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LAW AND SUBJECT IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE LAW IDEA
(Our philosophy at the crossroads)
BY
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The invitation which Reformational Philosophy addressed to the philosophizing world of the West was an invitation to rediscover philosophical communication. From the very outset it was clear that thereby a desideratum difficult to realize had been articulated, and in the growing divergence between the movements issuing respectively from the continental and the Anglo-Saxon linguistic spheres there is certainly no ground for cherishing optimistic expectations in this regard. The philosopher will necessarily have to step out of his study and, by observing the “life” of Western culture, divest himself of illusions. In a very limited sense SCHELER and HEIDEGGER, following in the footsteps of NIETZSCHE, have served as examples in this respect.

The invitation to philosophical communication has indeed acquired no easily definable significance in the twentieth century. What has it come to mean now that, for the greater part of the culturally and rapidly integrating world, the highest wisdom has come to consist in mastering affairs as swiftly and efficiently as possible? Can philosophy, which by its very nature calls to reflection, still be tolerated within such a context if it would wish to be more than a mere supporter in this race? Is not a large — perhaps geographically the largest — portion of the terrain once occupied by philosophy thereby excluded beforehand from every communication unwilling to submit itself to the commanding imperatives of the pragmatizing slogan?

Yet precisely herein matters of the deepest significance for philosophy are at stake. And even if European philosophy, insofar as it has remained faithful to its traditions, now finds itself more or less thrown back upon itself under these conditions, is there not all the more reason at least to preserve spiritual contact among ourselves and to attempt to understand one another better?

Had the present situation been foreseeable from the side of Reformational Philosophy at the time of its emergence — it is not for us to judge concerning this — then it would undoubtedly have answered the latter question affirmatively. There is, however, a factor not to be neglected which must be kept in view. Might it be that what today appears to be growing apart nevertheless remains so connected by a generative bond that elsewhere a threatening rupture must become visible?

The origins both of the one and of the other lie deep, first of all in the nature and place of philosophy as such, and further in philosophy’s own understanding of its vocation. Yet however this may be, that vocation was one directed toward humanity. If, in creaturely “solidarity,” searching and disputing, philosophy has until now wished to assume this vocation, then, even though the deepest differences have manifested themselves therein, it must continue onward

here in solidarity. For this is the first significance of the term “law” for philosophy, just as it is for every task entrusted to humanity.

For a philosophical orientation which believes it must formulate matters in this way, the contact to be sought in the first instance will always be that which, from its own point of view, lies closest at hand. A philosophy still willing to sustain the seriousness of reflection upon the root and origin of all that is and thinks may least of all be abandoned by Reformational Philosophy. Least of all, even if it should be foreseeable that its interlocutor, given his provenance, will before long turn toward his dialectical counterpart.

Yet precisely with the maintenance of the demand for communication there immediately arises, in the first place, the question concerning the correlation between law and subject. The idea of law, as the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea has believed it ought to understand it, can from the outset expect no agreement from those who wish to recognize no law for the philosophizing and scientifically active human being (and consequently for the human being as such) other than that of autonomous meaning-bestowal. When the conclusions of rational discourse can lead to no other outcome than the absence of all meaning, then this conclusion itself will articulate the only permissible meaning.

To be sure, in recent years we have been able, by way of a *philosophie de l’ambiguïté* and a dialectical critique of equally dialectical reason, to observe an attempt at retreat from the terrain of autonomous meaninglessness; yet this has by no means allowed the question concerning meaning-bestowal itself to liberate itself from dialectical confinement. Valid thought continues to be regarded solely as thought willing to allow itself to be cast back and forth between mutually presupposing and mutually excluding autonomy and intellectual exclusivity.

Communication with a dialectic of origins is indeed a difficult task, precisely because such dialectic reserves to itself the determination of the meaning even of the conversation. Everything advanced therein may be understood only from out of its own thinking of origin. How, then, shall it ever remain possible to continue seeing the solidarity of humanity’s task in this way and to bring that task to realization in enduring community of thought and labor?

And yet: the task is there, and the situation cannot be altered.

The very stake of the struggle is this situation itself.

It is tempting to conduct this struggle under the old perspective of the *philosophia perennis* with its eternal *telos*. It is undeniably fruitful and stimulating, within an exchange of ideas governed by this perspective, to receive from one another what the other has first succeeded in hearing from the all-encompassing ether of meaning-bestowal. Stimulating also when one takes into account the perhaps necessary re-reading of meaning arising from one’s own tension of origin.

Yet the focal point of the exercise of community does not lie herein.

The journey through this shared, and therefore so divergent, hearing has an aim. This aim is the source from which hearing takes place.

Is it then surprising that, during the march through the domain immanent to scientific (philosophical) thought, the gradually and increasingly rising suspicions of mutual difference — for at that stage they can legitimately be no more than suspicions — intensify the inner-philosophical tension until it reaches both its summit and its consummation in the free vista upon that which is the cause of our common journeying and our (unavoidable?) divergence?

The free vista. Yet this is precisely the point at issue. Can we expect this? In our most recent philosophy we know the admonition to continue questioning. To proceed, having traversed all paths, still looking upward toward the source, asking. Questioning therefore does not appear to be so simple, and the decision which decides all things lies deep. Might it be that, once we have arrived at the place of origins, whether the veils surrounding the summit are lifted and the “pavement of sapphire stone” — nay, far more than that — becomes visible depends upon the manner in which we question, upon the direction of our questioning, upon the organ with which, and the expectation within which, we ask?

For the shared hope is that which held us together, which must continue to hold us together. Once together we have approached the focal point, a decision concerning our hope must fall. In preparation for this we are not released from responsibility toward one another. This constitutes the tension of the common advance. Yet at the focal point one can only listen personally and ... choose.

What does this signify for our law-subject correlation?

In the first place, that speaking about it is already itself the consequence of the choice intended. That this speaking, as subjective, acknowledges itself to be regulated, normed, determined in its meaning. That within this meaning the aforementioned correlation presents itself and demands treatment. In other words: what is at issue is the meaning of meaning.

This question cannot be evaded. And this immediately in a twofold respect. One may reject it in practical-pragmatic fashion. But thereby one has already spoken and, on one's own part, posited the determination of meaning and the norm. Namely: one's own insight into the norm which must then direct the meaning of all action. And further: if one values communication, then it must truly be communication, and as a simple rule of the game it will have to be established ... what its meaning is.

More difficult than this question is, for the moment, not the question concerning the meaning of “law.” Communication, rule of the game, law, meaning? Yet what is at issue here is a transcendental matter in which the question of autonomy or heteronomy among the communicating parties themselves is thrown back upon them. Whoever wishes to communicate must choose for this decision and must therefore submit himself to the law of communication.

Idea of law, heteronomy of choice.

But also: idea of law, choice with respect to the *nomos* which demands the choice; in other words, subject-ivity of the necessity to choose with respect to the origin of all meaning-determination, including that of the *ratio* which accompanies every insight, ours included.

At the focal point law and subject are definitively confronted with one another. And however the decision may fall, together with all its consequences, it will be the law which regulates the competencies; the subject will have to conform itself. The expectation with which one began one's questioning toward the ground, the source, the focal point, will prove decisive for the acceptance or rejection of the all-decisive norm, for the assumption of the place proper to subjectivity. That expectation will prove already to have decided.

Being and Knowing?

The decision will concern, before all else, whether the heteronomy thus imposed is acknowledged. Non-acknowledgment throws the subject back upon itself, that is to say, into the dialectic of a supposedly grasped autonomy and of the “rational” lawfulness of its realization. SARTRE’S grand, thetic *engagement* did not lead him out of the adventures of dialectic. Instead of satisfying MERLEAU-PONTY’S challenge, he followed, from afar, in the footsteps of ROUSSEAU. With this difference, however: the dictatorship of the French Revolution believed for a time in Rousseau’s ideals, whereas today nowhere is any place any longer accorded to a corresponding faith.

Yet how far do we get with outward acknowledgment? Quite rightly, from the side of MARTIN HEIDEGGER, the “question of ground” has been directed against such acknowledgment. Having arrived at the source, has it seen the source?

And if such acknowledgment would wish to be more than merely outward acknowledgment, not merely to a certain extent but along the whole line, then it finds itself confronted with the great difficulty that it is not the law which begins to present itself, but that which is determined in its meaning by the law. Does the realization of meaning coincide with that which subjectivity offers us therein? How could we recognize them apart from their answering to meaning? Yet still: in its subjective answering, have we truly read its meaning, can we read it, as the meaning-bestowal of its law expects from us? And if not, where does the cause lie — in the one who reads, or in that which was read?

But now we stand first of all before a question in relation to which the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, particularly in recent discussions, once again found itself challenged.

For the dispute concerning the law-subject correlation may be declared inadmissible in the name of ... the law. It may be rejected because another relation, another ordering, another structure claims priority. This is the ancient division between the noetic and the ontic.

The claim unquestionably bears no modern character. Today the issue concerns rather “scientific” or metaphysical, metaphysical or ontological, ontological or ontic. Who, since the “critique of reason,” still dares to allow the dispute to proceed between the ontic and the noetic? And has not phenomenology definitively delivered us from the dilemma, especially after the “knowing” subject was compelled to surrender itself to the “ontic” subject — which, thanks to that quality, possessed the ontological monopoly?

Even if this may generally be so, the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea cannot pass by the issue raised during the “preliminary investigation” of the matter occupying us here. For even if it itself rejects every tutelage by, or assimilation to, theology, its principal thesis of transcendental critique, with the thesis therein contained concerning the presuppositions and presupposed elements of scientific activity, brings it into the closest contact with theological-philosophical traditions.

Now then, traditionally orthodox theology within Calvinist circles was pre-eminently inclined to present itself as champion of the ontically given. Did not the questions surrounding Article 2 of the *Confessio Belgica* unfold within precisely this schema? Nor can this surprise us, since the ancient, scholastic, and pre-critical humanistic philosophy prevailing at the time of its emergence demanded, of rational knowing, *adaequatio* to the rational order of being (or to the order reconstructed *more geometrico*). Critique of reason and phenomenology may have placed such a demand — connected as it was with the uncritical idea of “substance” — outside the philosophical order, yet theological thought continued in many respects to Christianize the

metaphysical concept of being into the concept of the created, indeed even into the first fundamental concept of philosophy embracing analogically both Creator and creature.

Besides, what advantage would theology have gained by transferring itself to the new philosophical movement? What it believed itself to encounter in the “ontic” was the residue of an idea of law, and this seemed to awaken its reverence for the Lawgiver. If the critical question concerning the Archimedean point thereby occupied by theology must be directed toward it, then certainly nothing changes should it exchange its perhaps pre-critical standpoint for a position within the “space” of a theology awaiting its ever contingent consecration. For according to its own testimony the latter, prior to this sovereign moment, rises no further above human wisdom, while nevertheless permanently and not contingently designating its Archimedean (pre-“theological”) point as the exclusively valid one. The antinomy of the thesis is, since the excuse of the pre-critical period can no longer apply, only the sharper.

Nevertheless, it is by no means thereby settled *a contrario* that the noetic-ontic correlation ought to replace that of subject-law, that it could take its place, or that it first supplies its correct interpretation. And this least of all if one claims to encounter the Lawgiver within the law. For what character belongs to that which here — note well, together with the Creator — is brought under the ontic denominator?

The givenness of creation? Now the questions raised earlier concerning the readability of the “law” by way of the “realities” of subjectivity return. How is the “givenness” of the creature to be read? Through the spectacles of Scriptural revelation, one repeats after CALVIN. Excellent; but after all that has befallen the Reformation, we now wish to raise more precisely the question how the eye of the reader has been adjusted to these infallible spectacles. And what his head and hands have done.

For the so-called “ontic” in no way brings us into direct contact with the “law.” It is that which was (or is) placed over against human noesis in order to be known. Yet through this opposition it does not thereby assume the position of norm for knowing.

What presents itself to knowing is a “reality” given in a certain sense. But: in what sense given? This question must be raised with respect to the creature in and around us, but no less with respect to what has been done, after CALVIN, with his image of Holy Scripture as spectacles for reading the revelation of creation — an image intended neither theologically nor philosophically. In what sense is Scripture “given”? In carrying through the dualism of knowing and being, people in fact failed to realize that what according to CALVIN belonged on the side of the knower (Scripture) was silently transferred to the other side for the sake of epistemic certainty. That they failed to realize this can only be attributed to the deepest ground-motive which had already for centuries moved Western Christendom in the foundation of its life.

This ground-motive was that of nature and supernature in its then rationalistic form. It is not derived from Holy Scripture. It was rationalistic in origin. Within this motive the revelation of the truly moving and meaning-bestowing Origin, knowable from His creation exclusively in the light of Holy Scripture, had become overgrown by created reason. Humanism, which cast off the supernatural, continued to live from the rationalistic inheritance. Within its framework, however, by turning toward subjectivity (of experience and of being), it removed from the ontically known the background of self-positing lawfulness; ontological is only the subject as lawgiver — or contingent lawgiver.

We now stand within a remarkable situation which certainly demands our attention. Along with the old rationalism we discern, in what it called the ontic, the law; yet the latter is not the ontic of ancient and medieval philosophy. Along with post-critical humanistic philosophy we acknowledge human subjectivity as responsible within creation for the realization of “being”; yet this responsibility entails no ontological freedom.

We reject the noetic-ontic schema because it contains an inadmissible synthesis with the rationalistic demand of *adaequatio*; but equally must we reject every subjectivizing reconstruction of this schema which merely shifts the center of gravity within the subject-object relation, with all the consequences this entails, while leaving the schema itself intact. For the schema itself, however metamorphosed in the course of time, has been handed down from the inheritance of which we have just spoken.

Despite the most urgent declarations concerning the “crisis” of reason, the schema cannot be detached from its origin in the priority of knowing, the priority of intellectual, theoretical knowing. And there is every reason to ask whether a Western philosophy grown by grace of this priority — despite all attempts not merely to shift the center of gravity within the subject-object relation, but also to shift the accent from knowing toward experience and being — can truly be regarded as capable, in accordance with its own pretension, of withdrawing the subjectivity of being as such from the threat of abstraction posed by philosophical-scientific thought, which remains anchored in its pretension to origin.

The idea of law. Of the meaning-bestowing law. What is its meaning?

Introduction to the Discussion

a. A. L. CONRADIE

Thus we stand before the apparent dilemma of having either to seek the law within the “object” of knowledge or else to allow it to disappear within a “subjective” idea of the fulfillment of meaning, which threatens to relativize it.

In the foregoing we have deliberately attempted to illustrate the idea of law as heteronomy by means of the fundamental questions of philosophical exchange. For only there is “ground” reached, and only there can it become clear what the true depth of the problem is. What is at issue is the law of origin, beyond which no further questioning back is possible; stated otherwise, the issue concerns the origin of meaning-bestowal, from which a beginning of conversation — and consequently of everything that might subsequently be brought forward within it — can acquire meaning. The premature introduction of a derivative meaning of law can only distract philosophical attention. If there is to be talk of law at all, there is no escaping its grip, least of all by denying its existence. What is therefore at issue is its own meaning.

Perhaps within the circle of Reformational Philosophy there has long existed a need for reflection upon its more precise designation (“Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea”) in the present age. This question has meanwhile presented itself more concretely in three fundamental exchanges of thought conducted with the W.d.W. (“Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee”), in two of which the conversation was initiated from the other side, while in the third this also occurred, though already accompanied by a response from our side.

The first two originate from South Africa, although one of them arose in a Utrecht dissertation; they do not reject all the ideas of the W.d.W., but are oriented rather toward the conceptions of PROF. STOKER, especially the Utrecht dissertation.¹ The third is the discussion familiar to the readers of our journal, initiated by PROF. VAN PEURSEN. Taken together, they concentrate upon the subject of communication, so urgent for us today. They do so from the standpoint of the scriptural life- and world-view and prove to culminate in the issue named in the title of our essay. Instead of deviating to the sidelines — as the W.d.W. has unfortunately so often had to experience whenever engagement with it merely articulated an *a priori* rejection of communication — the authors have sought contact at the central point of transcendental critique and its claim to appeal to a given “state of affairs.”

The question raised is this: is the latter appeal justified, and consequently is communication in the deepest ground truly possible? Does not the idea, emphasized with at least equal force by the W.d.W., of an antithesis reaching to the root between Christian and non-Christian scientific activity — or better and more broadly: culture — stand in the way of this? Should it really surprise us that neither humanism, nor dialectical theology, nor traditional Thomism arrive at genuine communication with Reformational Philosophy, despite possible appreciation? And is such communication, even for those who have availed themselves of the opportunity — indeed sought it — to investigate these possibilities more deeply, fundamentally attainable? Can even a Reformed tradition continuing itself within so-called neo-Calvinism make peace with the fundamental theses of “Reformational” philosophy? Has this philosophy gone too far, or not far enough?

In encountering these questions, it knows itself to be taken up into the movement of its own necessary historical evolution, and thereby brought into contact with both past and future.

We may state at the outset that all three of the writers mentioned by us have penetrated profoundly, in breadth as well as depth, into the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea and, judging from the passages cited from its works, have understood its terminology. Naturally the thought suggests itself whether, in this case, language itself is not also entangled in the problem of the “states of affairs” at issue; however, this may merely be noted without permitting any direct conclusion to be drawn from it.

Mrs. CONRADIE immediately places at issue the core problem of transcendental critique which, according to the exposition in *A New Critique...*, likewise — we may add: above all — would rest upon such a state of affairs. And since what is at issue here is the key point of the W.d.W., we understand how weighty the discussion must become and how greatly it will occupy precisely that terrain which we have above attempted preliminarily to illuminate.

After the author has brought out that in the discussion concerning transcendental critique logically conclusive arguments will be advanced on both sides, yet according to PROF. DOOYEWEERD the parties must nevertheless arrive at divergent conclusions as a consequence of their differing religious starting points, she raises the question whether this does not already apply at the fixing of the “state of affairs” itself (the theoretical Gegenstands-relation amidst the modal aspects distinguished by the W.d.W.) concerning which the discussion is conducted.

¹ A. L. CONRADIE, *The Neo-Calvinistic Concept of Philosophy*, Natal 1960; V. BRÜMMER, *Transcendental Criticism and Christian Philosophy* (Academic dissertation, defended at Utrecht), Franeker, 1961. For the discussion DOOYEWEERD-VAN PEURSEN, see Phil. Ref. 1959/3, 4, 1960/3, 4, 1961/4.

