eeuw" (or: "eeuwigheid") is rendered as "the times" or "history," because in that case one can just as well pull the heart up to the modal level, totally losing sight of its central (supramodal) nature. Dooyeweerd writes: "For 'history' in its temporal sense must find in the human heart its concentration on God's eternal providential plan."

tional and scriptural conception of the heart on the one hand and the scholastic view of Bavinck and Woltjer on the other.

Behind all our temporal functions, including thinking, Kuyper assumes a central religious root, the *heart*, as concentration point and deeper unity of our entire existence. This straightaway precludes all forms of an over- or under-estimation of scholarship. Woltjer, by contrast, interprets “heart” in this text, where it certainly means “center of consciousness,” simply as “thought,” as “logos.” Also purely in line with the scholastic dichotomy between “spiritual form” and “matter,” located within the boundaries of the temporal cosmic order, he interprets the word of Ecclesiastes in the sense of an intellectual concept of the infinite, within the human thought-function, by means of which it would rise above “finite matter.” Through all of this Woltjer arrives at a completely different view of science and scholarship than does Kuyper and to a totally different view of reality compared to what Kuyper presented in his Stone Lectures.

I note first of all that in *Ideëel en Reëel* (Ideal and Real) Woltjer, when speaking about the reality of the ideas, uses the word “idea,” with a provisional small restriction, in a *Kantian* sense.

We see no objection to employ the word in a Kantian sense, though while provisionally leaving aside the concept of *necessity*, which for Kant is *a priori*. Elsewhere he remarks: “[The idea] is the concept given by reason of the form of the whole, in which concept both the extent of its manifold contents and the place belonging to each part are determined *a priori*.” We intend therefore with [the word] idea a concept of reason in the form of a whole, i.e., such that the relationship of the parts to the whole is completely determined.²²

Deviating from Kant, Woltjer then assigns objective reality to these ideas. This view is then further elaborated in the Augustinian and Thomistic sense of the *universalia ante rem in mente divina* (pre-existing ideas within the Divine Mind) and the *universalia in re* (universal forms within things) – exactly as does Bavinck in his *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing* (Christian Worldview). This idea-realism leads Woltjer to a peculiar view of reality with a strong Augustinian and neo-Platonic orientation.

Moreover, Woltjer accepts different *degrees of reality*. He asks:

To what do you attribute more reality? To that which in itself is a plurality or to that which in itself is a unity? Is it not to the latter? Well, then you have to acknowledge that your own spiritual existence, which you recognize in opposition to the multiplicity of things outside yourself as an enduring identical unity, possesses more reality than the material things. And is it not the case that that which is free, because it enjoys through its freedom more independence, is therefore more real than that which is bound within itself and through that dependent? If yes, then from this point of view you must also acknowledge the higher degree of reality of the spiritual above the material world.²³

For this reason he also accepts *degrees of individuality*:

Moments that are accidental with respect to the idea constitute the individual. To the extent that the species stands on a higher level the individual acquires more significance. Within the inorganic world, where, for that matter, the concept *species* in its proper meaning does not find an application, it does not exist. It is found in the realm of plants, and it becomes more manifest to the extent in which the multiplicity of relations embedded in the idea of a species becomes more numerous.²⁴

²² “Ideëel en Reëel” (Ideal and Real), *VRV*, 188.

²³ *Ibid.*, 208. That this view of reality intimately coheres with the neo-Platonic theory of ideas cannot be contested. The Philosophy of the Cosmogenic Idea has shown that it is not consistent with the biblical idea of creation, since Scripture nowhere provides a foundation for the view that material things are less *real* than the human being, not even to mention the construction about an *anima rationalis*.

²⁴ To my mind, this conception regarding degrees of individuality cannot be explained in terms of the idealism in its Augustinian and Thomistic understanding. Much rather it points in the direction of neo-Kantian or Romantic influence, suggesting an *irrationalistic* leaning. In traditional idea-realism, matter indeed remains the *principium individuationis* (principle of individuation). It is also impossible to relate the position taken by Woltjer with the conceptions of Duns Scotus.

Woltjer does give a remarkable articulation to this gradated view of reality plays out in legal theory:

Every expression of law is more real insofar as it more closely approximates the idea of justice. [. . .] When a law is made as an expression of the legal consciousness of a people, thus largely replacing ignorance and restricting egoism, then that code of law in reality has a higher ranking than the legal consciousness of individuals because it more closely approximates what is *just*. (VRV 226–27)

A totally different view of reality therefore has to flow from Kuyper's view of reality, from his religious basic conception of Calvinism where the heart is conceived as the *religious root* and concentration point of the entire existence of a person.