In *A New Critique*... this is not denied; nevertheless, the author believes it necessary to direct the spotlight upon a passage from Vol. II, pp. 73–74, where one reads:

“It is impossible to eliminate the religious starting-point of theoretical thought. But it is not impossible to perform a provisional epoche of all specific philosophical interpretations of the states of affairs which are to be established in a precise way before we try to account for them in a philosophical theory.”

Here the question presents itself concerning what portion of the path between religious starting point and philosophical theory the state of affairs under discussion must be precisely established, or whether starting point and theoretical reasoning concerning it can in fact be held apart. And with this the relation between law and idea of law is placed at issue.

The difficulty which discussion at this point appears to involve emerges especially at the end of the fifth chapter of Mrs. CONRADIE’S work, when, after having illuminated from every side the transcendental-critical investigation of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea from the standpoint of Reformational Philosophy, and after having pointed to the universal coherence within which DOOYEWEERD placed the structure of theoretical thought, she nevertheless believes his conception on this matter must be rejected because, on the one hand, it accentuates universal coherence according to DOOYEWEERD’S own view, while on the other hand it seeks the legitimacy of theoretical contact in a state of affairs within the modal structure of thought which is undeniable for all.²

The modal structure as such would indeed be honored with respect to the first two questions of transcendental critique — namely those concerning abstraction from coherence and the necessity of an Archimedean point — yet would necessarily be disavowed from the moment of the choice of this point onward. BRÜMMER’S dissertation likewise believes that all emphasis must be placed here.

The complex of questions which from the outset would already demand preliminary disentanglement is now concentrated by Mrs. CONRADIE within the problem named in the title of our essay, and therefore we wish for a moment simply to follow the author.

She believes that PROF. DOOYEWEERD attributes the lack of communication between philosophical viewpoints to differences in the content of presuppositions, while assuming the presence of these presuppositions and their *a priori* influence to be structurally necessary. Yet in the discovery of this — supposed — “state of affairs” he would meanwhile have seen the opening of the way toward contact.

However, from the moment that DOOYEWEERD gave to the “Archimedean point,” structurally required as universal, a subjective content of his own, his entire philosophy — including that which prior to this moment had been established as universally valid structure — proves to be governed from this subjectively given content. We therefore cannot be in contact with an

² ... we cannot agree that the point of contact must be sought in the modal structure of thought, for the account of this modal structure only becomes intelligible in the context of the full structure of thought, which includes both a modal, theoretical structural aspect and a supra-theoretical structural aspect. And this conception of the full structure of thought and of the positive rôle of religion in philosophy is the immediate implication of DOOYEWEERD’S interpretation of the sovereignty of God, the central thesis of his religious *a priori*. For this reason we must conclude that the transcendental critique is not a proof but a description of D.’s fundamental epistemological assumption, which lies at the root of his entire philosophy and is most inaccessible to the immanentist philosopher. (Conradie 1960:154)

“undeniable state of affairs.” And since D. considers every struggle between transcendental ground-ideas³ as such to lie outside philosophical discussion, communication with his philosophy, closed from the standpoint of its own starting point, would appear to be excluded.

Provisionally we raise here the following counter-question: how far does transcendental critique intend to reach? That is to say: what is its actual structure? And how was this structure discovered? Was it discovered from out of philosophical dialogue, so that its limit is reached with a disclosure of the presence of *a priori* motives attained by philosophically immanent means? Or is a philosophical criterion to be applied — if such exists! — expected to extend beyond the consequences of philosophical elaboration into an evaluation of the very presence of the *a priori* itself? Can philosophy as such pronounce judgment, in the highest instance, concerning this presence?

To the first question the W.d.W. answers: transcendental critique was discovered from out of philosophical dialogue. With respect to the second it must observe that dialogue presupposes at least two partners, that it for its own part must deny this here, and must reserve to itself the right to apply the final test to the partner precisely at this point (namely whether or not there is an equal denial).

For the question which proves to precede everything else is this: shall theoretical thought itself possess the last word concerning the presence or absence of the presuppositions from which it philosophizes? What in fact is its position if it wishes to continue applying its own criterion? What is the law of this criterion? Or is it itself the criterion of the law?

We find the answer of our author implied in her integral judgment concerning the transcendental critique of the W.d.W.:

“DOOYEWEERD’S philosophical system itself, which attempts to relate world and origin in a theoretical idea, reveals all the characteristics of a coherent and impressive metaphysic” (p. 200; emphasis ours, M.).

We shall have to undertake an investigation into the author’s idea of origin and consequently into her Archimedean point; already we now know that she sees the father of Reformational Philosophy as connecting God and creation within a theoretical idea and thus as subordinating his supra-theoretical presuppositions to theoretical thought, with the result of an impressive metaphysics. Indeed, such a result could only be attributed to such a cause. And the law (criterion) of the idea would therefore bear theoretical character.

The author believes herself exempt from this criterion and able to justify her conclusion because:

“Even when structure and content (namely of the idea of law in Reformational Philosophy) have been fused, we see that the resulting concepts ... are not to be found in Scripture...”

This determination appears at a stroke to reverse the roles, yet we continue to ask: what criterion is implied in the author’s judgment?

b. DR. V. BRÜMMER

³ I.e. those of the scholastic, reformational and humanist philosophies under discussion or tendencies influenced by them.

We now wish, however, first to concern ourselves with the Utrecht dissertation of DR. BRÜMMER, in order subsequently to enter into discussion with both South African authors concerning the “idea of law,” which appears equally — though not without nuance — to govern their studies. Their conclusions with respect to the W.d.W. will prove to be substantially identical.

A parallel indication of an *a priori* implication in judgment, similar to what we have just encountered in Mrs. CONRADIE, is found near the end of BRÜMMER’S truly masterful exposition of DOOYEWEERD’S thought. After observing that according to the W.d.W. an as yet unanalyzed view of cosmic time underlies both theoretical thought and naive experience, and that this awareness can become explicit only in an *a priori* theoretical insight, he concludes (p. 122):

“Hence the actual subjective transcendental *a priori* dimension always has a theoretical character and pre-supposes the synthetic *a priori* (epoche and inter-modal synthesis).”

We are unable to read anything into this conclusion other than a tacit identification of the explicitly theoretical with the actual — inserted into D.’s conception of the transcendental *a priori* contrary to his intention — which reversal of intention can only be attributed to the presuppositions of the author himself, not yet under discussion here.

For DR. BRÜMMER as well, and rightly so, the transcendental critique of theoretical thought constitutes the focal point of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, indeed, as it were, that philosophy itself. It is therefore against this critique that he directs his anti-critique.

Yet from the very outset we recognize the above-mentioned parallel with the misunderstanding found in Mrs. CONRADIE’S work in the very approach of his criticism, since he is unable to understand the character of the so-called intentional (theoretical-logical) opposition of the modal aspects within the “Gegenstandsrelation” (according to D.’s conception) as a logical reality, and therefore can only attribute this antithesis to a prior theoretical attribution of independence to each of the modal aspects. DR. B. one-sidedly connects sphere-sovereignty (“universality in its own sphere”) with the meaning-kernel of the modality instead of placing inter-modal coherence in the foreground (this is indeed impossible from the standpoint of an identification of the explicitly theoretical with the actual — see above — though the W.d.W. itself gives no occasion for such a misunderstanding).

The author continues along the same pattern in his treatment of the coherence between modalities and individuality-structures, at which point he believes himself obliged to follow PROF. STOKER’S theory of conic sections. According to DR. BRÜMMER, the W.d.W. cannot provide a satisfactory explanation of the unity of the modalities while preserving their mutual irreducibility within the individuality-structure, because in its treatment of theoretical thought, cosmic time — precisely that which should accomplish this task — proves instead to bring about the mutual disintegration of the modalities. STOKER, for his part, wishes the individual structures to be regarded as “substances,” while seeing these latter as inseparably connected to one another through the modalities. Prof. D. attributes STOKER’S difficulty on this point to an incorrect interpretation of the Gegenstandsrelation as an ontically real antithesis.

DR. BRÜMMER meanwhile believes, on the repeatedly noted grounds above, that this defense cannot be convincing; that the relation established via cosmic time between the modal and plastic dimensions can remain only an extrinsic one within the idea of a transcendent fullness of meaning; and that transcendental critique begins with an isolation of the logical and non-logical modalities from one another.

“It is hardly surprising to find both of them (KANT and DOOYEWEERD) faced with the epistemological problem of synthesis between the various law-spheres, a problem which is central in the transcendental critique of both” (p. 160).

The attentive reader will once again recognize in DR. BRÜMMER’S opinion — namely that for DOOYEWEERD, just as for KANT, the epistemological problem stands at the center of transcendental critique — the same parallel with Mrs. CONRADIE’S conception, and we shall therefore have to attempt to uncover the foundations of DR. BRÜMMER’S philosophical thinking ourselves.

Now he has placed no obstacles in our way in this regard, for after the descriptive portion of his dissertation and the short introduction just discussed concerning the Gegenstandsrelation and the mutual irreducibility of the modal aspects, he lays all his cards upon the table at once in an exposition concerning “meaning” according to his own conception. Against that background he subsequently reviews DOOYEWEERD’S work. Although we do not regard this order of treatment as the most preferable, it need not obstruct a fruitful discussion, provided only that the mutual grounds are ultimately brought to light as such. For our part, however, with a view to the desired concentration upon those grounds, we wish for the moment to leave the author’s self-described “digression” aside and to enter instead into his subsequently developed understanding of transcendental critique.

DR. BRÜMMER believes that three developmental phases must be distinguished in PROF. DOOYEWEERD’S thought:

1. that of the Anti-Revolutionary Statecraft articles preceding his first major work;
2. that expressed in the Prolegomena of the Dutch edition of the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*;
3. that found in the articles published in *Philosophia Reformata* since 1941 and in the English work *A New Critique*.

In the first phase, DOOYEWEERD would have illuminated the “noetic” themata by which a truly Calvinistic philosophy distinguishes itself from others, namely the questions concerning the origin and mutual relation of the distinct law-spheres. In the second phase the “idea of law” refers to the fundamental presuppositions of every philosophy. Here it was presupposed that philosophy directs itself toward the totality of meaning. Since this presupposition is by no means universally accepted, it became necessary to investigate what the “universally valid conditions are which make theoretical thought possible, and which are required by virtue of the immanent structure of this thought itself” (p. 205). With this, the third phase would have been reached. Although Dr. B. acknowledges that this final phase was implied in each of the preceding ones, he nevertheless believes that only in the latter does transcendental critique as such come properly into view. “Universally valid conditions” means for him: ontically universally valid conditions.

This evolution in D.’s line of thought becomes for the author centrally important in D.’s definition of the Archimedean point. In the first two phases this would have been chiefly a watchtower and thus would have had “noetic” significance; in the third it claims an “ontic” position, namely as the point at which the selfhood participates in the root-unity or totality of meaning and from which alone theoretical synthesis can consequently be accomplished.

But the answer to the question concerning such a totality of meaning can only proceed from a prior answer to the question concerning the Origin of all meaning. Thus DOOYEWEERD asks (*N.C. I*, p. 52, cited by B., p. 216):

“How is this critical self-reflection, this concentric direction of theoretical thought to the I-ness, possible, and what is its true character?”

“It is clear,” says BRÜMMER, “that with this question DOOYEWEERD has abandoned his transcendental critique.”

For what is at issue here are the subjective presuppositions determining this transcendental critique.

“Hence, in this third problem, DOOYEWEERD moves his attention from the ontic pre-requisites of theoretical thought to the noetic pre-suppositions of philosophy (as transcendental criticism).”

In this he returns to his second phase and abandons, for the sake of the thesis of the religious antithesis, the question concerning universally valid states of affairs which lay at its foundation.

Thus the author sees standing over against one another:

- an “ontic” sphere, within which are anchored the necessary presupposed conditions (“prerequisites”) of theoretical thought,
- and a “noetic” sphere, where the distinct “ideas of law” would belong as subjective presuppositions.

According to BRÜMMER, DOOYEWEERD stands before the impossible choice either:

- of relativizing the question of truth concerning the Origin (“true or pretended origin”) in order to include within his argument the problem of the Archimedean points of non-Christian scientific activity as well,
- or of making an appeal — inadmissible from an “ontic” standpoint — to the law of God in order to determine the true content of the idea of law, whereby, according to the author, the connection (possibility of communication) with non-Christian philosophy would be severed at the root and only a hopeless discussion within the “noetic” sphere would remain.

Instead of confronting this choice, DOOYEWEERD, according to DR. BRÜMMER, shifts the difficulty by introducing the religious ground-motives upon the stage in a subsequent phase of his thought. With respect to the non-Christian ground-motives the influence of this development is not of such great significance, but it becomes highly significant in view of the biblical ground-motive of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, described by D. as that of creation, fall, and redemption. D. represents the relation between ground-motive and idea of law in such a way that the ideas of law constitute the theoretical expression of the religious motives.

From this point onward, says the author, DOOYEWEERD abandons his appeal to the divine law and shifts instead to the foundation of divine Word-revelation.

We shall have to investigate more closely what, within DR. BRÜMMER’S line of thought, respectively the idea of “law” and the significance of Word-revelation for philosophy mean, and it may be anticipated that the relation between idea of law and religious ground-motive will thereby become critically thematic from our side. That our author can see in the critical reflection

upon the religious ground-motives of theoretical thought nothing other than a “change,” “exchange,” or “leap” in the father of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea may at first sight astonish the adherent of a Reformational philosophy; nevertheless, we shall prove here to be dealing with a deeply rooted question which certainly ought now to be squarely faced, lest it continue needlessly to place stumbling blocks in the way of philosophical exchange in the future.

We have already seen that the work of Mrs. CONRADIE rests upon the same root as that of DR. BRÜMMER. The latter, however, has believed it necessary to provide an extensive justification of the foundations of his critique. Whether these are shared in their full extent by the author of *The Neo-Calvinistic Concept* is not of primary importance. For the moment the issue concerns the alternative: “noetic–ontic” or “subject–law”; on this question both authors occupy the same standpoint. For the present, therefore, we may confine ourselves to DR. BRÜMMER’S expositions on the matter.

BRÜMMER’S *A Priori* Concerning “Meaning”

Inadequate Philosophical Justification

While BRÜMMER considers the term “time” difficult to maintain as a designation for the coherence between the modal aspects, he does regard the word “meaning” (*zin*) as suitable for this purpose in itself. The issue now concerns the meaning of this word itself. In a manner remotely reminiscent of the method of signific analysis, he allows the significance of the term “meaning” to diverge in two directions (“the term ‘meaning’ is very ambiguous,” p. 164), namely as referring either to the content of an affirmation or to purposiveness, as for example in the expressions respectively: meaning of words, and: meaning of life. He sharpens his intention further in the distinction between:

- “logos-articulation” (articulate categorial content of words), and
- “telos” (purpose).

Having posited these definitions, he proceeds from them to investigate DOOYEWEERD’S use of the term “law” as the law of meaning-determination.

The Word of God, according to the author, is simultaneously creative and revelatory, and therein the absolute origin of that which it brings to structural expression (“articulates”); the divine Logos is thereby the criterion of truth for the human logos. In like manner, God’s purposes (*Telos*) are the criterion of truth for ours. Thus two pairs of meanings for “meaning” arise.

As creative Logos, the divine Word is the absolute origin of the created cosmos according to its history and actuality, according to the whatness (*quidditas*) of what exists and its concrete individual existence; the whatness of what exists is always real only in the existence of the particular concrete (the category “green,” for example, does not exist; only the green leaf, etc.).

It is not difficult to recognize in the foregoing the well-known philosophical viewpoints of scholasticism, which the author quite self-evidently chooses as the basis for his further reasoning. Likewise, without further criticism, he adopts the distinction fundamental for him between the special revelation in Scripture and the general revelation in the creature, indeed going so far as to follow the late PROF. V. HEPP in his speaking of a *revelatio Dei in statu recto*, self-revelation of God amid His relation to man and cosmos, and a *revelatio Dei in statu obliquo*, in which God causes the cosmos to reveal Himself to man.

“This revelatory character of the creative Logos is, as we shall demonstrate,”

thus the author,

“the basis for all our knowledge of cosmic reality” (p. 159).

Distinct from the Logos, the Telos is the purpose for which God called the cosmos into being, namely as expression of His love.

“The purpose of this expression is that the created cosmos might return the love of God by honouring him as its Creator.”

This purpose has been revealed to us in the law of God.

With this the author has informed us what meaning the term “law” bears for him in the present context. The law as such has a heteronomous character with respect to the cosmos (*law for the cosmos*) and may therefore not be confused with the immanent structure of the cosmos. The latter would thereby acquire autonomy (“it would have a law within itself”), according to Dr. B. In support of his intention he cites a statement by DR. BERKOUWER in his *Faith and Sanctification*:

“This coming of God’s command from outside is essential to the command of God...”

We do well to note this identification of *telos*, law, and commandment.

The author further concludes readily that the law therefore cannot be seen as an immanent cosmic structure apart from God. Provisionally, though as will appear by no means apart from the author’s own idea of law, we should like to interject the question: does “immanent structure” as such mean “apart from God”? This could only be the case if the cosmos could from its origin possess such a mode of existence.

The W.d.W. confesses together with the author the self-evident heteronomy of the law. But with respect to what correlate? Its opposition to autonomy directs itself in direct attack against every hypostasis of human reason, which indeed truly possesses an immanent character with respect to the cosmos as a creature determined by the Creator in its peculiar meaning, yet throughout the entire tradition of Western philosophy has been confessed as sovereign lawgiver. Can Dr. B. intend this? We shall see.

Alongside the duality “ontic–noetic,” and crossing it in a certain sense, there now appears upon the scene the duality Telos–Logos. The Logos-structure of creation as the factual form of the cosmos has, through the Fall, fallen away from the Telos. Nevertheless God preserves this “structure”

“in continuity with the past ... in the continuity of the fall and therefore under judgment” (p. 170).

Do we here encounter, in the old garment of the late Middle Ages, an offshoot of twentieth-century scholasticism with a hypostasis of the law of sin in the divine Logos? The author says:

“the creative Word is ‘repeated’ in continuity ...”

In the line of scholasticism, the Telos–Logos duality now proves dependent upon the duality of knowing and being posited as truly original. And with this is naturally connected the accentuation of the difference between Word-revelation and creation-revelation. The author seeks *a priori* to circumvent the antinomy arising from such a synthesis with non-Christian thought by bringing

together his concept of Telos with that of Logos under the scriptural — divine — revelation of the Word of God in John 1:

“The law of God as Telos of the cosmos is revealed to us in Scripture. However it is fully realized only in Christ who fulfilled the law. In this sense Christ is not only the revelation of the divine Logos (Joh. 1:1–3), but also the revelation of the Telos of the creation ... Hence W. J. AALDERS remarks that on account of sin there is a breach between the law of God for the cosmos (Telos) and the law (or articulation) of the cosmos, with the result that the former cannot simply be read off from the latter.”

This applies equally to nature and history (pp. 170–171).

Unquestionably, for the sake of safeguarding the inviolability of revelation for the “supernatural,” the “will” of God for creation (Telos) is posited as primary with respect to the “Logos-articulation” (the meaning-bestowal knowable by man). And within the latter the author takes yet a further step in the same direction by grounding in the creative character of the divine Logos the limitation to — and thereby the necessity of — the abstracting character of all human knowledge (including pre-theoretical knowledge). For the latter lacks the creative element, that is, the creatively knowing element of individual existence.

For the author it is, by virtue of his own presupposition, of the highest importance to demonstrate the agreement of his theses with that which presents itself ontically as truth of being. At issue here therefore is the *adaequatio* of the human logos with the cosmic Logos-structure, which the Creator preserves in continuity with original creation and the Fall and causes to continue its course through the ages.

Knowledge concerning the divine Telos likewise can be obtained only from God’s “ontic” revelation. Yet knowledge as knowledge remains the affair of the human logos. It therefore remains dependent upon the “intellect,” posited in second place with respect to the Telos.

While, as we have seen, man remains dependent upon Scripture for knowledge of the Telos, he acquires knowledge of the cosmos articulated by the divine Logos from the *revelatio Dei in statu obliquo*. Man comes into contact with this revelation through his intuition, and following STOKER, in distinction from DOOYEWEERD, the author wishes to call this contact naive experience.

STOKER believed that at this point he discovered a significant element of truth in the phenomenological method as a species of the “phanerocritical” (*phanerosis* = revelation). Here there lies simultaneously a principial difference and a principial agreement between STOKER and ourselves, though this cannot yet come under discussion at present.

Investigation into the Meaning of BRÜMMER’S Logos-Systematics

What we must first keep in view, in order to come into contact with Dr. BRÜMMER’S conceptions, is what we should like to call his *logos-systematics*. Man’s “telos” may here, in agreement with the author, remain outside consideration. The issue concerns the relation of the human logos to divine revelation in Telos and Logos, the former as law and will heteronomously imposed, the latter as articulation of the creature revealing itself in that creature; both posited as “ontic,” and thereby regulative, over against the noetic sphere, wherein the (human) logos has its place.

The question then is by what route the latter allows itself to be regulated from, that is through, the “ontic” sphere, and whence its competence derives to pronounce judgment as it has done through the mouth of Dr. B.

In order to understand the author on this point, we do well to pay attention to his own view concerning DOOYEWEERD’S use of the term “meaning,” against which Dr. BRÜMMER’S argument, after rejecting cosmic time as the idea of the meaning-coherence of the modal aspects of experience, was directed.

According to him, the term can refer both to the creative divine Logos and to the Telos; as structural principle of the cosmos only the meaning of “Logos-articulation” comes into consideration. Were this to be confused with Telos, then concrete existence would present an insurmountable problem. Telos is heteronomous with respect to it and cannot encompass concrete-individual existence. To assert this, indeed, would result either in a dualism or in a reduction of the concrete individual to the “law.”

KANT declared the meaning-structure of the cosmos to be a logical one, which is rejected by DOOYEWEERD. According to Dr. B.—and this can no longer surprise us—the logical universal, transcending sphere-sovereignty, bears a cosmic character and underlies all the modalities. DOOYEWEERD, on the other hand, sees cosmic meaning as a cosmonomic idea, according to the author. And this, he says, cannot possibly underlie every philosophical system as the W.d.W. claims. KANT’S conception of the cosmic order as a logical one surely cannot be called cosmonomic.

This evident misunderstanding of the term “cosmonomic” in Dr. BRÜMMER’S argument would scarcely need to be noted were it not most intimately connected with the *a priori* he has thus far developed.

As a consequence of this *a priori*, he sees in DOOYEWEERD’S conception of the law-subjectivity correlation an internal contradiction. On the one hand, the idea of law would relate equally to law and subject; on the other hand, it would include the idea of subject as correlate and thus see the idea of law complemented by a subject-idea.

After, as he believes, having demonstrated that in the W.d.W. “the existent subject” receives its “individuality” from the law (*typical law of individuality*), the author asks how matters now stand regarding concrete existence vis-à-vis the “law.” By definition the relation is one of heteronomy; there is therefore mutual polarity. And since DOOYEWEERD can allow no proper law inhering in the subject as such over against the “cosmonomic meaning,” only the conclusion of the subject’s lack of structure would seem possible.

The author himself sees only one escape from this dilemma. The subject can possess a structure in some way determined by “law,” which nevertheless as “structure” would belong to the subject-side, and this leads to acceptance of the author’s distinction between the Logos-structure of the subject and the Telos-structure of the law—a distinction which, as we saw, stands or falls with the scholastic distinction between intellect and will in the meaning-giving Creator.

Within DOOYEWEERD’S cosmonomic idea, meanwhile, existence is seen by the author as the reality of the law, which indeed is absolutely not self-sufficient since wholly dependent upon the will of God in which it has its origin. Hence the author’s conclusion:

“This implies that the dependent existence of the subject (as dependence upon the creative act of the Logos) is reduced to the dependent reality of the law (as divine purpose—Telos—dependent upon the will of God)” (p. 183).

He judges:

“... it (D.’s view) does not take into account that between the divine purpose and its concrete realization there is a gap which is bridged by the divine creative Logos. ... D.’s reaction against the so-called ‘Logos-speculation’ prevents him from doing justice to this bridge ... D. cannot explain the concrete existence of the subject.”

And, in STOKER’S words:

“D. fails to recognize the reality of creation as something different from legislation” (p. 184).

The point around which this Logos–Telos discussion—passing by the W.d.W.—ultimately revolves is indicated by Dr. B. as follows (p. 187):

“D.’s cosmonomic Idea of cosmic meaning prevents him from taking account of the creation by the Logos, with the result that he cannot explain the concrete existent in its particularity and its concrete existence.”

The manner of expression—“he cannot explain” (*italics ours*, M.)—makes one sense that boundaries are being approached beyond which no merely intellectual contact remains.

We recall that for the author “law” must be heteronomous and not an “immanent cosmic structure apart from God” (p. 170). We pointed to this uncritical identification of “immanent cosmic” and “apart from God.” Finally, the author draws his conclusions concerning D.’s use of the term “meaning” (*meaning*) (pp. 184–185). He cites *A New Critique* II, p. 31:

“... meaning is nothing but the creaturely mode of being under the law, consisting exclusively in a religious relation of dependence upon God ...”

and asserts that D.

“identifies the mode of existence of the subject with the mode of reality of the law.”

The reader will perceive how here, proceeding from the author’s previously noted uncritical identification, the same fault is attributed to DOOYEWEERD, without Dr. B. considering himself obliged either to ask or to render account concerning the difference in origin of the meaning of the term “law” in the two conceptions. It is precisely this origin which must interest us to the highest degree. And not merely for the sake of the dissertation discussion presently at issue (for which, taken by itself, a simple review might suffice), but in order clearly to bring to light the scholastic world of thought revealed in B.’s conception; and above all for the sake of the threefold confrontation which we intend and to which the dissertation itself has willingly given occasion.

To remain for a moment within the author’s terminology: to explain or interpret is the work of the human logos. The author’s “logos” explains the individuality and concrete uniqueness of the subject with the aid of the “basic category” “existence.” This category is supposed to accompany the creative act of ontic articulation belonging solely to the divine Logos, whereby the individual is called into being as “existent.”

In *A New Critique* III, pp. 15–18, DOOYEWEERD explained how a line of reasoning such as that presented here by Dr. B. rests upon the scholastic conception of substance as individualization

of being and as the absolute point of reference for all properties attributed to it. Yet this conception of substance is internally contradicted by the fact that the philosophical conception here at issue had placed the principle of individuation (of substances) in the principle of matter. Thomas Aquinas attempted to accentuate still further the absolute individuality of substance by assuming creative ideas of individual beings in the divine Logos (see DOOYEWEERD loc. cit. and *Philosophia Reformata* 10, p. 25), which only sharpened the antinomy.

Of this entire scholastic-Aristotelian background to his theses, upon the basis of which he criticizes D., Dr. B. has given no account whatsoever. All the more was he obliged to do so because he himself did not hesitate to use the question of the religious ground motives as the proper motive of his work. It is inadmissible, when one aims to penetrate to the basis of a philosophical work, to leave untouched that which gave occasion to the most fundamental expositions within that work, and simply to construct one's own critique upon an *a priori* no longer critically justified, which itself belonged to the very starting-point of the struggle over foundations. For more is at issue here than merely an order of treatment, to which we have already pointed.

Nor can it therefore be clear what the author intends by the expression "he cannot explain." Does this mean that the "basic category" "existence" is itself capable of doing so? Where does such a "category" find its origin? By what authority is such an origin proclaimed? If this authority cannot present universally valid credentials, then the expression "explain" remains meaningless and every "category" disappears from view.

In other words: confronted with individual subjectivity we stand before the mystery of creation, where nothing can be explained, but only meaning can be sought.

It is here that the term "meaning," in connection with "law" (of meaning-determination)—which was the subject of the discussion at this point—must acquire its pregnant significance.

Summary of BRÜMMER'S Characterization of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea

We begin to obtain something of a "combat contact" with Dr. B. when, on the basis of the critique directed by D. against KANT, he takes up the questions of origin and fullness of meaning.

KANT'S Archimedean point was determined by the *Satz des Bewusstseins*, unacceptable both to D. and to his critic. The question for Dr. B. is whether D. in reality rises above this proposition. B. cites *A New Critique* II, p. 540:

"In the last instance it is not some abstract functions of consciousness but the fullness of self-consciousness which experiences the modal meaning functions in cosmic time as its own. This insight means the final liberation of epistemology from the prejudices of immanence-philosophy,"

and remarks that the opposite of this assertion becomes evident in D.'s philosophy. The *Satz des Bewusstseins* merely receives there a reinterpretation in the light of D.'s idea of law, by which it is elevated above KANT'S restriction to the logical function. The author's own critique of KANT is fundamentally limited to the fact that KANT does not ascend beyond the human logos to the divine Logos; this is the cause of KANT'S turn toward the immanence of consciousness. DOOYEWEERD likewise does not recognize the (divinely creative) Logos, with a similar consequence.

Dr. B. refers to D.'s conception of "intuition," which would not be an intuition of the ontic articulation of the cosmos in its independence from man (as STOKER'S naive experience as intuitive consciousness of the *revelatio Dei in statu obliquo*), but an intuitive consciousness of cosmic reality as "my own," as not independent of my selfhood. He cites D.'s proposition that God does not behold the cosmos outside the heart of man, to whom, as created in His image, He entrusted creation.

When STOKER, according to the author (p. 193), in contrast maintains man indeed as culmination-point but by no means as concentration-point of the cosmos, this does not signify a denial of the unity of the cosmos. STOKER concentrates this unity in the divine creative Logos, not in man as image of God. He therefore does not deny the pre-noetic (!) articulation of the cosmos by accepting a *Satz des Bewusstseins*. For him (and the author) the meaning of creation is not concentrated in a "Telos-totality" (*imago Dei*), but in a "Logos-totality" (the divine creative Logos).

In B.'s opinion, the consequences of placing the image of God at the center (by D.) instead of the creative Logos are therefore catastrophic for maintaining communication between human beings across the gulf of an undeniable antithesis.

Although DOOYEWEERD does not wish the image of God to be interpreted individualistically, since man exists only in participation in the supra-individual totality of meaning of creation, nevertheless according to B. this fullness of meaning as fullness of Telos cannot be concentrated in humanity as such, since through the Fall humanity has lost the image of God and contradicts the Telos. DOOYEWEERD therefore sees the *imago Dei* revealed in unbroken sense only in Jesus Christ as Head of reborn humanity. But because he chooses his point of departure in the divine Telos as heteronomous goal imposed from God's side, he can speak of humanity as reborn community only in an eschatological sense.

In order also to reach presently concretely existing humanity, he would have to abandon his cosmonomic idea of meaning and turn to the idea of meaning as Logos. Otherwise, according to Dr. B., it will fare with him as with KANT, for whom, though for other reasons, reality in its concrete existence remains an unknowable *Ding an sich*.

We believe we do not greatly err if—in terminology borrowed from the W.d.W.—we attempt on the basis of the foregoing to approach BRÜMMER'S interpretation of it as follows.

The idea of cosmic diversity is obtained, not without influence from KANT, by articulating modalities of reality cosmonomically on the basis of the theoretical Gegenstandsrelation, while rejecting a metaphysical-logical foundation. In the Gegenstandsrelation there is encountered, according to DOOYEWEERD (thus according to B.), a cosmically universally valid "state of affairs," presenting itself though only within the theoretical epoche, which nevertheless wrongly finds its justification through the concept of epoche because it rests upon the previously posited "sphere-sovereignty." The search for the paths of intermodal synthesis, made by D. into the gateway of his transcendental critique, can derive no justification from such an alleged state of affairs.

Likewise the idea of an *a priori* cosmic coherence is wrongly designated by D. in cosmic "time," which on the other hand would simultaneously have to serve as organon of the breaking apart of meaning and moreover, at least according to B., would become actual as subjective-transcendental dimension only in epoche and theoretical synthesis.

Since the idea of time, employed beyond customary limits, cannot satisfy the requirements imposed upon it as founder of meaning-coherence, perhaps the concept "meaning" might serve

for this purpose. Having chosen a significant definition as his point of departure, Dr. B., in connection with STOKER, analyzes Dooyeweerd's use of the term on the basis of his own scholastic *a priori* in the direction of the concepts Telos, *telos*, Logos, *logos*. As we have seen, it is excluded beforehand that by such a procedure any real connection can be obtained with the world of thought of the W.d.W. Every concept of "state of affairs" itself falls entirely outside the field of vision here. The only remaining bond is faith in divine creative sovereignty, although even this bond is principally threatened by Logos-speculation. Telos, nomos, and meaning no longer have anything to do with one another.

The parties approach one another again in the discussion concerning the *Satz des Bewusstseins*, which according to B. would harbor in D. the idea of the totality of meaning. Yet once more it is the hypostasis of logos which separates and pronounces judgment over every attempt at communication, despite antithesis, from a background other than that of what is to be known (*the ontic*).

Ultimately it will be in the confrontation with the duality of the noetic and ontic spheres that the question concerning the origin of meaning, and thereby concerning the significance of this term, will definitively present itself.

Ground Antinomy in BRÜMMER's Intellectualism

"Since it excludes the possibility of apostasy, the Telos cannot provide a really integral or universal basis on which to account for both Christian philosophy and apostate thought. Hence the Telos cannot serve as basis for rendering an account of the antithesis implied in the idea of a Christian philosophy." Thus Dr. BRÜMMER (p. 222) as he proceeds to formulate his final judgment on the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (W.d.W.).

As we know, for Dr. B. "Telos" means the law.

Now it is highly problematic whether "law," in any of its customary meanings, may serve as the "basis" for the antithesis in a religious, radical sense; indeed, even the term "basis" itself is open to objection. The positing of the antithesis is a sovereign act on God's side: what the law could not do, because it was powerless through the flesh, God has done. And in the law of Moses, intended in this revelatory Word, the love of God had concentrated itself under the figure of the disciplinarian. With this we find ourselves at the focal point of all meaning, as this is set before us only in the Gospel.

As we saw earlier, Dr. B. wrote that Christ, who fulfilled the law, was therein not only revelation of the divine Logos, but also revelation of the Telos as the "law" of creation. But precisely in this Telos the antithesis is posited. And we must already now—and in a fully aprioristic sense—set ourselves against the author on this point.

We cannot avoid doing so, since he himself has preceded us by transferring the said term, in the sense intended by him ("The purpose of this expression is that the created cosmos might return the love of God by honouring him as its Creator. This purpose is revealed to us in the law of God," p. 189), to that which the W.d.W. understands by "law." Against this he reproaches the W.d.W. for restricting the logical to one of the modalities, albeit while acknowledging its universality within its own sphere, instead of assigning to it—as various earlier and contemporary Calvinist philosophers have done—a cosmic character underlying all modalities (p. 175ff.).

In this, as we have repeatedly seen, the author follows the traditional line of scholasticism and now substitutes his own concept of “Logos” for what the W.d.W. truly understands under law—as the law of meaning-determination.

Without wishing to undertake further investigation into whether or not the author agrees with LOEN’S conception of the logical as “the general formal structure of the articulatedness of being” (p. 176)—which in any case aims at something quite different from rationalistic Logos-speculations—we sense here that we stand before a deeply decisive choice.

The author attempts to justify his own choice by exercising what he believes to be an immanent critique of DOOYEWEERD’S principle of the excluded antinomy, which he calls “formal” in nature and therefore allegedly tending toward a cosmic logic and toward an idea of meaning incapable of reaching the concretely individual.

On both points—of which we have already dealt with the latter—we touch the religious root, and thus a genuinely transcendental critique from the author’s side would have been required.

The reality of the articulating Logos, which creatively reveals, appears according to BRÜMMER as central, as that which the human logos has to repeat conceptually. The latter will never attain complete adequation, since, as we saw, it cannot reach “the concrete existent.” Even everyday knowledge remains abstract.

In knowing, contact with reality is obtained in intuition, as we discussed it according to Prof. STOKER’S conception. And Dr. B. decisively aligns himself with STOKER where the latter “maintains that our theory of knowledge takes seriously the ontic origin of our knowledge, viz. the fact that our knowledge refers to the articulation (spraak) of the existent in its independence from the subject of knowledge” (p. 172).

“In its independence,” that is, in its independence of the noetic sphere from the ontic sphere. In the ontic sphere the Logos appears as lawgiver of noesis, as determiner of meaning for human (“logical”) insight in a cosmically comprehensive sense. And thereby, according to Dr. B. (p. 226), it becomes the universal common ground for both sides of the religious antithesis.

It can be common ground by virtue of the *revelatio Dei in statu obliquo*. In our effort to philosophize Christianly, we must interpret the ontic articulation of created reality in the light of the *revelatio Dei in statu recto*. But because of our fallibility in interpreting even this revelation, Christian philosophizing can only be understood in eschatological perspective. The Telos of this perspective is therefore, in Dr. B.’s view, encompassed by the Logos.