Moreover, to this religious basic conception belongs the pregnant confession of the *sovereignty of God* in the sense of the *absolute sovereignty of the Creator*, expressed in Calvin's well-known adage: *Deus legibus solutus, sed non exlex* (although God is above the law, He is not arbitrary). And this confession gives a totally different orientation to one's view of reality.

Although I am convinced that Woltjer whole-heartedly accepted this religious basic conception, it could not sufficiently work itself out in his view of reality. It was obstructed by his metaphysical logos theory and his doctrine of the reality of the concepts of reason within the divine Logos.

In the history of Christian thought, idea-realism is intimately tied to a speculative logos theory.

The Aristotelian-scholastic strand in this logos theory took the intellect to be the "essence" of God,²⁵ so too it could only discover the image of God within the human "intellect."²⁶ All of this resulted in a complete denaturing of the scriptural doctrine of God's creational sovereignty. The Aristotelian idea of god, according to which god as first unmoved mover is pure "Reason" (not infected by matter) in the sense of pure form-activity, is irreconcilable with the Christian idea of creation.

It was Aquinas who formulated the thesis that the good is not good because God has ordained it. Rather God had to give effect to the good because it *is good*, i.e., because it is consistent with the rational nature of the human being and with God's reason. Only the "compulsory effect" of the natural moral law is traced back to God's will. In contrast, the Augustinian and neo-Platonic line in the *Logos* theory, which Woltjer follows, attempts to reconcile the realism of ideas with the full sovereignty of God's creational will. The Augustinian doctrine of *lex aeterna* (eternal law) with its higher and lower degrees of reality essentially attempts to accept God's creational will as the origin of the neo-Platonic idea of the world order.²⁷

Yet it once again concerns two lines of thought that, in their *religious root*, are irreconcilable.

William of Ockham's late-scholastic nominalism realized this. It is remarkable to observe how this trend, with the rejection of the speculative logos theory, at once also affected the idea-realism. In his theory of the *potestas dei absoluta* Ockham attempted to maintain the sovereignty of God's creational will, which does not allow God's work of creation to be subsumed under ideas of the law of reason.

Yet it was not at all the case that Ockham in doing so brought the biblical doctrine of creation to expression. His was essentially a *voluntaristic construction* that actually denatured the Christian view even more than had the speculative logos theory. Ockham after all understood the creational sovereignty of God in the sense of despotic arbitrariness without realizing that the concept of arbitrariness only makes sense under the yardstick of the law, leaving open room to play

²⁵ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, q. XIV a. IV.

²⁶ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, q. III, a. I.

²⁷ See also Otto Schilling, *Naturrecht und Staat nach der Lehre der alten Kirche* (1914), 174–175: "In a completely unforced and natural way this eternal law, with the natural moral law flowing from it, is thus absorbed within Christian thought. Augustine achieved this by modifying this concept, derived from classical philosophy, in a Christian sense, insofar as he traces this true, eternal law that corresponds with nature back to the personal will of the omniscient God."

for the possibilities of arbitrariness.

The Calvinistic conception of God as sovereign Creator broke in principle with this entire dilemma of *realism* or *nominalism* because this dilemma in the final analysis measures God's sovereign will with human norms. Here the starting point is not chosen in reason or in the so-called faculty of the will. Rather it is found in the *transcendent religious sphere*. Calvin precludes radically the realistic speculation that one can penetrate through rational argumentation to the essence of God *per se*. He points out to the reader that God's *law* is the final standard for good and evil. Human thought can never move beyond the law as boundary. God stands *above* the law. But Calvin fulminates equally against the consequences of nominalistic voluntarism, which assault God's holiness.

All of this also coheres with a remarkable difference between Kuyper and Woltjer regarding the object of theology. Kuyper, in his *Encyclopedia*, explicitly rejects the view that God could be the object of theology because human reason is limited to the temporal cosmos; rather, the object of theology is God's *revelation*, given as it is within the boundaries of the cosmos. Woltjer, in contrast, designates God Himself as object of this discipline. The logos theory of Woltjer does not acknowledge the law-boundary for human thought, something that is essential for Kuyper.

It is striking that Kuyper, when he remains faithful to this religious line of thought, articulates with great clarity a cosmomic idea that in all its basic features matches the basic idea accepted by the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea and that indeed provides a basis for a truly *Christian* view of reality.