This conception receives its most pointed significance when Dr. B. allows the noetic-eschatological approach to the truth of the Logos (presenting itself in the “ontic”), via *revelatio in statu obliquo* in the light of *revelatio in statu recto*, to culminate in a continual testing of the latter “by careful exegesis of the Bible, accompanied by the prayer that the Spirit of truth may lead us into all truth” (p. 228). Along this line every attempt at Christian philosophizing becomes dependent upon theological exegesis of the Bible.

Consistently—and in itself quite rightly—the author motivates this statement by referring to the faith of the church, which must also guide its philosophical activity, and which in turn must be tested against the norm for faith in Holy Scripture. But then he says that this task of testing

belongs to theology, appealing in passing—and in our opinion incorrectly—to statements of Prof. BERKOUWER concerning the serving task of theological science.⁴

It is clear that the author keeps his attention fixed entirely one-sidedly on the content of the distinction of faith—a distinction such as STOKER also intends with respect to revelation in creation in his conception of intuitive naïve experience. But this distinction is inseparably bound to and dependent upon believing as such, which above all must answer to the norm of faith in the direction it takes.

We gladly agree with the author when he does not wish to see theology as *regina scientiarum* but as servant, and certainly no less when he sees its task fulfilled only in the perspective of the Parousia. But when he nevertheless (p. 229) continues during the advance of creation toward its consummation to assign theology the leading place, we can see in this nothing other than entrusting leadership—even over faith itself—to theoretical thought.

The entire separation between *revelatio in statu obliquo* and *in statu recto*, however much both are subsequently related to one another, rests upon this assignment of the final word to the intellect—a religious positional choice which found its inherited expression in the schema ontic-noetic.

And thus the “Logos” remains an ambiguous ground for the coexistence of an apostate and a Christian science. While man cannot detach himself from his ground, he attempts to suppress the truth of his existence and replace it with some absolutization of the creature. And now, identifying this Logos as self-evidently with the God of the Bible, the author says: “Hence the most fundamental motive of non-Christian philosophy is not in man and his idols, but in God” (p. 232).

It is impossible to discuss this with the author from the distinction law-subjectivity, since his conception of the “Logos” erases this distinction in favor of the duality ontic-noetic, and the idea of law is referred to the Telos as “divine purpose,” which no longer maintains any real relation to creation in its concreteness.

Dr. B. expresses the core of his religious-philosophical conception in the following formulation (p. 233):

“The world does exist apart from man, since it is dependent for its existence exclusively on the creative Logos which calls it into being. However, for its noetic articulation as a human world, as the home which man receives from God and in which he may worship his Lord, it is dependent upon the cultural task given to man ... man is the voice of the cosmos, the interpreter of the existent, who has the task to articulate the significance of the world as creation of God.”

Thus we see man’s “cultural” task brought under the basic denominator of interpretation by the human logos, and since this logos finds its connection with the ontic only through the noetic route, the question presses itself forcefully upon us concerning the cultural influence of this logos upon “being,” which after all exists independently of man.

The noetic is clearly placed over against “being,” with the intention that the human logos should echo the Logos speaking in being. Dr. B. will immediately acknowledge that although the world may exist independently of man, man—including his intellect—nevertheless belongs to this being (“human world”).

⁴ We refrain from testing writers' largely eclectic substantiations of their theses by means of quotations from the writings of other authors.

The question now is: to what extent?

For its noetic articulation, together with the “culture” built upon it that must make this world into a “home,” it is dependent upon the human logos, which in this task must follow the phenomenological method in a phanerocritical sense.

The author has emphasized with much force the possibility which, in contrast to the W.d.W., his thesis of the creative Logos supposedly offers for accounting for the concretely existent. Yet no matter how much the “logos” may be conceived as subject to the Logos-articulation and therefore counted as belonging to the “ontic,” this remains impossible—if the noetic is to retain the place assigned to it—with respect to the “phenomenological” act as the irreducible core of the “logos” that takes a position over against the Logos-articulation.

Yet according to the author’s basic thesis this act too, if it is really to exist, must be accompanied by the category of “existence” and thus possess an “ontic” character. But thereby, according to the same basic thesis, it loses its opposed position on the side of noesis.

Quite rightly the author has remarked, in agreement with the W.d.W., that the “de-idolizing” of the created demanded by Christian thought must be achieved by abolishing all absolutizations. But this will never succeed unless, in the first place, the hereditary and primary absolutization rooted from ancient times in the Western spirit is abolished—the absolutization which grants actual thinking, albeit under the apparent cover of the Logos-hypostasis, its own and indeed meaning-determining place over against a Being from whose encompassing embrace that same logos cannot withdraw without passing into non-being.

BRÜMMER’S Theologism as Final Determination of Meaning

Dr. BRÜMMER, grounding himself in the originally posited dualism of being and thought, considers DOOYEWEERD’S attempt to ground intellectual communication upon universally valid presuppositions (“pre-requisites”) to have failed because of the introduction of the religious concentration-law as, in origin, the law of Love and freedom.

He calls this a relating of thought to the Telos, which for an apostate would not “hold.” Consequently, according to B.’s assertion, D. in the third phase of his transcendental critique switches over to the “noetic” side with its indeed differing ground-motives. Therefore Dr. B. also calls the ground-motive of creation, fall, and redemption noetic.

But if D. writes that this motive must govern the immanent course of philosophical thought, then he ought to demonstrate that in the ground-motive we are dealing not merely with a noetic theme, but with a noetic accounting for an ontic reality, which would be the universally valid ontic ground of every philosophy.

D., however, uses the theme only to determine the content of his own cosmonomic Idea. In doing so he has also missed the true meaning of the Christian faith, which according to Dr. B. points to the divine Logos as the ground of all being and philosophizing. Therefore D., according to Dr. B., also cannot understand the apostate religious ground-motives in their true sense (Dr. B., deliberately appealing to Dr. Dengerink, speaks of ground-themes).

These too he can value only in their noetic quality, as (apostate) replacements of the Christian ground-motive, “while he fails to see that in a still more fundamental sense apostasy is an unending struggle to suppress the ontic reality which the Christian faith confesses.”

Therefore DOOYEWEERD defines religion as the innate impulse of the human selfhood to direct itself toward the true or a pretended absolute Origin (p. 249). Prof. BERKOUWER, by contrast, has pointed out that fundamentally we are always dealing with a relation to the living God.

For D., the deepest motives of non-Christian philosophizing would thus be found in the noetic themes that are the result of man's idolization of the world, and not in the hidden and unconscious struggle with God. He would therefore fail to notice God's presence in non-Christian thought, nor the appeal of God that resounds even through non-Christian motives.

Likewise he misses the fact that the Christian message does not disclose the true meaning of the theme of man's relation to the world by rejecting an apostate theme as apostate in itself, but by liberating it from the misuse whereby it serves as a cover for our rebellious struggle with God.

What becomes us, according to Dr. B., is not an antithetical attitude toward non-Christian philosophy and culture by viewing them from the standpoint of the Fall, but the proclamation of the fact that Christ has risen and overcome our rebellion, and that therein the true meaning of non-Christian philosophy and culture comes to light.

Pending the consummation of history, the church must lead the way in all this as "a liturgy, a gesture in which the riches of creation revealed in human culture are returned to God" (p. 251).

All this DOOYEWEERD could not see because he bypassed the universally valid and universally position-determining articulation of the Logos in the "ontic" and fixed himself upon the "noetic."

Therefore, in B.'s view, he trusted the Christian faith—not individually, but as confessed in the church. Yet this too can make no claim to infallibility. We require the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the help of theology in order, until the consummation, to test our faith against its norm in Scripture, "to determine whether it truly articulates the meaning of the Spirit."

The author continues (p. 246ff.): "That this theological activity has to be accompanied by the prayer for the guidance of the Spirit of truth, is self-evident" (*italics ours, M.*).

For this reason theology may not, as D. does, be denied ecclesiastical authority. Yet under its guidance we may undertake our philosophical task of understanding ourselves and the world in which we live.

Our faith is never infallible, but our eternal access to divine revelation is in faith, thus Dr. B. Its norm we understand only from that revelation, through the Spirit.

Dr. B.'s revealing God is the Logos, and the first contact from man's side is taken up by the noesis of theo-logy.

Here we must ask: what, or rather Who, is the Word of God? Who is the Spirit of God, and by whom was He sent?

Whence, consequently, does faith (believing) depart—from man (the little child, the poor in spirit) who is (the author's "ontic"), or from the thinking, articulating logos, which is in principle—and we may now say on our part: in isolated position—placed over against being and therefore ... is not?

Can contact with the thought of the W.d.W. be achieved so long as these questions remain unanswered?

Before addressing this, we shall turn once more for a moment to the argument in Mrs. CONRADIE'S work, which converges with that of Dr. B., and thereafter consider Prof. VAN PEURSEN'S line of thought.

Insufficient Critical Justification Also in CONRADIE; Schema of Nature and Grace

The reader will recall Mrs. CONRADIE's remarkable conclusion, in which she sees Prof. DOOYEWEERD, in the manner of scholasticism, metaphysically connecting God and world apart from Scripture. The criterion of her criticism ultimately is that D.'s conclusions, including his attitude toward other ground-ideas, have not passed through the control of an "objective" theology. For, she believes, everything for DOOYEWEERD depends on the choice of the heart, whether apostate or converted. And this overestimation of the significance of religious positional choice must necessarily come at the expense of "states of affairs" as a possible basis for communication. One may confess that the regenerated heart has placed itself under the control of the Arche, but in reality the situation is exactly the reverse. And this, according to the author, lies in the peculiar position which the "heart" has received in D.'s philosophy.

In order to convey the weight and strikingly characteristic nature of the statement that follows, we shall reproduce it in full (p. 202):

"... we find that the heart has a two-fold role, which we may call ontological and epistemological. In its epistemological role it is the archimedean point of philosophy, from which it surveys the modalities conceived as theoretical distinctions, meaning in the epistemological sense. In its ontological role, it is the supratemporal concentration point of the modal spheres conceived as modes of being, that totality in which the whole cosmos participates. DOOYEWEERD identifies these two roles of the heart. Because the heart as archimedean point sees the truth of the cosmos, and because in a very specific sense it is the cosmos, it is an easy step to conclude that the heart not only speaks the truth, controls the truth but finally is the truth, moreover is that to which all other truths are relative."

This statement is particularly striking and leads us to the core of the discussion. For it is—though now directed against D.'s conception of the "heart"—equivalent to our own earlier immanent critique of BRÜMMER's conception of the "logos."

The difference, however, is that both South African authors argue uncritically from the aprioristic dualism of ontic and noetic. From within this religiously determined dogmatic dualism, our author now arrives, without deeper investigation, at attributing a dual character to the conception of the heart in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. By contrast, starting from Dr. BRÜMMER's own apriori, we indicated by immanent analysis the irresolvable antinomy of his logos-construction, and thereby the untenability of the uncritically accepted basic dualism itself.

With this uncritical mode of argumentation—which we had to observe in Dr. B. no less than in Mrs. C.—it is not too surprising to hear the latter complain about D.'s failure to explain what he understands by religion. But how, then, does one ordinarily gain intrinsic understanding of a philosophical work—even after a meritorious description of it—and especially with the intention of criticizing it? The idea of religion permeates the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea in all its dimensions and ramifications. It is precisely of this that it seeks to give an account.

Thus the author can also maintain, only as a result of a fundamental misunderstanding, that D. chiefly advances the difference in content of presuppositions as the cause of the lack of contact

between different philosophical directions, whereas the issue is precisely the recognition or non-recognition of the fact of the existence and operation of these aprioris. In her eyes D.'s own point of departure remains just as theoretical, arbitrary, and dogmatic as he accuses his opponents of being, and as a consequence contact is excluded by definition.

For herself she ends within the familiar scholastic schema, according to which, in the sphere of "nature," Christian and non-Christian philosophy have phenomenologically equal opportunities, while the theologian could investigate the how and why of this situation. Between philosophy and theology, according to her, there will never be peace, and this is beneficial for both. And Christian faith, she says, should not seek presuppositions but rather eliminate them.

Agreement and Difference Between the South African Critique and That of Prof. C. A. van Peursen

Questions similar—and to a considerable extent identical—to those raised by the two South African authors have also been directed by Prof. VAN PEURSEN to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. These are the questions concerning communication, states of affairs, ground motives, and antithesis. The conclusions to which he arrives also generally resemble those reached by BRÜMMER and CONRADIE. Ultimately, similar backgrounds seem to appear at decisive points.

Nevertheless, there is an important difference. And this concerns first of all the highly significant issue of the position of man in the created cosmos. From the traditional scholastic standpoint, we saw in the South African writings a critique directed against the turn toward subjectivism which they believed they discerned in the architect of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, when the antithesis in the presuppositions of theoretical thought—fundamental for him—could apparently no longer be grounded, like these presuppositions themselves, in a universally acceptable "state of affairs." Against this alleged subjectivism the authors posited the original duality of knowing and being; Dr. BRÜMMER more specifically the duality of logos and Logos, the latter "regulative" for the former, while simultaneously banishing the idea of "law" ("Telos") to an honorary primacy of the will in the supernatural realm. Thus, according to him, the cosmos exists independently of man, who through the mediation of the *revelatio Dei in statu recto* must attempt to gain both theoretical and practical insight into the intentions of the *revelatio Dei in statu obliquo*. Theology takes the lead in this endeavor.

Prof. VAN PEURSEN is entirely different. What he praises in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea is precisely that it sees the meaning-dynamics of the cosmos concentrated in man. Naturally, in that case the first word cannot belong to an intellectual contemplation of the Logos by the logos, but must instead be attributed to active human experience. The decisive issue then becomes what exactly is "experienced." And insofar as this concerns the given character of creation, all this may therefore only be viewed from the perspective of man, without making room for a "Satz der Immanenz."

The "states of affairs" indicated by the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea as the test in dialogue with other philosophical schools—a test which, according to Dr. BRÜMMER and Mrs. CONRADIE, Prof. DOOYEWEERD disastrously abandoned—now constitute for Prof. VAN PEURSEN precisely a serious stumbling block. If the temporal world is dynamically concentrated in man, how can there still be "states" of affairs? This question becomes all the more pressing if we nevertheless continue to speak of ground motives moving man and of an antithesis arising from them. Must

one not choose one side or the other? And does this not place the very idea of “law” itself in question?

Although approached from an opposite standpoint, the thought of polarity in the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea reappears here as well, namely with respect to the correlation it posits between law and subjectivity. Here too the questions naturally gather around the transcendental critique of theoretical thought and ultimately prove to culminate in the increasingly weighty issue of the relation between Christian philosophy and theology.

It is by no means our intention to draw the entire discussion already begun between Professors DOOYEWEERD and VAN PEURSEN into the following treatment. Yet we cannot set aside those themes from this exchange which are relevant for us here.

In this respect the problem of “states of affairs” certainly offers an important point of contact. To VAN PEURSEN’S criticism that within a philosophy consistently placing the dynamics of creation in the foreground one cannot allow “things” to “stand,” DOOYEWEERD replied that such a remark may appear grounded within a philosophy which, operating within an aprioristic dualism of “subject” and “object,” must brand every reference to lawfulness as “objectivism,” because within this apriori it has chosen to attribute originary character to subjectivity. This apriori itself continually throws such a philosophy back and forth between the poles of subjectivity and objectivity. But this remark has no point of contact with philosophical thought which from the outset sees the only reality of creation in its meaning. The states of affairs of which D. intends to speak possess a thoroughly dynamic character, since they are related to the religious root of reality and regulated by the creation law that determines meaning and is itself intrinsically dynamic.

Prof. VAN PEURSEN replies,⁵ however, that subjectivism is by no means his intention; that in the examples of states of affairs given by D. he believes interpretations to be included—which indeed cannot be otherwise—and that he maintains his opinion that the ordering law of the Creator lies more backward, in the depth of the cosmos. For man it is impossible to stand outside his “interpretations” (taken in the broadest sense, including practical activity). According to VAN PEURSEN, we would do better, instead of speaking about “law,” to speak about “reality,” and instead of speaking about law as the boundary between God and creation, about the presence of God in His creature.

The reader will recall Mrs. CONRADIE’S objections on this point and her reference to *A New Critique* II, pp. 73–74. Prof. D. repeats what he said there in response to VAN PEURSEN (see *Philosophia Reformata* 1960/3–4, p. 121), emphasizing that he never intended the discovery and description of “states of affairs” to be independent of the religious ground motive directing philosophical thought, but that he only warned—and continues to warn—against giving states of affairs, encountered without thorough investigation, a philosophical interpretation that fails to do them justice.

According to D.’s view, therefore—if one will permit this formulation—even the state of affairs that there are states of affairs to be encountered remains subject to the requirement stated in *A New Critique* II: “to perform a provisional *epoche* of all specific philosophical interpretations of the states of affairs which are to be established in a precise way before we try to account for them in a philosophical theory” (emphasis ours, M.). In other words, the required *epoche* must leave pre-theoretical experience intact. But how does the latter function in its integral structure as human

⁵ For this review, we rely on the readers of the journal to be familiar with the relevant articles.

experience? How is this structure constituted, apart from the undeniable influence exerted upon it by science—as emphasized by V. P. and universally taken into account by D. as well?

Given the present state of their exchange, it would not be impossible that both authors would not entirely agree with the final clause of the preceding sentence. Nevertheless, it seems to us that their provisional difference concerning the issue at stake could only find resolution within a framework formulated by the foregoing question.

The entire problematic—in its articulation of meaning-dynamics and time, states of affairs and interpretation, ground motive and antithesis, Word of God and theology, subjectivism and objectivism, and finally the central question concerning communication between living and thinking subjects under the law—is rooted in the question of the mutual relation between pre-theoretical experience and the analytic-synthetic structure of theoretical thought. At first sight one might perhaps be inclined to formulate matters the other way around. Is not a “sub-topic” here wrongly made dominant over the entire philosophical discussion, and does not one’s conception of it rather depend on what one believes must be accepted regarding the other matters? Or, reasoning from the *apriori* of BRÜMMER and CONRADIE: is not the ontic wrongly made dependent upon the noetic?

Yet we may recall that the relation between non-theoretical and theoretical thought is preeminently the subject matter of transcendental critique and therefore must precede all that follows. And this because, while engaged in theoretical activity—here and now—we must become thoroughly conscious of the position and situation in which we find ourselves amidst the whole reality, which as such is not theoretically qualified.

Or have we already gone too far with this assertion?

Can it be rejected because of the unavoidable incorporation of the principles and fruits of theoretical thought into our everyday Western, or Western-oriented, concrete experience?

We shall be obliged to undertake a critical confrontation with all the articulations of the problematic raised, precisely now that our transcendental critique itself is being led to its transcendental boundaries. But then, in answer to the question we ourselves have just posed, we must first refer to what we said in our introduction concerning the question of the heteronomy of the choice of the rule of communication.

For however one may think about states of affairs and insight into them, the first “state of affairs” presenting itself in the discussion is the unavoidable question concerning the autonomy or heteronomy of the choice of the rule of communication. To reject that question means accepting autonomy, which leaves room only for seeking ways of elaborating it, but cuts off communication at the root with anyone who does not accept that autonomy.

In other words: in the discussion surrounding the theme “states of affairs,” the issue is not primarily the relation of a subjectivity to things in their mutual arrangement, but rather the status of subjectivity itself—whether or not it is subject. This *a priori* with respect to the foundational question of the discussion as inquiry into the foundation of the discussion itself.

It is therefore not surprising that this “state of affairs” is in fact acknowledged by each of the three philosophers discussing with the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea who have appeared in our article, insofar as they place—both explicitly and implicitly—the structural difference, as formulated by Prof. D., between the non-theoretical and the theoretical attitude of thought at the

center of the debate, although by the nature of their philosophical ground conceptions the explicit treatment in the two South African writings comes more strongly to the fore.

“States of Affairs” and the Problem of the Theoretical Attitude

“The antithetical attitude,” writes Prof. VAN PEURSEN (*Philosophia Reformata* ’61, p. 195), “which DOOYEWEERD discovers between the logical and the non-logical functions, indicates that he nevertheless assigns an exceptional place to the logical function. This is directly connected with his doctrine of ‘naive experience’ ... This naive experience does not exist, as I wrote earlier, for the logical function cannot place itself so outside of, or at least over against, the other functions ... for the theoretical attitude stands less over against, and is not so easily isolated from, the other functions as DOOYEWEERD portrays it” (196).

By these words Prof. v. P. means to point out that the assigning of a separate position to the logical function in the *Gegenstandsrelatie*, presented by DOOYEWEERD as an ontic datum of the theoretical attitude of thought, should be attributed to Neo-Kantian influence upon D.’s (subjective) interpretation of the state of affairs concerning theoretical thought. He had earlier acknowledged that in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (*W.d.W.*) the *Gegenstand* was never viewed as empirical reality itself, but rather as the result of the abstracting activity of the logical function of thought itself in its setting itself over against the non-logical functions of experience.

The placing of the logical function — even if only abstractly and intentionally — outside or over against the other functions, as Prof. D. describes it, is therefore rejected by Prof. v. P. on the ground that the difference between the theoretical and non-theoretical attitude of thought is not principal in character, and this latter claim rests upon the continual influence of theoretical thought upon “naive experience.” This influence, Prof. v. P. had stated in his preceding article, may not be attributed solely to the application of science in everyday life, something to which Prof. D. had pointed from the outset. Human experience is always already formed by a scientific or mythical worldview and “includes” the theoretical attitude.

Thus the struggle concerning the distinction between the “attitudes of thought” stands in the foreground. Prof. D. [156] sees in v. P.’s conception the working-out of his rejection of the acceptance of states of affairs independently of philosophical interpretation, and behind that the rejection of the idea of “law” as a supra-subjective order above the subject subjected to it (*Ph. Ref.* ’60, p. 129). The stakes are therefore high — indeed the very subject of this contribution — and the question presents itself as to what the principal or non-principal distinction between theoretical and non-theoretical thought ultimately has to do with this matter, and whether one’s conception of this distinction is of decisive significance for the idea of law as the *W.d.W.* places it in the foreground. All the more because the issue is what is truly to be understood by this idea, and we already pointed to the depth of this question when we recently recalled the inescapability of the choice between autonomy and heteronomy of the rule of communication.

Above we saw how Dr. BRÜMMER formulated his grounds against DOOYEWEERD’S conception of the theoretical attitude of thought very sharply indeed by speaking of a mutual isolation of the logical and non-logical modalities, which according to him is the consequence of D.’s a priori of sphere-sovereignty, whereby his assertion concerning *epoche* remains no more than fiction. D. speaks namely of a *disstase*, a standing-apart of functions in the *Gegenstandsrelatie*, but this cannot be a reality, according to Dr. B. (pp. 154/155), since it nevertheless remains logical in

nature and the logical function cannot transcend its own boundaries. It is the absolutization of sphere-sovereignty, he believes, which provides the true though therefore no less unacceptable account of the isolation of the logical function. We believe that Dr. B. here overlooks the reality of the universality-in-its-own-sphere of the logical function and therewith the meaning of abstraction. The matter, however, lies deeper and now requires our special attention.

In the first place, following STOKER, Dr. B. can see the coherence in cosmic diversity guaranteed only through the mutual connection of substantial individualities and mutually independent modalities, while rejecting D.'s idea of cosmic time as the bond of coherence. According to STOKER, modal universality in its own sphere is completely dominated by (indeed rendered impossible by) sphere-sovereignty.

Secondly, as a consequence of this, the retrocipations and anticipations which refer from the logical modality to the other modalities or from these to the logical can have no real meaning. Hence there is no reality of abstraction.

Thirdly, however, B.'s view in this matter flows forth from his already described conception of the "ontic," which he says is independent of the "noetic" sphere. With respect to the ontic, the latter must strive after its *adaequatio*, and in this it is ultimately guided by theology.

The noetic sphere is therefore exempted from every obligation to account for its own position. Existing reality finds its explanation wholly within "being" as articulation by the thinking Logos, which is simply identified with the infallible Word of John 1. Yet "the noetic" is not included within this; it is described as the human logos called to *adaequatio*.

We have pointed to the fundamental antinomy in this conception, and it is now no longer difficult to understand why Dr. B., by means of an argument concerning the "isolation" of the logical function in D., seeks to undermine his transcendental critique [157]. With the aid of STOKER'S conception he himself exercises a transcendent critique intended to drive D. into the camp of KANT, and shortly thereafter, with the aid of a thesis concerning the identity of the *Satz des Bewusstseins* and transcendental self-reflection, allows the idea of law in the *W.d.W.* to perish beneath the judgment of the "Logos."

The position of a *Gegenstandsrelatie* which is merely the product of a theoretical abstraction must be an offense to Dr. B., since in his own system its place is occupied by the fullness of the (human) logos in its unaccounted-for position over against a divinely articulated "being."

When we ourselves raise the critical question of the justification of the theoretical Logos-dogma, we know that with Dr. BRÜMMER'S line of thought we have returned into the vicious circle behind which the questions again present themselves concerning the relation of logos and Logos, the *Gegenstandsrelatie*, the *Satz des Bewusstseins*, as well as — with him and Mrs. CONRADIE — the question of belief in the possibility and meaning-content of an "objective" theology (as opposed to the "subjective" *ego regeneratus*), etc.

In Prof. v. P.'s thought that pre-theoretical experience includes theoretical experience — considered by Prof. D. to be internally contradictory — the latter sees a reversal of the conception defended by the *W.d.W.* that the theoretical attitude of thought always appeals to the pre-theoretical. As just noted, Prof. v. P. grounded his rejection of the principal distinction between these two kinds of experience in his insight that everyday experience is by no means naive. As human experience it is always already formed by a mythical or scientific worldview and receives its orientation from the religious direction of man. In this connection V. P. cites the example of the

difference in everyday experience when observing the starry heavens or a volcano by a cultivated Westerner versus a native inhabitant of an undeveloped region. In all this together, he concludes, the issue concerns a living-through of the meaning-totality of reality, which cannot be separated from the pointing toward the Origin of man and world (*Ph. Ref.* '61, p. 196).

From his standpoint Dr. BRÜMMER could only speak of an isolation of the logical function by DOOYEWEERD, and he later sees it playing its role in such a position within a (heretical) *Satz des Bewusstseins*. He wishes to know nothing of “functions,” but replaces them with the full human being as logos. Only this logos’s theology can, eschatologically, provide him access to the divine Logos as truth (in fact a *theologia sacra* functioning as a *theologia naturalis* in the knowledge of “nature”). Naive experience is limited to intuition as man’s first contact with the *revelatio in statu obliquo*.

The religious experience of the creature in its fullness is thus qualified by the categories of the Logos as rational lawfulness (articulation) and only in the *Telos* directed toward the “supernatural,” with which “nature” can come into conflict as with that which is heteronomous to it (indeed actually does). Hence, when the *Telos* is taken into account (which according to BRÜMMER is what DOOYEWEERD calls “law”), no connection can ever be achieved with non-Christian thought. BRÜMMER therefore seeks the synthesis on the basis of the Logos:

“Since the divine Logos is indeed the universally valid ground of all existence and all knowledge, the Christian message of creation, judgment, redemption and consummation provides the only basis for understanding the true character of non-Christian philosophy. This message judges our revolt as an effort to suppress the Logos, and it judges our idolatry as an effort to replace the Logos. In this judgment, however, the Christian message reveals the prospect of salvation: our struggle with the world which we have turned into an idol is nothing but a cloak for our struggle with the ground of our existence from Whom we try fruitlessly to become independent, but Who, in His infinite mercy, does not allow us to succeed. Non-Christian philosophy, born from the struggle with God, is only possible because of the grace of God who prevents this struggle to realize its aim. Hence the most fundamental motive of non-Christian philosophy is not in man and his idols, but in God. The Christian has to acknowledge the activity of God in all non-Christian philosophy, says VAN PEURSEN, since God does not leave this world over to itself, but maintains it in existence and in relation to its origin and ‘ground. Although the Logos is suppressed by non-Christian thought, it cannot be excluded.” (Dr. B. p. 232; for the quotation from v. P. see his *Filosofische Oriëntatie*, p. 135. Emphasis ours, M.)

For at least three reasons this statement by Dr. B. is of particular significance to us:

1. because of the common denominator under which he brings not only Christian and non-Christian philosophizing, but also his own conceptions of Logos and *Telos* (or rather must bring them);
2. because of the connection which he seeks, rightly or wrongly, wholly or partially, with Prof. VAN PEURSEN;
3. because of the significance his statement may have for clarifying the “state of affairs” at issue in our question concerning states of affairs.

Within the connection we have raised, however, the primary issue remains the relation between: the place and meaning of the “logical function” in the *Gegenstandsrelatie* according to the

W.d.W., the mutual relation of pre-theoretical and theoretical thought, and the idea of law openly or covertly underlying them together with the religious ground-motive giving it direction and content. All this within the problem of transcendental critique as the pivot of communication (rule of communication?).

The common denominator under which Dr. BRÜMMER places everything is his idea of the Logos. Under the Logos both Christian and non-Christian philosophizing are brought together and thus confronted with one another — that is, so far as Christian philosophizing and its pretensions are concerned. Under this denominator the Telos is subordinated to the Logos. Under this denominator the continually repeated creative Word of God and the factual form of the cosmos fallen away from the Telos coincide, though from God's side "under judgment."

God's own activity is split into a maintained Telos (purpose) as law, which can never be immanent to the structure of the cosmos, and a judging presence of God within that cosmos as at the same time gracious ("His infinite mercy") continuing Logos.

We said: the Telos is subordinated to the Logos. For according to the author Christ appears as both simultaneously. But [159]

a. The Telos remains, in itself, a meaningless general concept of law.

b. Even as such, once announced, it remains completely outside of view, and the actual function of law is fulfilled only by the idea of Logos, which is immanent in the cosmos and thereby, according to the author's own definition, would be "apart from God."

c. The author can — wholly uncritically — impose upon the (human) logos over against the Logos the obligations of *adaequatio* flowing from the latter; yet this does not free him from the obligation of ultimate self-critique. Does he wish to speak from Holy Scripture or from autonomous philosophizing? If from the latter, then Christian philosophy may leave the critique to the evolution of "autonomous" philosophizing itself, which will point out the origin of the author's "Logos"-idea in the factuality of his own "logos" instead of, as the author pretends, the reverse. If from Holy Scripture, then he faces the challenge of justifying his Telos-Logos construction from its own proclamation — and not from a theology constructed with the aid of scholastic philosophy. Theological authority cannot stand before the sovereignty of God's Revelation.

We saw, however, that the author's final support of truth lies precisely in the (enlightened-believing) noesis ("logos") of theology, which brings us near Thomas's conception of faith as a supernatural gift of grace to the intellect. Yet assigning such a position to the intellect — Dr. BRÜMMER'S Logos — is itself not a philosophical or theological but a religious decision, one made in faith.

And with this we encounter the "state of affairs" underlying the whole of the author's conception and his discussion with the *W.d.W.* Where lies, and what is, the norm governing this state of affairs, and whence shall we gain the insight by whose light this "state" may be judged?

This question presses itself upon us, for upon his insight into this matter the author has grounded his highly principal statement: "the most fundamental motive of non-Christian philosophy is not in man and his idols, but in God."

As we have seen, Dr. B. seeks at this point a connection with Prof. VAN PEURSEN, who calls upon the Christian to acknowledge the activity of God in all non-Christian philosophy. Whether he has rightly sought this connection will become apparent in due course. Since, however, in our

discussion with Dr. B. we have again arrived at the transcendental critique of thought, and since this critique stands in the foreground within the framework of our subject, and because the principal or non-principal distinction between pre-theoretical and theoretical thought also occupies first place with regard to Prof. VAN PEURSEN'S views, we shall for the time being continue to approach the many questions occupying us from this side.

Gegenstands Relation and the Thought-Act

Since Dr. BRÜMMER, reasoning from STOKER's standpoint, can interpret DOOYEWEERD's *epoche* as a characteristic of the theoretical attitude only as a mutual isolation of the functions — and especially of the logical function over against the others — and as in fact grounded merely in the *a priori* of sphere sovereignty among the modalities, he must arrive at a rejection of the possibility of a universality-in-its-own-sphere, in this case of the logical aspect, and thereby at a rejection of a *distasis* and theoretical synthesis in the sense intended by D. [160]

Nevertheless, from the very standpoint of the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea itself, he has given an excellent analysis (pp. 152–155 of his book) of the possibilities of objectification and disclosure belonging to a logical modality universal within its own sphere. This analysis shows that, apart from the framework provided by this universality-in-its-own-sphere, one cannot speak of an opposition between the logical and the other functions simply as functions. In other words: the figure of the theoretical *Gegenstandsrelation* not only places functions abstractly over against one another (“intentionally”), thus enclosed by the logical function in theoretical activity that is universal within its own sphere, but is itself also an abstract formation.

Up to this point we have recognized our own view of the matter, which however, for the reasons already mentioned, Dr. B. could not continue to share. For he himself has, by means of a religious decision and in faith, elevated this abstract formation into a fundamentally real duality (noesis and being), behind and beneath which no further inquiry may be made.

For us the question now remains: from what *concretum* has the functional figure of the theoretical *Gegenstandsrelation* been obtained by abstraction? And it should be immediately clear that this must be sought in the individuality-structure of the theoretical thought-act. We merely wish to emphasize strongly that we fully agree with BRÜMMER's (implicit) opinion that one may not here speak of an opposition between functions *of* the thought-act. The abstract-intentional *epoche* is enclosed within the analytical function of that act, universal within its own sphere. In reality, what we are dealing with is an *epoche* of the analytical subject-object relation (within the thought-act).

But if what we have designated as the *Gegenstandsrelation* cannot be understood apart from the individuality-structure of the theoretical thought-act — within which, after all, the key to transcendental critique must be sought — then, as soon as we raise the structure of this act itself as a theme, we encounter the *a priori* necessity of giving an account of the “state of affairs” which, on our side, has been “interpreted” as meaning- or disclosure-dynamics. And with this we once again strike a ground where, at a deeper — indeed soon at the deepest — level, a choice must be made.

The difficulty is that precisely in this choice we once more come into contact with the disputed figure, as we already noted in passing during the discussion with BRÜMMER.

Can a level anywhere be reached where “states of affairs” simply stand? Where *nomos* and choice confront one another reciprocally?

The Idea of Dynamics in VAN PEURSEN

It seems to us that Dr. BRÜMMER, just as he unwittingly laid his own scholastic schema at the foundation of his premature transcendent critique, also too readily supposes that he can discern an affinity with the world of thought of Prof. VAN PEURSEN. He grounds the presence of God in reality — and thus also in the thought of non-Christian philosophy and science — in his idea of the “ontic,” within which even such thinking is accounted for in an uncritical manner (for from the outset, with Dr. B., it belongs to the noetic sphere separated from the ontic). [161] Within this “ontic” the “Logos” is creatively present. Yet it is not on the basis of a duality of noesis and being that Prof. VAN PEURSEN wishes to account for the relations in the cosmos and God’s presence within them.

The latter writes in his reply to Prof. DOOYEWEERD (*Ph. Ref.* ’61, pp. 197/98):

“... if they (namely the states of affairs) function essentially in meaning — and I would subscribe to that — then they no longer stand still; rather they move, oriented toward the Creator or toward whatever man puts in His place ... seeing states of affairs is only possible from out of a consciousness of meaning and direction ... which points either toward God or away from Him. Thus an intrinsic coherence of thing, man, time, and the presence of God.”

Further (*ibid.*):

“I see precisely things, objects, and persons within the radical reference of the meaning of the created order to its Origin. Time can only be understood within this reference, and the world is not a state of affairs, but the history of God’s faithfulness.”

With this, the cardinal difference between Dr. BRÜMMER’s static, rationalizing motive and Prof. VAN PEURSEN’s dynamic one has become sufficiently clear. The support which the former sought in VAN PEURSEN’s view, in the manner described above, in order to reinforce his own conception of the “presence of God” in non-Christian thought, cannot be called philosophically justified. In BRÜMMER, reason — under the name Logos — encompasses the existing cosmos and the creative divine Word revealed within it. This therefore stands, to a significant extent, in opposition to what Prof. VAN PEURSEN intends.

Whence then comes the shared resistance — expressed in this idea of the “presence of God” — against the antithesis between Christian and non-Christian thought which is central in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea?

In Dr. B. we found its origin in the Greek-scholastic idea of the Logos, a hypostasis of the supposedly all-encompassing (human) intellect. Such an autonomization and sovereignty of the intellect seems, at least outwardly, far removed from Prof. VAN PEURSEN. It is in the name of “meaning” that he denies the possibility of “states of affairs.”

Yet he does not deny the divine order to which reality remains subject. Rather, he rejects the term “law,” which he would prefer to replace with “reality.” For the order manifests itself only through man’s imperfect and groping interpretations and concretizations, and it is more in this imperfect search than in confrontation with “states of affairs” that Christians and non-Christians stand on

equal footing. Nevertheless: “because Christians themselves exist differently, things exist differently for them.”

For them, as human subjects, things (objects) exist, and the world-order in its temporality is the history of God’s faithfulness.