It is in the second Stone Lecture, where Kuyper accounts for the relationship between Calvinism and religion, that we find the confession of God's sovereignty as Creator expressed in the theory of the distinct law-spheres or spheres of ordinances. He writes:

Everything that has been created was, in its creation, furnished by God with an unchangeable law of its existence. And because God has fully ordained such laws and ordinances for *all* life, therefore the Calvinist demands that *all* life be consecrated to His service, in strict obedience. A religion confined to the closet, the cell, or the church, therefore, Calvin abhors. (LC 53)

The metaphysical logos theory is here completely eliminated. The cosmomic idea is conceived in a religiously pure way. Just look at the manner in which Kuyper elaborates this idea more explicitly:

What now does the Calvinist mean by his faith in the ordinances of God? Nothing less than the firmly rooted conviction [take note: rooted in the heart and not in "reason" – HD] that all life has first been in the *thoughts* of God, before it came to be realized in *Creation*. Hence all created life necessarily bears in itself a law for its existence, instituted by God Himself. There is no life outside us in Nature, without such divine ordinances, – ordinances which are called the laws of Nature – a term which we are willing to accept, provided we understand thereby, not laws originating *from* Nature, but laws imposed *upon* Nature. So, there are ordinances of God for the firmament above, and ordinances for the earth below, by means of which this world is maintained, and, as the Psalmist says, These ordinances are the servants of God. Consequently there are ordinances of God for our bodies, for the blood that courses through our arteries and veins, and for our lungs as the organs of respiration. And even so are there ordinances of God, in logic, to regulate our thoughts; ordinances of God for our imagination, in the domain of aesthetics; and so, also, strict ordinances of God for the whole of human life in the *domain of morals*. (LC 70)

Everyone who has even the slightest acquaintance with the theory of law-spheres of the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea will have to concede that its scientific investigation of the structure of reality it is nothing but thinking through and elaborating this religious understanding of law found in the thought of Kuyper.

Nonetheless, it has been contested that the idea of sphere-sovereignty developed within this theory, in the sense of the modal irreducibility of law-spheres, has any connection to the view of Kuyper.

Rather we once again give the word to Kuyper himself. In his lecture on "Calvinism and

Art” we find the following remarkable passage:

Intellectual art is no art, and the effort put forth by Hegel to draw out from thoughts, militated against the very nature of art. Our intellectual, ethical, religious [meant is faith – HD] and aesthetic life each commands a sphere of its own. These spheres run parallel and do not allow the derivation of one from the other. It is the central emotion, the central impulse, and the central animation, in the mystical root of our being, which seeks to reveal itself to the outer world in this fourfold ramification. . . . If, however, it be asked how there can arise a unity of conception embracing these four domains, it constantly appears that in the finite this unity is only found at that point where it springs from the fountain of the Infinite. There is no unity in your thinking save by a well-ordered philosophical system, and there is no system of philosophy which does not ascend to the issues of the Infinite. In the same way there is no unity in your moral existence save by the union of your inner existence with the *moral world-order*, and there is no moral world-order conceivable but for the impression of an Infinite power that has ordained order in this moral world. Thus also no unity in the revelation of art is conceivable, except by the art-inspiration of an Eternal Beautiful, which flows from the fountain of the Infinite [and rises towards the Infinite]. (LC 150–51)

What is striking in these statements in the first place is the prominent positing of the religious unity of God’s law in its Origin and central fullness of meaning. Here the cosmomic idea completely runs parallel with understanding the heart as religious concentration point of all temporal functions of reality. From this naturally follows the mutual sphere sovereignty, the mutual irreducibility of the respective law-spheres that Kuyper *explicitly mentions* here.

The metaphysical logos theory, ultimately reducing all laws to ideas within the divine Logos, is here *cut off at the religious root*, as will appear more clearly below.

Within this conception it is not possible to allude to lower and higher degrees of reality depending upon the proximity or distance from the idea. Kuyper’s view of reality here simply stands in direct opposition to that of Woltjer.

* * *

After unfolding Kuyper’s religious basic conception as compared to Woltjer’s logos theory, I come to a further analysis of both lines of thought in Kuyper’s *theory of science*.

The first train of thought builds on Kuyper’s religious basic conception, which I outlined above. It gets worked out in what he has to say about the religious antithesis in science and culminates in the rejection of current philosophy and the call for a Christian philosophy,²⁸ in the aforementioned assessment of science, and in the very important teaching about the role of πίστις, or implanted faith function, in coming to know.

The second line is one that arises from a metaphysical logos theory. It moves Kuyper, in the first place, given its connections to modern criticism, to a so-called critical-realism epistemology and, secondly, to an encyclopedic system of the sciences, within the context of five faculties, that literally loses all connection with the religious basic conception and is, almost without question, infused by logos speculation. In this same line also lies a logos-theory influenced approach to the dichotomy of soul and body, which Woltjer had earlier applied to the relationship of logic and the study of language.

For the moment I want to pursue the second train of thought in order to show that it runs into an irreconcilable conflict with the former.

In the Senate of the Free University the Lohman conflict generated the well-known theses regarding the precise significance of the reformed principles as foundation for the practice of scholarship. These theses pointed out the need to evaluate the epistemological questions raised

²⁸ See a response to the critique of Dr. Daubanton in *De Heraut* of 9 February 1896: “If someone says, ‘*The Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology* is in no way theological’ and they adhere to a philosophy that knows no other principle than what Hegel held dear, then we pronounce that this way of seeing things is beside the truth and leads to the nullification of all bone fide theology. The situation is completely different when one, as Dr. Kuyper does in the *Encyclopedia*, rejects current philosophy and puts a *Christian* philosophy in its place.”

by Kant from the perspective of the reformed principles, because they were unknown to those who lived in the sixteenth century, Calvin included. But already two years earlier Kuyper, in his *Encyclopedia*, undertook his well-known attempt to do this (without reaching any unity in style, owing to his ambiguous starting point).

Kuyper proceeds from the usual opposition of the subject and object of science, taking the subject in the sense of the general consciousness of humanity, understood as a supra-individual communal consciousness in which the individual consciousness of the researcher participates. The object then is the entire cosmos as object of our knowledge.

It should be observed that this traditional subject-object schema already contradicts Kuyper's religious basic conception in which he explicitly acknowledged the intellectual sphere as *one of the (law-)spheres of the temporal cosmos itself*. Indeed, within this conception the *entire cosmos* can never be the "object"²⁹ of theoretical thought, for then theoretical thought – at least in its "subjective pole" – would itself have to *transcend* the temporal cosmos. This is indeed, as I have argued more than once in this journal, what is assumed by the critical transcendental philosophy of Kant. And this conception, manifesting itself in the theory regarding the "transcendental thought-subject," was indeed the last apparent possibility for immanence philosophy to maintain the autonomy of theoretical thought within the domain of philosophy, in the context of critical self-reflection. However, this theory necessarily led to the identification of the "cosmos" with a theoretical abstraction from reality in its fullness, which afterwards indeed could function as "Gegenstand" of the epistemological subject. This, in turn, then once again led to a theoretization of reality that sets aside the "given" within naive experience!

As soon as one acknowledges – with Kuyper – that the intellectual sphere is *completely* fitted *within* the boundaries of the temporal cosmos, where it can only function as one amongst many spheres, this epistemological subject-object schema cannot be maintained any longer. In his view regarding the *subject* of knowledge Kuyper already completely moved away from the position of Kantian epistemology. Yet, in his conception regarding the relationship between subject and object he continues to be captured by the problem-setting of immanence philosophy.

According to Kuyper there must exist an organic connection between subject and object that ensures the possibility of knowledge.

He proceeds from the customary epistemological view of humanism, particularly articulated by Kant, according to which all knowledge is acquired through two functions only, namely perception and logical thinking. These two functions are captured in the concept *intelligere*, designating the ability to know; alongside it, as a second (pure) capacity of the soul, only the will is acknowledged. This necessarily generates the problem as to how the so-called epistemic object can enter subjective consciousness.

The solution Kuyper provided for this problem is known. Completely on a par with Woltjer he distinguishes within the epistemic object *moments* or simple ingredients and the *relations* between these moments. In their ideal unity these moments constitute the object as a composite whole.

These *moments* then arrive through our receptive awareness (affection) in our consciousness and are *non-logical* in nature. Within our physical experience they display a purely *sensory* character and within spiritual experience a purely *spiritual* nature. The relations, by contrast, are in their lawfulness *logical* in nature; indeed *objective-logical* – contained in the ideas that the divine Logos laid within all creatures.

But this entire distinction between moments and relations derives as such from modern

²⁹ What is meant is the theoretical "Gegenstand." It is unfortunate that Kuyper here also accepts the common theoretization of reality in identifying "object" and "Gegenstand."

epistemology since Locke. The latter drew a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, the simple “elements” (ideas) of the object known – these are given to us only as impressions of “sensation” (“äusseren Sinn” in Kant) and as the spiritual impressions of “reflection” (“inneren Sinn”) – and, on the other hand, the logical relations that arise solely from the combining action of “reflection” (i.e., our thinking-function), by means of which connections between these elements are established. Locke was satisfied to settle for an irreconcilable dualism between the aprioristic knowledge of necessary relations and empirical knowledge derived from elementary impressions. The Scottish philosopher David Hume, in his major epistemological work, developed a radical psychologistic epistemology that undid Locke’s sharp divide between *sensation* and *reflection*, between *objective* and *subjective* sensitive-psychic experience, and robbed all “natural relations”³⁰ of their objective valid character by tracing their “validity” back to psychical laws of association operating when we perceive sensations. This led to the skeptical conclusion that scientific knowledge – in particular the laws of causality and the substantial unity of natural entities – is purely subjective in nature, lacking every objective foundation.