History. From the discussions between DOOYEWEERD and VAN PEURSEN we know that, while DOOYEWEERD sees the modal aspects as really foundational for the individuality-structures of the dynamics of the concrete world of experience, VAN PEURSEN can see in these aspects only products of abstraction, while he gives primacy instead to individual structures as “pre-theoretical aspects” (p. 197). In connection with the significance of history in VAN PEURSEN, we now ask about the more precise meaning of the term “pre-theoretical aspects.”

For the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, the modal aspects are real and are therefore experienced pre-theoretically — that is, within the actual coherence of reality. Their theoretical separation and explicit formulation can only be completed within the evolving investigation of the special sciences, though of course as an activity that is in principle never complete.

The indissoluble coherence, and therefore the reality, of these aspects can only be experienced in the structures of individuality, as the direct expression of the dynamics of meaning. Their universality in their own sphere creates the condition for this.

We shall not enter into the discussion concerning possible similarities with NICOLAI HARTMANN, nor into VAN PEURSEN’s conception of foundational enkapsis as a “layer-model” (*Schichten-model*, p. 197), and we content ourselves with making here the same remark we made in connection with Dr. BRÜMMER’s unfounded appeal to VAN PEURSEN in support of his own views.

VAN PEURSEN’s “pre-theoretical aspects,” however, certainly possess a real character, but by no means a modal one. They are not to be understood as states of affairs; they represent no more than formulated approaches (as such real) to the order of reality. Nor may they be reduced to one among all of them (for example spatiality); rather, they are rooted in a fuller reality, where the human subject is directed toward and bound to the said order, ultimately again thanks to the religious direction in which it recognizes the meaning of all that exists.

If we now undertake an investigation into this “order,” from which the aforementioned “aspects” in their mutual relation, and from which man himself, to whom they relate, must be explained, we receive the answer:

- a. that man is subject because he is spiritually directed toward God (thus not by virtue of subjection to the “order”);
- b. that from this spiritual orientation he can discern space in coherence with world-space; that thus the energetic goes back to original activity, likewise the biotic and the psychical.

Here “original” means: taking its origin in man as subject within his coherence with the world.

Man ... directed toward God, directed toward the order of reality.

All this encompassed by the history of God’s faithfulness within the temporality of this order.

Prof. VAN PEURSEN has strongly resisted characterizations of his views as subjectivistic, irrationalistic, or existentialistic. We not only respect this, but ourselves attach the greatest importance to approaching one another as unprejudiced as possible, and to do so we must first seek a point of departure. Nevertheless, an important indication is provided by VAN PEURSEN’s

interpretation of “aspects,” which instead of being modal possess — if we may put it this way — a total (structure-individual) and practical character within their own sphere. They represent the relations of man to his world, relations which in their origin differ fundamentally from the subject-object relations in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea.

But if these relations do indeed possess a genuinely modal character, then failure to recognize this, in seeking their mutual coherence, must necessarily lead to a functionalistic interpretation of them, [163] with the threatening consequence of becoming entangled in the ambiguity of concepts unqualified in their modal meaning (one may compare DOOYEWEERD’s analysis of orientation-space).

Having noted this, we now wish first to ask what the term “history” can signify for the whole of our discussion.

It is clear that we cannot derive a direct indication of this from modal aspects such as spatiality, energy, organic life, psychical experience, and the like, however much these are encompassed in a certain way by “history-in-the-broadest-sense.” We come somewhat closer when we consider VAN PEURSEN’s remark concerning the difference between everyday and theoretical experience, namely that he “sees theoretical knowledge, alongside aesthetic judgment for example, as one of the directions or functions in which everyday experience can become concentrated.” He regards the latter as continually influenced and modified by these concentrations (p. 196). All of this takes place within the history of God’s dealings with man, “the history of God’s faithfulness.”

Now, making use once again of the term “states of affairs,” one could ask: are the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea and Prof. VAN PEURSEN indeed tracing the same state of affairs when they speak about the relations in which man stands? Relations that are interpreted differently by each, but which are in fact the same?

Yet does “directed toward,” “bound to,” an order of reality (or world) mean, in Prof. VAN PEURSEN, the same as in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea — namely, the taking of direction (as opposed to refusing to take direction) by man with his order-bound “reality” toward God? Who then is this God, and consequently this man, and consequently his “world”? In Dr. BRÜMMER we encountered at this point the divergence between Telos and Logos, although the former is theologically encompassed by the latter, so that through God’s “infinite mercy” the cosmos and the possibility of knowing it remain the same for Christian and non-Christian alike. Prof. VAN PEURSEN, by contrast, speaks of the “different” existence of “things” for Christians and non-Christians.

We do not now wish to ask whether in these “things” “states of affairs” are somehow still presupposed, but rather wish to understand that their “existence” for the subject is concretized in the mutual coherence of what VAN PEURSEN has called “pre-theoretical aspects.” “I see ... things and objects and persons within the radical reference of the meaning of the created order to its Origin,” says Prof. VAN PEURSEN, after which follows the already cited statement:

“Time can only be understood in this reference, and the world is not a state of affairs, but the history of God’s faithfulness.”

“History,” “the history of God’s faithfulness.” How are we to understand this expression? In any case, history here encompasses the aforementioned “pre-theoretical aspects,” which are aspects of this history.

Pre-theoretical aspects are also the modalities in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. Among these is the modality of responsible “cultural-historical” formation. This aspect is modal, and it is an aspect of reality directed toward God within cosmic time.

Can the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea agree with VAN PEURSEN’s characterization of the unfolding of reality in time as (God’s) history? Or must it reject this characterization? [164]

With regard to the temporal boundaries involved in this question, the mutual difference in insight between the two can best be illustrated from the discussion already conducted — especially from Prof. D.’s side, pp. 141–42, particularly the last three paragraphs of p. 142 (*Ph. R.* ’60). The reader will notice that the discussion concerning these boundaries ultimately becomes concentrated on the question of the relation between pre-theoretical and theoretical experience, where the issue is the place — and the competences connected with it — of philosophy and theology. This is certainly no accidental or merely specific conjunction.

History — God’s history? Where have we arrived here?

Does there appear in the background a state of affairs with respect to which interpretations are reciprocally attempted? Can we therefore demand that one provisionally suspend all specifically philosophical interpretations in order to establish the states of affairs accurately before accounting for them in a philosophical theory? But what is at issue here is a decision concerning the (possible) state of affairs that there are states of affairs.

Does the disagreement actually concern what Prof. VAN PEURSEN thought he had to understand in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea under “states of affairs”? Or are both parties agreed that fundamentally no things simply stand? And must the disagreement concerning “law” therefore be shifted to another level?

The merely dialectical dynamism of consciousness and historical occurrence

With respect to the series of questions that have thus emerged, it seems to us that the best way to begin an attempt at answering them within the present context is once more to bring into the light the dynamic character of the doctrine of the modalities in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea (W.d.W.). We shall observe, however, that the question formulated above concerning the distance between pre-theoretical and theoretical discourse, as well as that concerning religious starting-point and temporal boundary, are immediately implied in this doctrine. For the modalities can be understood only as modalities of the dynamics of meaning, which in turn becomes visible only in the movement of the modal aspects. It is precisely for this reason that every Hartmannian layered or “Schichten” character of the latter is excluded.

It seems to us that the dynamics of meaning, manifesting itself in a diversity of modalities, may provide, if not a state of affairs, then at least a point of contact for discussion concerning that wholly different dynamics of meaning of which Prof. van Peursen speaks. And we believe that such a point of contact reaches even further, since we appear to agree concerning the end-point toward which the dynamism is directed. Meanwhile, the path along which this movement takes place must help to inform us concerning the meaning of the “toward what.” We wish to begin by placing ourselves in the midst of this dynamism and, for the moment, under two “aspects” decisive for our subject.

But the attempt to place ourselves in the midst of the stream (of dynamism) places us in any case at the center of the problem. And it is here that we are simultaneously confronted with the central choice. How do we wish to take our position? Is it a standpoint, or is that which one would designate thus itself in motion?

The most difficult thing is not the acknowledgment that one is oneself from the outset included in the movement. The difficulty comes when we remember that this now also applies to our thinking. And not merely to the rationalizing thinking so criticized in our time, which imagined itself nevertheless able to retain the critique of thought in its own hands, but equally to that thinking which believes itself able to pronounce the judgment of “crisis” over thought itself—over every form of thought.

For of what nature is the thinking that leads thinking into crisis, that proclaims crisis over the “noetic” sphere in every form; over the sphere which, as we saw in Dr. Brümmer and others, because covered by the Logos of being, remained exempt from every obligation of accountability, but which also in post-scholastic developments secured self-criticism within its own “sphere”?

For human thought itself is included, within the coherence of the “pre-theoretical aspects” (as Prof. van Peursen calls them), in the dynamism which relates man to his world and this world to man within the “history” which time is. And the truly critical question which now arises is whether thought still remains competent itself to determine its own (critical) position within that coherence, its relation to history.

This problem has always been at issue wherever human existence was grasped in any sense as “history.” Today it receives special sharpness now that thought has already been forbidden to bring human action and occurrence under an absolute concept of History (with a capital H—that which is known retrospectively), and attention has been drawn to the fact that precisely “History” receives its meaning from concrete occurrence.

The question now is from whence occurrence receives this meaning, for meaning exists only in meaning-consciousness. Yet the answer can at most be approached in a dialogue of reciprocal meaning-bestowal. Only in the moving correlation between a consciousness—which rejects every supra-temporal point of view—and the presently concrete “occurrence,” as denial of a linear continuity of “History,” can this meaning-bestowal be experienced. On the condition that it be actualized as concentrated self-consciousness in the meaningful moment of the present now: either because the historical character of the event now present breaks into consciousness in one’s own moment, or because it radiates into this consciousness from the past and, as present, asserts itself as actual. Thus arise the force-fields of historical occurrence with their centers, the governing events, which for man are so many fields of original meaning-bestowal.

For three reasons we believed that, in our exposition of the relation between dynamism and thought, we might present the above account of the problem from the world of thought of the deceased Swiss philosopher Pierre Thévenaz (see the edition of his collected writings under the title *L’Homme et sa Raison*, Neuchâtel 1956): first, because of the sharpness with which the problem is posed; second, in order not to make the discussion take needless detours, since Prof. van Peursen, particularly in his latest inaugural address discussed in our journal, refers approvingly in many respects to this philosopher; third, because Thévenaz, apparently also with the intention of powerfully bringing to the fore the “sphere sovereignty” of philosophical thought, wished above all to philosophize from a Christian conviction. To what extent, in practice, the

boundaries between “sphere sovereignty” and “autonomy” remained fluid, and thought ultimately maintained itself as autonomous, may implicitly appear from our exposition.

The problem is, in our opinion, posed as sharply as possible from a certain standpoint important for our subject. We seem to be approaching the moment of the mutual confrontation of “law” and “subjectivity.” Meanwhile, in reality we are dealing with the correlation between two eminently “contingent” elements: present consciousness and the event present to consciousness. In the correlation each is the absolute condition for the other. How far does the tension of this “polarity” extend? And what is its inner character? For above all that is what matters.

The fundamental question upon which we stumble is namely this: by what path has the mutual correlation of both terms been posited as central meaning-bestowal? From where is the right derived to posit it thus? That where the recognition of meaning by man is concerned, it is his consciousness to which the (historical) event is correlated, can be understood from the philosophy of the centuries. That it is now this concrete occurrence which is related to consciousness in the foundational correlation, can be understood from the evolution of that same philosophy. But what cannot be understood from it is the competence presupposed behind it of the “consciousness” (thought) of the philosopher to allow the meaning of consciousness and occurrence, and of their mutual correlation, to spring from the tension of this correlation as meaning-bestowal. In other words: to proclaim (in this or some other manner) the law of integral meaning-bestowal. The inseparable interrelation of (moving) philosophizing and philosophy cannot provide an answer to this question of competence, because the pronouncement of philosophizing in philosophy can have no meaning except as the exclusive pronouncement of truth.

Thus we remain in the midst of the stream and are prepared to continue speaking of the stream of time. If we cannot acknowledge man’s ability, by means of his (philosophical) thought, originally to pronounce upon the origin and direction of that stream, but instead continually see him running into unavoidable fundamental contradiction, this does not mean that man would not be called to know this origin and direction and correspondingly to continue acting. But then concerning what “state of affairs” does one dispute each other’s “interpretation”? Can we, “in the stream,” suspend our philosophical judgment concerning this until (joint?) clarity has been obtained? From what point?

In the line of thought of Thévenaz, which we wish for a moment to retain within the present context, this point can only lie in the described “conscience d’historicité” (II, p. 135), “qui est une forme aiguë de la présence à soi-même” (“which is an acute form of presence to oneself”; emphasis ours, M., and we add for the sake of completeness: which exists only in the aforementioned correlation with the “event” imposing itself upon it). Self-consciousness as such is therefore here posited in the temporalized—and, because of the required correlation, we must say: historicized—sense of “presence to.” What this will mean further depends upon the event dominating the historical force-field, which continues to represent itself in actual consciousness.

Provided this representation remains fully actual, it can be any central event which thus determines consciousness and action (p. 137): “whether it be the revolution of 1789 or of 1917, the defeat of 1940, the progress of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, Marx’s class struggle, or the incarnation of Christ for the Christian.”

We ask: by what central “event” is the consciousness of the philosopher directed amidst the force-fields designated by him, where he thus sees the people of history alongside and after one another in their consciousness?

The significance of cultural dominants, also in the sense intended by Thévenaz, cannot be denied. One may see this influence upon both people and philosopher alike in Sartre’s *Critique de la Raison dialectique*. And we know what Thévenaz himself as a person would wish to answer.

But the philosopher himself—in what force-field is his philosophy of historical self-determination born?

The judgment may be severe against every philosophy whose thinker existentially withdraws himself from and elevates himself above that which, with pretension to universal validity, he has supposedly thought out. Yet one may equally not exempt his philosophy itself from the obligation of accountability which it implies for every expression of life.

The dynamism, the temporal movement, placed in issue in the philosophy just discussed, is grasped under the common denominator of historical events. A common denominator assuming the form of a moving totality-structure. The movement takes place between the consciousness of historical man and the events in his world. It is the movement of the dialectic of consciousness. Dialectic, because it cannot escape the framework of “presence to.” Beyond this no further questioning was possible, witness the mutual relativization of the “historical force-fields” as the final word. And we do not think we say too much if we conclude that it, as philosophy, was born in the force-field of dialectic.

It is the dynamism of dialectic which moves it. Dialectic in this case between history and, this time, philosophizing consciousness. A consciousness distinguished from the existential consciousness functioning in this philosophy (bound to the “event”) by the fact that it does not account for its character as proclamation transcending the existential.

It cannot justify itself before any existential demand, since thereby the foundation of its claim to enduring validity, and thus the dialectic of consciousness and occurrence as the origin of meaning, would collapse.

Thus: unaccountable proclamation. Final word. Word of origin.

The Dynamics of the Modalities and the Boundary of Time

As stated, we have chosen the example discussed here because we believed that by means of it we would not be too far removed from a point of contact within the discussion—not in order to pin the discussion down to it. Moreover, the argument applies in a corresponding manner to every philosophy that absolutizes historical dynamism. The question that remains at issue is this: what is the relation between the philosophizing dialectic of origin and the intra-philosophical dialectics that are realized within the movement of time? Can the former itself be regarded as subject to the latter? [168]

For the reasons set forth above, we have believed that this decisive question must be answered negatively. By this, the antinomy in the foundation of the contested line of reasoning must be regarded as evident.

Here we enter the vicinity not of “states of affairs” that stand still, but of an order that is given—an order of origin, time, and thought. Across what distance between origin and philosophical reflection does the space for suspension of judgment extend?

It is here that the meaning of the modalities becomes of great importance.

Prof. VAN PEURSEN posited pre-theoretical aspects, which would be aspects of a totality-in-motion and would come together in the temporal dynamism as history. In contrast, he regarded the modalities of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea as products of abstraction.

The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea regards the modalities as real and pre-theoretical. Yet they lack a totality-character. For the dynamism of time does not unfold within them (although their internal structure is geared toward it), because this dynamism does not take its point of departure from a temporal (or historically conscious) origin, nor is it proclaimed by a “temporal” authority, namely philosophizing thought.

The question concerning the “state of affairs” at issue—namely whether there are states of affairs at all—here assumes a transcendental and therefore direction-giving character. On both sides it appears to be answered in the sense that the fundamental “state of affairs” with which we are concerned is the fundamental dynamism of reality. Yet man, according to Prof. VAN PEURSEN’s own words, never frees himself from his interpretations. For our part we remarked that the path along which the movement proceeds must help inform us concerning the meaning of the “toward-which.”

“I see matters and things and people,” thus Prof. v. P. says in the cited passage, “within the radical pointing-forward of the meaning of creation toward its Origin. Time can only be understood in this pointing-forward.” And again: “the seeing of states of affairs is only possible from a consciousness of meaning and direction ... that points either toward God or away from Him.”

To this our answer is an emphatic affirmation. Yet can we remain upon this path within the mobility of a “history” with its “pre-theoretical” (totality-) “aspects”?

In the example taken from THEVENAZ’s philosophy we saw provisionally where such a course would lead in itself. The issue now is how this intra-temporal “dialectic” could nevertheless direct itself toward God. In THEVENAZ we found an answer: the tension within the Christian’s historical field of force is governed by the central “event” of the Incarnation. Yet this was not allowed to affect either the mutual relativity of the fields of force or the philosopher’s original choice regarding his philosophy. That choice remained anchored in the philosophizing dialectic between philosophical thought and historical “event” as the integral determination of consciousness—and thereby of meaning.

As stated, we are approaching the confrontation between “law” and “subjectivity.” The law (a “state of affairs”?) is proclaimed by philosophy within the mutual relativity of historical fields of force. Is philosophy truly the last word for philosophizing thought? If it admits beside itself another last word, then what is the relation between these last words? In THEVENAZ’s examples the Incarnation, as a central and dominating event, is placed relatively in relation to the others. Under the law of philosophy’s final word, its own final word is relativized and thereby reduced to the status of a subject. For the Christian—even if he is a philosopher—there remains only the possibility of escape into the “supernatural,” whose Sovereign here below possesses no legitimate universal authority (and therefore none for the Christian either). Can such legitimacy be reconciled with a movement directed toward God?

Does the difficulty not lie here—in the attempt to let “history” merge with God’s history?⁶ What “state of affairs” is at issue?