At this point Kant intervened in the epistemological debate. He posed the critical question as to the necessary conditions that make universally valid knowledge possible. He assumes with Locke and Hume that in our experience of the “external world” all that is given to us are unconnected sensory impressions – elements, or what Kuyper calls “moments” – of objects. Kant maintained that these impressions are then necessarily ordered according to the so-called aprioristic forms of intuition and thinking that are foundational to experience and that only in the synthesis of these forms with the sensed material of experience is the world of experienced things constituted.

For Kant every *determination* of the object bears a *transcendental-logical* character. The lawful relations between sensory moments of experience cannot be explained, as Hume taught, as owing to psychical association, since they have a subjective-logical, aprioristic origin.

In this way autonomous thinking is indeed elevated to the *law-giver* of empirical reality.

Kuyper and Woltjer gave an objective, idea-realistic twist to this subjective idealistic critical line of thought. They clearly realized that Kant’s claim that the origin of lawful relations within what is known ought to be found in the spontaneous activity of our *thought-function* would blatantly contradict the biblical understanding of creation.

However, instead of considering a different foundation for the problem of knowledge by proceeding from the religious basic conception of Calvinism, where self-consciousness and the structure of human experience are cast quite differently, both Kuyper and Woltjer took refuge in a metaphysical logos theory, with an eye to escaping Kant’s subjectivism.

The epistemological resolution of empirical reality into “moments” and “relations” is grounded in a psychologistic atomization of what is *given* in our experience that, as extensively demonstrated by the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, is *irreconcilably at odds with* the given. It is based on the *isolation* of the epistemological problem, which cannot be reconciled with the *nature* of this problem. It originates in the increasing subjectivism of modern humanistic philosophy and in a deeper sense in the starting point of this philosophy that irreconcilably contradicts the religious basic conception of Christianity.

This isolation proceeds from a dogmatic prejudice that from the beginning was set on an internally contradictory basis, one that has deep roots in the inherited scholastic view of the “soul” as *substantia rationalis* (rational substance). I have already referred to the influence of this latter conception on Kant’s theory of the transcendental thought-subject.

This prejudice restricts the sources of our experiential knowledge to the functions of sensory perception and logical thinking, which, as a closed complex, are set over against a reality “in itself.” The origin of this isolation of the epistemological problem lies in the Cartesian understanding of “soul” and “body” as two *closed* and therefore merely acci-

³⁰ These relations combine *successive* psychical impressions. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, Part I, Section vi.

dentally connected “substances.”

Aristotelian scholasticism was kept from this isolation because it conceived body and soul not as “closed” substances but merely as incomplete substances, brought to a unity through the metaphysical form-matter schema. Thus it considered metaphysics rather than epistemology to be the primary issue. In a philosophical sense this approach does penetrate much deeper than epistemological subjectivism, which posits its metaphysical prejudices as *dogma*, such that it remains uncritical with respect to its own ontological pre-suppositions.

The Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea has indeed been able to place the epistemological problem in a radically different setting than was possible in scholasticism and modern humanistic epistemology. In line with the scriptural reformational approach it no longer sought the *center* of consciousness in *theoretical thought* but in the *transcendent religious root* of human existence. In the theory of law-spheres it demonstrated the temporal meaning-coherence of all modal functions of reality. These new insights made it impossible to restrict the structure of human experience to an abstract complex of *functions*. Only at this point was it possible to understand the *identity* of the horizon of experience and the cosmic horizon of reality without falling prey to idealistic or criticistic misconceptions.

This radical reappraisal of the epistemological problem, however, only became possible through an equally radical rejection of the view, still thoroughly operative within modern epistemology, that soul and body are two substances enclosed within the horizon of time.

Rejecting the substance-concept turned out to be the primary condition also for the reformational articulation of the problem of knowledge. In this the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea simply proceeded constructively on the basis of the scriptural biblical basic conception of Kuyper’s anthropology, which acknowledged the religious root of human existence.