The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea does not reject the term “history” to designate a totality of events. Yet what happens cannot as such be grasped in its meaning merely by calling it history and attaching to that term the significance of a cultural-historical mode of coherence among all that occurs. When we do this, we simplify what happens into its historical aspect, which, once elevated to the common denominator of all the aspects involved in occurrence, can give us no answer concerning meaning. It cannot do so because its supposed meaning itself derives only from a mode of thought that does not ask after its own determination of meaning (that is, its own delimitation), and therefore remains trapped in dialectic with that thought. Only within the individuality-structures of empirical reality can the meaning of history be disclosed without distortion—there where even a “conscience” impoverished by abstraction may once more rediscover freedom and meaning.

One can only trace the meaning of the modalities in which man lives with his world by taking into account their differentiated disclosure within the distinct total structures of individuality—that is, by reckoning with their character as reality. Only in this way can their character as modalities of the dynamic disclosure of meaning in time be properly understood, together with the character of time in its directed disclosure of modalities. And thereby light is also shed upon what the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea calls the boundary of time.

For even the question concerning this boundary can only be approached from within time itself, where our thinking remains bound within its own dynamism. As became evident from our discussion of THEVENAZ’s conception, we touch concretely upon this boundary-problem precisely in the question concerning the competencies of philosophical thought.

Prof. v. P. posed to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea the question whether it does not separate time too “objectivistically” from what it calls the supra-temporal (*Philosophia Reformata* 1959, esp. p. 166), and he returns briefly to Prof. D.’s answer in *Philosophia Reformata* 1961, p. 198, and more deeply though not explicitly on p. 200.

For us, however, in order to know our path (the meaning and direction of dynamism) and to recognize our boundaries, the issue concerns the consciousness of meaning and direction of which Prof. v. P. speaks. Once more we wish to make use of THEVENAZ’s thought for this purpose. We saw how philosophically he bound us to the dialectical ground-relation between consciousness and historical [170] event, thereby situating us within one of the tension-fields of history. In the mutual relativization of these tension-fields he sought to respect the boundary of time. But for us the problem of that boundary arose precisely when we found the “event” of the Incarnation arranged under this relativization, namely as a problem concerning the limits of “thought.” At first approach the problem appeared to find its point of contact (internally philosophical) in the question concerning the relation between modality and individual total structure, specifically with respect to “history.” What should we say about this in connection with what theology has called the “Incarnation”?

⁶ See also the facile identification of THEVENAZ’s central events, around which “history gravitates,” with “events of salvation-history,” in the review of Prof. v. P.’s inaugural lecture in *De Rotterdammer*, October 22, 1960.

When Prof. DOOYEWEERD remarks (*A New Critique*, II, p. 561) that God's revelation, in order to become understandable to us, both in the revelation of the Word of God and in scriptural revelation, takes its course through our creaturely time, Prof. v. P., in response to an expression used shortly before ("the transcendent light of eternity must force its way through time ..."), believes that this presents eternity as laboriously forcing its way into time, in contrast to what he regards as the biblical idea of an "opening up of world-time" in the knowledge of the Father made possible to man (*Ph. R.* '59, pp. 166–67). The expression "force," which may perhaps be somewhat strong, in any case does not directly concern God's revelation in Christ (as a reading of the passage itself will show). Prof. D. merely intended to express that since it pleased God to reveal Himself within temporal creation, therefore His word-revelation also—concentrated in the Word as its focal point—took that route.

On the other hand, however, in a conception such as THEVENAZ's, how is the consciousness of meaning and direction attained that points toward God, as Prof. v. P. rightly regards as necessary? THEVENAZ merely points to the gravitation of "history" around central events, among them the Incarnation. Nothing norms the creature as included precisely within this gravitational field. It is normed only by the law of the gravitational fields, and therein its meaning is determined. Could it have been otherwise?

In our opinion it could not have been otherwise. For once the historical aspect of reality (whether or not under the misleadingly concretizing title of "event") is designated by thought as the integration of the fundamental dynamism, it cannot rise above its creaturely modal character. It can represent only the historical aspect of the Incarnation. But has this aspect itself thereby preserved its meaning?

The aspect receives its meaning from the fullness of meaning of which it is one modal expression. In his own way Prof. v. P. also holds fast to this principle (*Ph. R.* '59, p. 166; '61, pp. 196, 197–98). He speaks of time as directedness toward meaningfulness, the movement of the cosmos toward God.

This we would gladly adopt, for it is in the movement of disclosure that the fullness of meaning comes "to fulfillment" within the mutual coherence of the aspects. The question now is whether the fullness of meaning can be found by philosophical thought.

If it can, then thought must be able to place itself outside, opposite, indeed above the fullness of meaning. In our discussion of the antinomy in THEVENAZ's dialectic of origin we saw how, within it, thought made the event as event into the focal point of human reality and determined the "meaning" of that reality; and how this philosophical thought itself, contrary to its own content, failed to justify its competence with respect to any such event. We saw how from such a primary absolutization of thought there necessarily arose the absolutization of one aspect of reality (in this case conceived concretely) into the radiating center of all meaning.

If thought does not possess such authority, then it is assigned its own place within the dynamics of the disclosure of meaning; universal "within its own sphere," it may approach its boundaries, yet it can provide no verdict whatsoever concerning what lies beyond the boundary.

The elevation of thought (always within dialectical bondage) into the origin of meaning rests—from the creaturely standpoint—upon an isolation of the modal aspect of thought (the distinguishing function) by means of abstraction from the total structure of the temporally mobile act of thinking, and it has its roots in the earliest history of Western philosophy. Throughout the whole development of this philosophy, the abstraction thus isolated retains this character, and

we encounter it both in BRÜMMER's previously discussed uncritical dualism of the noetic and the ontic and in THEVENAZ's "crisis"-thinking, which has passed through many critiques, where present consciousness and present event in their dialectical conjunction generate cosmic meaning.

With regard to the primary question of competence just raised, the West has made its choice, stimulated and fertilized in the modern period by the idea of human autonomy as such. This does not relieve us of the necessity of making our own decisive choice.

Has the historical aspect of the Incarnation in THEVENAZ's philosophy of gravitational fields preserved its "historical" character? No, for it has absorbed the Incarnation itself and thereby turned it, as "event," into the central determination of meaning for the consciousness of Christians. In the same way this occurs for other groups of human consciousness with "events" of differing qualified significance—political, economic, scientific. In this relativization the shift of meaning that has taken place with respect to the historical modality expresses itself most characteristically.

We can only be protected against such displacement of meaning by directing the meaning of thought itself toward its fulfillment, which transcends every particular meaning. Yet this can occur only in the choice that precedes every further, especially theoretical, reflection—a choice concerning the true focal point (meaningfulness) of creation.

Here lies the point of encounter and the difficulty of encounter of which we spoke in our introduction. For although it is impossible to make the described choice from a point outside the true center, the question remains whether, in making that choice, we are willing to recognize this center.

The mutual relativity of the gravitational fields can only be maintained from a point designated by thought. If thought is not competent to designate this point, then it must allow its meaning to be directed from the point at which the human being who thinks has been placed.

Origin and Root of the Bestowal of Meaning

From this point all aspects display themselves equally in their own irreducible meaning. [172] There can be no question there of a correlation between consciousness and history determining integral meaning. The event will not primarily prove to be an "event" in the historically modal sense, although historical science may approach it from that side. It will prove to display all modalities, each time qualified by the total nature of the event. And it is not in the first place as a historical event that it addresses a (historical) consciousness.

We cannot permit ourselves to elaborate upon the causes that in the development of philosophy led to the absolutization of the historical aspect. It must suffice to point out that this, like every absolutization, causes thought to wander into shifts of meaning and into ambiguous, unqualified concepts, whose meaning must be examined if ordered exchange of thought is to be attained.

Thus the problem of "states of affairs" again presents itself to us. Yet, we hope, it has now itself been removed to some extent from the sphere of unqualified concepts. For we may now express ourselves by saying that the interpretations from which man "can never step outside" differ according to the insight that man believes he possesses concerning the place from which he

interprets, while meanwhile, elevated above every human arbitrariness, that place remains the same for all.

THEVENAZ's "example" of the Incarnation as a central event may guide us here, provided that for our part we carefully and reverently observe the boundaries of philosophical thought. When we speak pre-theoretically of it as an event, we do not express ourselves incorrectly. But if philosophically we were to believe that we had thereby comprehended it, then we would not merely have gone philosophically astray—as would be the case with most other examples of central events—but would have laid hands upon the very Root of reality itself, which therein is also the root of our philosophical thinking. For when we ask concerning the qualification of the total structure of this "event," we receive no answer from the cosmos.

The cosmos cannot give us an answer because from this event it receives its entire meaning. Only from there can our thought first take its departure amid the whole unfolding of life. According to its historical aspect we often call the "Incarnation" the midpoint of (historical) time. According to its fullness it signifies Origin and Root, Bestowal of Meaning and Fulfillment, for the term is theoretical, but the reality thereby inadequately designated proclaims to us Him to whom the Father has given all things.

By speaking thus, have we not after all arrived unawares at theology, at philosophy, at thinking which, according to our own assertion, can only take its departure and formulate itself from the Root of all meaning? Prof. VAN PEURSEN has repeatedly raised these questions, and at the conclusion of his latest contribution sharpened them into the issue of the religious ground-motive. We ourselves have repeatedly asked concerning that portion of the path of reflection where suspension of theoretical—and more specifically philosophical—judgment could and/or should take place.

But what does "taking one's departure" mean here? What is the basis from which we [173] depart, and what is a ground-motive? Of what nature is the movement along the way, and what is that way?

Here we have arrived at the all-governing point in transcendental critique, which itself in turn governs pre-theoretically the communication of life and theoretically philosophical and scientific debate.

In seeking the meaning of reality we all depart from the point where we have been placed in order to be able to depart. Simply because we ourselves did not place ourselves within the meaning of our existence. The same may be said of the path we must travel; but our own—and now in the fullest sense of the word: subjective⁷—insight (interpretation) concerning that basis continues to guide our view of the way.

Departure is not something one may choose either to do or not to do; the dynamis of our existence governs entering upon and proceeding along every front of practical life, including that of scientific, philosophical, and theological thought.

⁷ To avoid premature misunderstanding we note, superfluously perhaps, that in this term the emphasis falls upon subjection to accountability before an exclusive norm.

From the moment of departure the question of “interpretation” begins. Basis and departure, dynamis and path demand from the traveler—who has not himself given himself self-consciousness and world-consciousness—awareness, choice, and action.

Does what we assert here depend upon “interpretation”?

The foregoing exposition of our own and others’ thought gave an unmistakably affirmative answer to this question. Yet interpretation can only exist under determination of its meaning amid the meaning concerning which it speaks. Even the most anarchic judgment can derive significance only from that.

We therefore believe that “along the way” one may suspend a theoretical (or philosophical) judgment while awaiting the manifestation of the given realities—which are always dynamic—within interpretations that for that very reason necessarily complement one another. Practically this means much, but it will never lead to unity of interpretation. The careful establishment of “states of affairs” always continues to contain within itself the view of the basis and the assessment of the path one has traveled (or had to travel).

Moreover, both the demand for and the possibility of suspending judgment apply equally to all kinds of judgments. Yet they speak with particular sharpness concerning philosophical judgments, since the interpretation of the basis must therein be explicitly contained and within the development of ancient and modern Western civilization has tended to present itself as the last word. Indeed, this occurs even in the denial that a last word is possible. We found such a last word both in THEVENAZ’s conception of the force-fields of historical consciousness and in the idea of an objective theo-logy (eschatologically striving toward its consummation) in BRÜMMER and CONRADIE.

The “last word” assigns interpretations—their origin notwithstanding—their place. It must do so because man remains bound to a last word. It is the word that establishes meaning. The last word judges all the “last words” that have presented themselves as such. We are at the boundary of interpretation. We have arrived there by thinking. Thought has dynamically travelled the path of thought and now sees itself confronted with the boundary of thought.

Concerning that path of thought, which leads to the boundaries of thought, the three authors with whom this article conducts its dialogue have debated with the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea. Because it is the central path of philosophical exchange, we wish, before concluding with consideration of the possibilities of communication as such, to examine it separately for a moment. The question concerning suspension of judgment and the provisional answer we have already given immediately make themselves felt here. Earlier we already stated that within scientific exchange of thought the discussion of states of affairs and interpretation assumes a specific and acute character.

The Path of Thought and the Boundaries of Thought

At the same time, in doing so we must also attempt, in a certain sense, to summarize what has been remarked in its proper place concerning the problems before us. Let it first be stated that the path of thought bears the character of a total structure, like all human paths and everything that manifests itself in creation. We would even put it this way: the dynamic individuality-structures of creation in their modalities can only be understood from those of human action, of his acts and “actions.”

All of them bear the same modalities in the same order of disclosure, whatever else those modalities might prove to be. Each displays — at the place assigned to it within that order — the modality of conscious distinction (and of being distinguished). In each case this modality is structurally qualified in accordance with the total structure within which it functions. Here we touch, in the first instance, upon STOKER's "intuition," though its actuality depends entirely upon the internal dynamic of the action or act. It is true that STOKER sees it as directed toward revelation. Another question, however, is whether, in and through the action or act, it understands that revelation. This will depend upon the direction of the dynamic.

In any case, within the direction taken it is disclosed. Man knows what he does (from which not-knowing first acquires meaning), and thus progressively comes to know "reality." The intentional, abstracting activity of thought, to which he can set himself at a certain point in his development and which he can cultivate to a greater or lesser degree, is qualified by conscious analytical distinction. Within it man takes up the distinctions acquired in practice, while preserving their modal-analytical character. And it is here that he becomes aware, within the structurally proper systematics of disclosure belonging to the act of thought, that the "objects" with which analytical "subjectivity" deals within the dynamic coherence are analytical objectifications (including any anticipations)⁸ drawn from the practical actions and acts in which he as man "entered into reality."

Within the analytical modality of the intentional (theoretical) act of thought we encounter the mode — modulated according to the structure of this act — of becoming conscious of reality, which recognizes the meaning-kernels of the objectified non-analytical modalities as intrinsically non-analytical in nature. In this "interpreted" givenness Western man found occasion to place himself autonomously, in his analytical subjectivity, over against that which could either be kept outside this autonomy in knowing, or else controlled by it. Naturally, however, the impulse toward appropriating this autonomy could by no means proceed from the given structure itself.

The dualism thus born from the impulse of autonomy was elaborated, under the intrinsically dialectical variation of impulses, into ever new forms of fundamental autonomous dialectic, beyond which one was repeatedly not permitted legitimately to inquire further. The Kantianizing philosophies in particular gave considerable prominence, in their own way, to the term "Gegenstand," or "Gegenstandsrelation." In most cases epistemology thereby assumed primacy within philosophy. Yet for the significance of the fundamental figure this is, in our view, by no means essential.

The question with which the three authors discussed in this contribution — all engaging the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea — have occupied themselves, was whether this philosophy, through the mouth of Prof. DOOYEWEERD, had discovered in what has been called the Gegenstandsrelation a "state of affairs," and whether it had valued and applied it correctly. This question is all the more important because its transcendental critique appears in many respects to have chosen therein its first point of contact.

Whereas Dr. BRÜMMER, proceeding a priori from his own starting-point, can value the search for such a state of affairs insofar as it is defended by an appeal to "the ontic" (in Brümmer's sense), he must oppose it where he believes he detects an unperceived transition to the "noetic" side. Prof. VAN PEURSEN, by contrast, sees in it a metaphysical speculation (of the neo-Kantians)

⁸ For the terminology employed here we permit ourselves, for the sake of brevity, to refer to the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea. See also Dr. BRÜMMER, op. cit., pp. 151ff.

reduced to the “ontological.” In this latter criticism the problem of ontology as such comes into view, sharpened specifically upon the problem of the dynamic of the disclosure of thought.

As we saw, Dr. BRÜMMER neglected to justify the “being-position” of the “noetic” sphere and thereby automatically also that of his own “noetic” critique. In the discussion with Prof. VAN PEURSEN the question arises whether the “ontic” dynamic is to be accounted for by thought, or whether the dynamic of thought (especially that of the philosopher) is itself enclosed within being (= movement). In the latter case, what is the position — and therefore the competence — of the final “word” of thought?

Whoever contests neo-Kantian philosophy in its pretension to the autonomy of thought — in which this philosophy most clearly brings to light the fundamental pretension of all Western thought — must seize it at its core position: the open absolutization of the “Gegenstandsrelation.” And from there show where its paths run up against the limits imposed upon thought.

Whether this can lead to the acceptance of the Gegenstandsrelation as an ontic structure of at least theoretical thought is a question⁹ which, like all structural problems, must remain open to further inquiry within the development of philosophy. Yet even in this investigation the a priori choice concerning the right of the “last word” presents itself. This choice determines the view of basis and path as described above; it directs the investigation of the problematic. Only one who believes he finds the final word concerning the “crisis” of thought upon the path of thought itself — possibly by placing every “final” word out of view — can suppose himself exempt from this ultimate responsibility.

Placing ourselves once again within the stream of the dynamic, we believe we find a significant point of contact for our discussion concerning the position of the “Gegenstandsrelation” in the already cited passage from Mrs. CONRADIE’s work (p. 154): “... we cannot agree that the point of contact must be sought in the modal structure of thought, for the account of this modal structure only becomes intelligible in the context of the full structure of thought, which includes both a modal, theoretical structural aspect and a supra-theoretical structural aspect ...”

What follows in this quotation after “which includes,” however, must first be disentangled from a misunderstanding arising out of the author’s own presuppositions. For in the first place, as we believe we have sufficiently demonstrated, no modal aspect — and therefore not even the analytical one — is of theoretical origin; secondly, in the placing of the analytical modality within its structural religious context (by DOOYEWEERD) we are not dealing with a “supra-theoretical” aspect. The most important point, however, to which the author draws attention is that even the modal structure of the analytical aspect becomes intelligible only within the coherence of the full structure of thought.

Now this full structure of thought, as we have already seen, is encountered both in all pre-theoretical actions and acts and — in a certain systematization derived from the structure of that act — in the specific acts of thought tending toward complete theoretical systematization. In all actions and acts this full — dynamic — structure encompasses all modalities equally.

We have already agreed with Dr. BRÜMMER in his contention that within the Gegenstandsrelation one does not find an aspect of the actual act of thought set over against analytical subjectivity; and furthermore we saw that this latter, within the total dynamic of the act, encounters analytical-

⁹ It may already be clear that the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea answers this in the negative.

modal objectifications derived from concrete life-practice (actions and acts), which are now systematically brought to consciousness and disclosed as such.