Yet Kuyper and Woltjer did not question the assumed *logical* character of all lawful relationships without distinction. As a substitute for the *human* logos they elevated the *divine* Logos, i.e., divine Reason, to the level of Origin. This was done in their exploration of the realistic theory of ideas to which we referred above. The relations within the knowable things are therefore not purely *subjective* but *objective*-logical in nature and, therefore, as logical relations, can only be grasped through our *logical thinking*.

In a relative sense one can appreciate this attempt to escape from Kantian subjectivism in epistemology with an appeal to the “rational” divine plan of creation.

But who does not realize that this entire logicistic-idealistic orientation regarding the lawful relations in the cosmos flagrantly clashes with Kuyper’s religious *cosmomic idea*, in which he confessed so sharply and clearly the *mutual irreducibility* of the modal law-spheres!

We see here the extent to which the speculative logos theory again leads to an inner “logification” of the law-spheres, while the religious understanding of God’s Sovereignty as Creator in its turn has to lead to the theory of the sovereignty within each sphere of the temporal law-spheres of reality.

Undoubtedly the *diversity* of the objective ideas that are implanted in creation is maintained in Kuyper’s and Woltjer’s Logos theory – but it is a diversity *within* the Logos, *within* the *objective concepts of reason*. In other words, it is a diversity that can only be *logical* in nature.

The inner contradiction noted above is found only in the thought of Kuyper. This is in large part due to the fact that Woltjer constructs his philosophy of science completely on the basis of the speculative logos theory, whereas in the case of Kuyper the latter is simply a side-line adjacent to the main line of his religious basic conception.

It is high time, given the confusing debates that have arisen within our circle around the

Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, to come to clarity on what the issues are and no longer presume a kind of *harmonia praestabilita* between Kuyper's Calvinism and his logos theory – which in reality appears not to exist.

One can trace the diverging line, stemming from the logos theory and the scholastic view of soul and body, within Kuyper's encyclopedic system of sciences. Distorted as it is by the wholly historically-influenced schema of five faculties, this view can hardly claim any scientific merit.

Just consider the rich prospect of a truly philosophical encyclopedia provided *in nuce* in Kuyper's idea of a divine world order in which every sphere of ordinances, amidst its temporal coherence with all the others, bears its own irreducible character and has its own place and order within the whole. This view together with the theory of individuality-structures of reality developed by the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea could have set the notion of an encyclopedia on a truly reformational basis.

Instead, we now find a threefold quasi-Hegelian schema for the classification of the disciplines into five faculties. On the one hand, it is oriented to the trilogy: God, man, nature, and, on the other, to the dichotomy of soul and body in its traditional scholastic sense.

Kuyper writes:

If it is asked what distinctions control this actual division of scientific labor [namely, in five faculties], it is easily seen that the attention of the thoughtful mind had directed itself in turn to *man* and to *nature* that surrounds him; that, as far as his own being is concerned, man has occupied himself severally with his *somatic*, *psychic*, and *social* existence; and that even more than these four groups of sciences, he aimed distinctively at *the knowledge of God*. The accuracy of this division, which sprang from the practical need, is apparent. The principium of division is the subject of science, i.e., *Man* [ὁ ἄνθρωπος]. This leads to the coordination of *man* himself with *nature*, which he rules, and with his *God*, by whom he feels himself ruled. And this trilogy is crossed by another threefold division, which concerns “man” as such, even the distinction between *one* man and *many*, and alongside of this the antithesis between his *somatic* and *psychic* existence. Thus the subject was induced in the *Theological* faculty, to investigate the knowledge of God, and in the faculty of *natural philosophy* to pursue the knowledge of nature; to investigate the somatic existence of man in the *Medical*, his psychic existence in the *Philological* faculty, and finally in the *Juridical* faculty to embrace all those studies which bear upon human relationships. The boundary between these provinces of science is nowhere absolutely certain, and between each two faculties there is always some more or less disputed ground; but this cannot be otherwise, since the parts of the object of science are organically related, and the reflection of this object in the consciousness of the subject exhibits an equally organic character. (PST 190)

It is therefore not strange that within this schema, in the footsteps of Woltjer, philosophy is closely connected to linguistics and history as disciplines and simply coordinated with the special sciences, which fall outside the philological faculty.

As a consequence, the truth that philosophy has to provide all of the disciplines equally with the necessary *theoretical* foundations was not apprehended, and, in particular, the relationship between theology and Christian philosophy left unexplained!

Within this line of argumentation Kuyper took philosophy to be that discipline which has the “psychic existence of the human being as object.” The same object applies to the other philological sciences: history and linguistics.

Kuyper does not even try to line this view of philosophy up with the more precise description of philosophy developed later [in the *Encyclopedia*], namely, as the pursuit of the totality of scholarly knowledge.

It is therefore also not surprising that Kuyper fears the development of sociology, as study of human society, which threatens to break apart the artificial schema of the juridical faculty.

But fortunately we are here only on an unfruitful and dead-ended *side-track* of Kuyper's argumentation.

A meaningful elaboration of the rich soil of Kuyper's Calvinistic basic conception was temporarily made impossible by a speculative logos theory and the traditional scholastic views re-

garding the dichotomy of soul and body.

The matter-spirit dichotomy, given its linkage with the speculative logos theory, made it impossible for Kuyper to organically develop the idea of sphere-sovereignty into a theory of law-spheres.

Where Kuyper by contrast succeeded in liberating himself from this strange schematism, totally foreign to his basic conception, he managed to lay the foundations for Calvinistic thought, upon which one can constructively build with gratitude and peace of mind.

To this belongs, in addition to his penetrating theory regarding the necessary religious presuppositions of science and, in connection with that, the all-determining idea of the antithesis, his equally important theory of the faith-function (πίστις) in the process of knowing.

When people explain Kuyper's philosophy of science this important πίστις theory does receive special attention, but they usually stop short regarding its significance for philosophy at that crucial point where the actual coherence of this theory with the deep religious basic conception of Calvinism clearly comes to light.

In Part I, Chapter II, §11 of the second volume, Kuyper commences with an extensive explanation of the so-called *formal* function of the *pistis* in the process of knowing and he gives the following definition: "that function of the soul (ψυχή) by which it obtains certainty directly and immediately, without the aid of discursive demonstration" (*PST* 129). However, this provisional circumscription as yet does not touch what is essential to the πίστις. This definition practically coincides with the accepted understanding of intuitive evidence and apparently as such allows for a combination with the logos theory. But it is Kuyper himself who emphatically protests against this identification of *pistis* with intuitive evidence. The actual crux of his *pistis*-conception does not really function within his epistemology and is only returned to when he investigates the correlation of faith and revelation in theology.

Kuyper therefore penetrates much deeper than what is normally suggested and the entire flow of his argumentation makes it incorrect to view his initial "definition" as the complete and final stance of his epistemological *pistis* theory. It is only in Section 2, Chapter 1 § 25 that Kuyper brings to expression his religious basic conception within the context of his epistemology. There we read:

Faith indeed is in our human consciousness the deepest fundamental law that governs every form of distinction, by which alone all higher "Differentiation" becomes established in our consciousness. It is the daring breaking of our unity into a duality; placing another ego over against our own ego; and the courage to face that distinction because our own ego finds its point of support and rest only in that other ego. This general better knowledge of faith renders it possible to speak of faith in every domain; and also shows that faith originates primordially from the fact that our ego places God over against itself as the eternal and infinite Being, and that it dares to do this, because in this only it finds its eternal point of support. Since we did not manufacture this faith ourselves, but God created it in our human nature, this faith is but the opening of our spiritual eye and the consequent perception of another Being, excelling us in everything, *that manifests itself in our own being*. Thus it does not originate after the Cartesian style from an imprinted idea of God, but from the manifestation of God in our own being to that spiritual eye which has been formed in order, as soon as it opens, to perceive Him and in ecstasy of admiration to be bound to Him. (*PST* 266–67)

What is clearly and explicitly stated here is that the so-called formal function of the *pistis* in the process of knowing is entirely controlled by the *contents*, in which faith and revelation are unbreakable correlates. Faith is here recognized as transcendental boundary-function of our entire temporal existence.

Only in this sense does Kuyper's theory of the *pistis* adapt itself epistemologically to his doctrine of the necessary religious presuppositions of science, to the radical antithesis in the starting point of scholarship, the view of the heart as the religious concentration-point of human existence, the confession of the creational sovereignty of God in its pregnant biblical sense, and the rich religious idea of law as it is conceived by Kuyper.

But it is equally clear that this *pistis* theory, which proceeds from Kuyper's religious basic conception and belongs to the dominant trend in his thought, runs into an irreconcilable conflict with the metaphysical logos theory, the scholastic conception of the soul with its abilities, and idea-realism.

In scholastic psychology there is no room for the function of faith as part of the created human nature. Faith there belongs to the sphere of grace as a *donum superadditum* to the intellect. And it is striking that also in the dualistic antithetical understanding of nature and grace, such as it is found in dialectical theology, the most fulminating protest was raised against Kuyper's conception of the *pistis* as boundary function of human nature. To Barth faith is the wholly other, which is unable to find any point of connection in nature.

It is precisely the acceptance of the faith function as boundary aspect of temporal reality, if it is worked out consistently, that will lead to a proper demarcation of theology and philosophy.³¹

Christian theology may indeed be accepted as a special science with its own field of investigation being delimited, similar to the other disciplines, by a modal aspect of reality, even though it maintains its exceptional character owing to the unique nature of this field of investigation and through the circumstance that the Divine Word revelation occupies a central position within it.

In all subdivisions of theology – scholarly Bible research, ecclesiology, dogmatics, and the practical subjects – it remains the view-point of faith that provides a special scientific delimitation to the field of investigation. Therefore all truly *theological* concepts actually are *boundary concepts* in the pregnant sense of the term. Their contents point beyond the boundary line of time to the religious fulfillment of faith and revelation in the Word incarnate and to the triune God who revealed Himself then and there.³²

Philosophy, by contrast, has the task to unite in its theoretical totality view all the aspects of reality, and thus all the fields of investigation of the special sciences, so as to understand them in their meaning-coherence. Moreover, viewed from a Christian standpoint, philosophy and theology have the same supra-theoretical religious presuppositions. Only where these *presuppositions* of philosophy and theology are different in principle would it be possible to speak of an *a priori* conflict. In his *Encyclopedia* Kuyper understood this with great clarity.

This brings me to the end of what I wanted to say about Kuyper's philosophy of science.

At the beginning I remarked that it seems as if Calvinism has arrived at a cross-road. I have highlighted this thesis through an extensive analysis of the diverging trends of thought present in Kuyper's intellectual endeavors.

At this point I need to add with great emphasis and a deep sense of seriousness that the focus of the present difference of opinions will eventually confront everyone who is called to collaborate in the development of Calvinistic scholarship to make a choice. For there is "*periculum in mora*" [danger in delay]!

Since his death the spiritual heritage of Kuyper remained undivided. But it was striking to note that gradually a development in Calvinistic thought manifested itself in which the second trend of thought was explored almost exclusively. By contrast everyone was able to see that the legacy of Kuyper's religious basic conception of Calvinism was left aside without profiting from it philosophically. Doctrines such as the antithesis in scholarship, the heart as the religious concentration-point of existence, the *pistis* theory in its material significance, and the sphere-sovereignty of the law-spheres were less well understood and, at least outside the field of theology, often gradually watered down into propagandistic slogans without any tangible content.

When the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea emerged and developed in the line of

³¹ Compare in this regard my presentation to the theological conference in Zürich on "The natural legal consciousness and the knowing of the revealed Divine law" (*Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde*, 1939: 167ff.)

³² This radically distinguishes scriptural theology from all speculative theology. The latter operates with *metaphysical* concepts, which cannot furnish true knowledge because they are nothing but a "construct of reason," guided by an apostate faith in the autonomy of "natural reason."

Kuyper's religious basic conception, it was accused of deviating from the reformed tradition, of undermining the work of Kuyper, Bavinck, and Woltjer, of straying from the confessions, and so on.

We may find comfort in the fact that after the publication of his *Encyclopedia* Kuyper experienced a similar situation. At the time it was the church council of Bedum that handed a petition of protest over to the Deputants, against the restorer of Calvinism, that was aimed at upholding contact between the Reformed Churches and the Theological Faculty at the Free University. The accusation was: deviation from the reformed confessions exactly in those points in his scholarly works where Kuyper's religious basic orientation was at stake.

Is the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea guilty of undermining Kuyper's work when it has built further on this religious basic conception and uprooted a line of thought that is *foreign* to Calvinism? No, sooner, the opposite is the case. Proceeding in this way indeed does justice to the restorer of Calvinism in the highest sense of the term.

This is not, nor was it in 1896, about a deviation from the reformed confessions – which are indeed whole-heartedly accepted by all adherents of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. The distinction between soul and body has found, in the light of the religious and scriptural basic conception of the Reformation, a more principled basis than was the case in the traditional dichotomistic theory of substance, which only left room for the soul as a unity centered in the intellect. On this basis, also, nominalism is rejected more sharply than is possible on the basis of idea-realism. No, it has much more to do with an urgently needed and, given our reformational calling, commissioned task to sift with care between the principles of the Reformation and the traditional philosophical ideas that spring from an entirely different root.

Therefore, the current contest, just like in 1896, is not a sign of inner decay, but rather a joyous sign of a spiritual revival that can bear rich fruits under God's blessing.