The distinctions thus elaborated subsequently re-enter practical life along various channels, modally through the analytical avenue. Many remain in the background; others penetrate into everyday distinction within the cultural sphere. They help either normatively to enrich it or, anti-normatively, to impoverish it. Which of these occurs is determined by the direction of the disclosure-dynamic of pre-theoretical and theoretical human life. It was this which Mrs. CONRADIE incorrectly designated a “supra-theoretical aspect,” and to which Prof. DOOYEWEERD refers, at least insofar as the theoretical is concerned, when he speaks of the theoretical synthesis accomplished in the act of thought by the whole person. Here lies the *sedes materiae* in the discussion concerning the relation between Christian and non-Christian life-practice, and science as one sector thereof.

We have thus spoken from the basic principle of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea and its theory of structures. Interpretation? Undoubtedly. Concerning a state of affairs knowable to everyone? How far does the possibility of suspending judgment extend?

We believe that the necessity of suspending definitive judgment accompanies us continually upon our path of life and thought, yet that we nevertheless remain equally continually called to judge, because we are called to live — that is, to decide. The dynamic of disclosure does not come to an end. It demands from us not arrival but the taking of direction. To our directional choice “God’s presence in reality” responds, and along with it our apostate vital impulse responds as well, since in the continuous following of lies it can only find its ruin. Yet however much it responds, we receive no answer from this “presence of God.” Rather, it asserts itself above all in our being directed toward our fellow human being, which places before us the normativity of universal communication. Can we interpret communicatively without appealing to the knowability of that within which the path must jointly be sought?

If “no things stand still” and everything is restlessly underway — not least our own distinguishing thought — then the path and our mutual relation upon the path can be maintained in only one way: by maintaining direction. For it is within that direction that “things” become for us what they are. Moving being is inseparably bound to direction.

The Path of Thought as Stake and Instrument of Spiritual Power-Struggle

In our discussion thus far, even where we confronted apparent denials of any dynamic other than the logical, we everywhere encountered the movement of the creature. We have followed its path chiefly along the theoretical avenue, because there the problem of communication not only presented itself *in casu*, but because we also discovered there a central route within this whole question.

This, however, requires some further consideration, in order shortly to serve us in the matter that occasioned this exposition.

For it was not by the theoretical path as such, but by means of a spiritual formation of power supported by theoretical thought, that scientific reflection acquired its leading position in the development of Western culture. This is to be distinguished from the helping to develop practical judgment, of which we have spoken, and in which theoretical thought continues to appeal to pre-

scientific distinction, while the latter, in structural perseverance, continues to encompass the former even in its advance.

Precisely within this structural encompassment the struggle over spiritual power-formation to which we refer here has played itself out around the path of thought. The issue was whether this path could indicate the direction of the unending dynamic and guarantee coherence during the common advance.

Secondary in this respect was the decision in favor either of a seemingly more static rationalism or of its polar opposite, an alleged dynamic “irrationalism.” The real issue was whether the path in this direction could lead into openness, or whether it too led to insurmountable limits. The entire development from critical thought to crisis-thinking bears witness to this. The oscillation of the compass needle between the poles of the unavoidable dialectic of origin, as discussed by us, could meanwhile not be misunderstood by anyone willing to see. It has been, par excellence, the sign of the “presence of God” in the culture of Western science and philosophy.

The “path of thought” bears first of all the creaturely form of the act of thought discussed above, which, with respect to the dynamic of disclosure in the diversity of its modal aspects, differs in no way from all human acting. One may, from the side of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, take this view (interpretation) for what it is; nevertheless the problem of the final word, as we have raised it, in correlation with human belief, cannot thereby be set aside.

For whence came the impulse that made the path of thought the stake in a struggle for power, that claimed for it the monopoly as the avenue of central direction? It did not arise from the justified demand to actualize the irreducibly proper modal character of rational distinction, but from the faith of Western man, who believed he could secure in this thought the seat of his autonomy. In this surrender of faith the total structure of the act of thought, together with the ultimate disclosure through faith inherent in it, necessarily disappeared from view.

The danger of blindness at this point can present itself to the Christian in a specific way, and we believe we have already encountered it in this discussion.

We believe we encountered it in CONRADIE’s dividing line between nature and supernature, which, with respect to the possibility of knowledge, she allows almost to coincide with that between philosophy and theology. In a salutary mutual struggle between the two, the truth — which DOOYEWEERD, by ignoring the value of an objective theology, was bound to miss — would, for the Christian, best be served.

We encountered it in the most open manner in Dr. BRÜMMER, in the blind trust which he wishes accorded to prayerfully rational biblical exegesis, which, together with all creation, must submit itself under the “Logos.” Dr. B. gives neither himself nor his readers any account whatsoever of any “final word” spoken by philosophy in this matter. Nevertheless, on this very ground he rejects every integral opposition to such philosophy that might arise from the Gospel.

After the foregoing reflection on the path of thought, it is not difficult to understand what, in our opinion, was really at issue. It was not a rejection of a theoretical conception as such, but a deflection of the act of thought away from the one proper direction its dynamic must take if it is not to run aground against the boundaries of thought. A deflection under the guidance of faith, which structurally determines the direction of all human actions and acts. In this case, under the guidance of faith in thought itself, which one sees directed toward its *telos* of fulfillment in theoretical systematization.

This trust proved no less present in the Christian philosopher THEVENAZ's central placing of the "event" according to its absolutized historical aspect, where he believed he could philosophically place the central event for the Christian on the same level as similar events for others. This philosophical equalization proved to be the consequence of a silent detachment of the philosopher *as philosopher* from the lawful condition under which he had placed every consciousness, namely, its determination by a particular central event.

A philosophy that had passed through crisis-thinking thus proved not to have advanced to a true transcendental self-critique. The totality of what happens proved to extend far beyond its "historical aspect."

That the philosopher did not satisfy his own condition was therefore self-evident. What is not self-evident is that he could arrive at this in uncritical trust in the philosophical course of thought. Without this trust he would not merely have liberated "consciousness" from various possible absolutizations, including that of a "meta-history," but would have dissolved both consciousness and event out of the dialectic of origin of the *présence à*. In other words, he would have brought them out of this "state of affairs" into the open field of the disclosure-dynamic. And he would have led the Christian philosophizing person out of the dilemma between a universally relativizing philosophical consciousness and determination by the Christian "event."

Transcendental Critique and Theology

We have considered the path of thought chiefly by attending to the structure of the theoretical act of thought. There was good reason for this, because through the use of, and in response to, this structure, the deification of thought received its "creaturely" opportunity, and the struggle concerning this rigidity therefore had to concentrate itself there.

The path, however, leads further; thanks to the intimate interweaving of all human acts and actions within the person and within social relations, not only are his practically experienced distinctions subjected to theoretical analysis in the dynamic of the act of thought, but also the theoretically systematized distinctions of the latter are worked back into non-theoretical actions and acts, i.e. applied and practically disclosed. Yet everything continues to depend upon the disclosure which, both practically and theoretically, brings us to transcendental boundaries, in this case to the boundaries of thought, where the question of the "last word" arises.

It is therefore self-evident that in the present discussion, conducted by Christians, not only philosophy but especially also the "problem" of theology plays an important—if not implicitly decisive—role.

With respect to the South African authors, the positions were sharply defined. Both BRÜMMER and CONRADIE assigned the decisive role to theology, and this in a way which is simply unacceptable for the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea.

The situation between it and Prof. VAN PEURSEN is different.

Just as the whole issue of the dynamic of disclosure, within which the mutual relation between theoretical and non-theoretical distinction is situated, remains fully under discussion, so too does the problem of theology. It is discussed in principle in our journal, *Philosophia Reformata* 1959 pp. 167–68, 1960 especially p. 142, and 1961 p. 200. There appears to be no disagreement concerning the scientific character of theology.

[180]

Nevertheless—and this is significant—it is precisely here that the discussion takes its subtle turn. Prof. VAN PEURSEN says that in Christian philosophy the issue concerns a humanly imperfect, yet witnessing articulation of the full biblical message, not as a restricted motif but as the driving force of philosophizing. Speaking about the limits of transcendental critique itself (which are the limits of thought), Prof. DOOYEWEERD says:

“Here philosophy must remain silent, and only religious confession or surrender to the Truth itself can speak. And yet transcendental critique of thought was from the beginning held in the central grasp of its religious starting-point, of which it finally gives theoretical account ...”

Prof. VAN PEURSEN, replying, asks concerning the thesis of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea that transcendental critique leads beyond theology, indeed beyond the boundaries of philosophy, to the central *dunamis* of God’s Word, and that its central biblical starting-point itself is no longer dependent upon theological and human insights:

“Is this biblical starting-point grasped purely within the formulations of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, or represented without any theological-human influence? Or does DOOYEWEERD mean that the entire Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, including its formulation and its ‘language,’ is a defective pointing beyond itself? With that I would agree, but then the antithesis is not between the biblically formulated motive articulated by the Christian and the other motives, but the Christian too, in his formulation—which can never be absolved from the influence of some apostate motive—can only bear witness in brokenness.”

The stakes now appear to be very high, namely the antithesis itself.

The wording of the closing sentence in Prof. VAN PEURSEN’s statement makes us ask: of what can the Christian bear witness “in brokenness”—of the biblical ground-motive, as formulated by him, or of the antithesis? The phrase “of it” leaves room for both meanings. However intended, in either case we can say: in this matter there is no difference between Prof. VAN PEURSEN and the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. Only this: brokenness in the sense used here is the mark of the antithesis. It is not found on that side against which God has set His antithesis.

Prof. VAN PEURSEN continues to object to the formulation of the biblical ground-motive as “creation, fall, redemption,” since such a formulation cannot have arisen without theological influence and can only point beyond itself toward the full biblical message. Finally, he emphatically maintains his earlier objection to Prof. DOOYEWEERD’s statement:

“Our philosophy dares to accept the stumbling-block of the cross of Christ as the cornerstone also of epistemology,”

and concludes:

“The antithesis is indeed placed between two kinds of philosophy and not merely between God’s Word and the spirit of apostasy.”

This refers back to his earlier remark concerning the expression “stumbling-block,” etc.:

“Has it not been insufficiently observed that all these statements, reflections on knowledge, etc., were already shaped by a very definite exegesis?”

Reading this, we ask: even if, in the present context, a formulation such as “creation, fall, redemption,” however scriptural in itself, could betray theological influence, must the same

therefore hold for the cross as cornerstone also of epistemology? For this is not about the special subject of epistemology (which VAN PEURSEN, to our surprise, italicized in the last quotation), since this subject falls under everything human beings do. On the contrary, the issue is the cardinal question whether the-cross-as-cornerstone can or may ever become an object of exegesis! Ultimately this question may prove highly important in the light of what was said above concerning the path of thought. For epistemology and exegesis have everything to do with the position, course, and limits of that path.

All the questions arising here, including those raised by Mrs. CONRADIE and Dr. BRÜMMER, but which Prof. VAN PEURSEN as well as we ourselves have grasped within the theme of dynamic movement, concentrate upon the relation between the full biblical message and transcendental critique within philosophy. For the great question at issue is whether interpersonal communication will dare, must, and can proceed to the very foundation of its univocal determination of meaning, if it is to be real and therefore possible at all.

According to our conviction, this foundation will not be reached so long as, through avoidance of radical transcendental critique, an original dualism is maintained, within whose poles the dynamic of disclosure must take place. In our preceding argument against such dualism we found confirmation in what is perhaps the most philosophical statement of Heidegger:

“Thinking has here fastened the end of the guiding thread of all philosophical questioning to that from which it springs and to which it rebounds.” (*Sein und Zeit*, §38)

God’s history with humanity?

Along this “guiding thread” the conceptions discussed in our debate—those of (dynamic) total structures (“pre-theoretical aspects”) of original “activity,” “life,” but also of scientific thought, aesthetic appreciation, and so forth—would have to move, provided we are really dealing with such total structures. But this would only be conceivable on the presupposition of the original dualism we reject, not when the issue is a disclosure that must reach beyond the “here-below” in the here and now.

If one nevertheless wishes simultaneously to keep this in view, then immediately the alternative of a second dualism appears (in fact that of nature and supernature), as we encountered it in THEVENAZ—in his Christianity on the one hand and his relativizing of the central, meaning-determining events on the other.

With this double dualism we indeed arrive at the “religious ground” of this dialectical mode of thought, because it reveals itself in its religious ground-motive. But for precisely that reason transcendental reflection upon it is kept outside philosophy so long as one wishes to maintain the autonomy of philosophical thought over against faith and religion. The theoretical reflection upon the relation of “nature” and “supernature” is then handed over to theology. But then one also cannot acknowledge that what is at issue here is the actual ground-motive of an entire attitude toward thought and life.

The demand that theoretical thought be subjected to a radical transcendental critique applies with equal force to theological thought, because the latter, as theoretical in character—as we have seen—reasons from philosophical and religious presuppositions. Even though this critique, which follows the theoretical path of thought, cannot philosophically transcend the limits of theoretical thought, it nevertheless receives its concentric transcendental direction from beyond those limits.

For this very reason, in our view the transcendental dynamic of philosophical thought can only be understood if it is acknowledged that the modal aspects are not products of theoretical abstraction, but belong really, in their inseparable coherence, to the transcendental structure of our temporal world of experience, thus referring to the one root of reality.

The only remaining question is whether the philosopher has allowed the direction from beyond that boundary to be shown to him, or whether he has once again fastened the “guiding thread” between the poles of an immanent origin-dialectic. Why did THEVENAZ, as regards his philosophy, choose the relativity of central events and not that one event which pointed to the one transcendent root-unity of creation? The “central biblical starting-point” of the transcendental critique of a Christian philosophy neither can nor may “be dependent upon any human or theological insight.”

But meanwhile: what is a “starting-point”? What point must this be?

The Demand for Breaking Through Functionalism

The question what “starting-point” means here confronts us once again, and now in the deepest sense, with the choice between the “horizontal” path of the Western tradition—which in principle, and increasingly consistently in the modern development of the special sciences, has attempted to bring the total structures of individuality under absolutized aspects—and, on the other hand, the “vertical” path of reflection upon the individuality structures moving within their modalities.

In the first case, the “starting-point” is the point where, as already described, the “guiding thread” of the fundamental dialectic underlying theoretical dialectic is “fastened.” It is a point affirmed by thought, or by theological thought. From there not only does the path of thought begin with its own immanent dialectic, but all human paths begin there and continue until the final “impossibility of possibilities” announces itself, leaving only a possible continuation “hereafter.” Insofar as it transcends nature, human life upon this path is summarized under its historical aspect.

Human faith too, insofar as it is still taken seriously and not understood as projection, refuge, or *mauvaise foi*, can then only be brought along the horizontal path, whether by reverting to a doctrine of analogy or by once more allowing “history,” in the above sense, to encompass, permeate, and elevate to a higher plane the Christian’s understanding and experience, toward which he must also point and draw his fellow humans who share and shape history with him. Thus, within THEVENAZ’s world of thought, the “guiding thread” can be fastened in the consciousness of the “event” of the incarnation, which then opens time and history toward the history of God’s faithfulness.

It is far from our intention, by exposing what we consider the consequence of excluding the reality of the modalities as such, to suggest within the present discussion a view merely so that we may then refute it. The matter at stake lies too deep for us even to be able, at this level, to have ready some kind of standard (“state of affairs”) for possible use. The issue is mutual approach; but this can be achieved only through trying to understand the intention of what has been formulated (already difficult enough!) and through presenting perspectives within the thought of one’s dialogue partner which one believes to discern as consistent implications.

For the sake of clarity we wish to stress emphatically that, in our opinion too, attention to the historical aspect of time is of the greatest importance, precisely in revelation-“history.” But in this

aspect we are dealing with a modality universally functioning within its all-sided coherence. God forms the person who listens to Him in the history of that person's life. Contrary to what Dr. BRÜMMER supposed, the *imago Dei* has nothing to do with a "proposition of consciousness" (*Satz des Bewusstseins*). The stigmata of the Master indicate in the believer the being and destiny of the human person. But his life can only be understood from the total structures of what he does and undergoes.

Everything that "happens," if it is to be understood, must be disclosed beyond its "historical aspect," within the totality of its manifold individuality structures of human actions and social relationships.

These structures cannot be stretched between the poles either of a rationalizing or a historicizing consciousness, between a mutually reflecting beginning-point and end-point, even if one then wishes to elevate them to a higher level. My action or act, in its concreteness, is not qualified by a present moment (*praesens*)—in whatever sense—but by the "existentially" "vertical" direction which it must take in the movement of its modalities, and which alone first grants meaning also to its historical aspect.

The consequences of transcendental critique, as the ultimately scientific interpretation of given reality from the standpoint of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea—a reality into which one is placed communicatively and upon which one must therefore reflect—thus manifest themselves directly in the breaking through of the hidden common denominators under which a community of faith that imagines thought to be sovereign repeatedly believed it could subsume this reality. This culminates in affirming the reality of the modalities, moving within individuality structures and irreducible to one another in meaning.

Ground-Motive and Communication

In this article we have attempted to contribute something toward reflection upon the important question posed to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea concerning states-of-affairs and interpretation. Yet neither can be escaped. In reflecting upon them one necessarily reaches a boundary which we cannot pass without having expressed a definitive interpretation of the definitive state-of-affairs by which all insight into states-of-affairs is governed. This boundary is the boundary of the starting-point. The starting-point of what Prof. VAN PEURSEN called: "the human being who can never step outside his interpretations." As we have seen, the issue concerned a starting-point for the dynamic movement by which the interpretations of the dynamic are themselves moved.

"Starting"—"point"?

Or: ground-motive?

How great the misunderstandings surrounding this last expression have been and continue to be! How little is it understood when expressed merely as a "theme."

Themes and starting-points can, under the guidance of ground-motives, appear within arguments and can be indicated. We saw the example of the starting-point in M. HEIDEGGER as a point determined by thought for fastening a "guiding thread" of metaphysical-philosophical dialectic. But the motive which presented such a point lay beneath it and can only be found in the deepest motivating grounds of a humanistic conviction of life, behind which no further questioning can be made by anyone and by no means whatever, because it wishes to be the final motive-force, the final creative word.

Whoever reflects upon the motive thereby enters philosophy, or theology, and thus interpretation. But interpretation of what is. Just as interpretation itself exists. And just as interpretation, together with the whole of life, is driven onward by and from the ground-motive.

Because our discussion presently takes place among Christians, it is important jointly to confess clearly the deepest motive which drives us. And as a consequence of this, once again to reflect upon whether the antithesis is or is not fundamental. From there we must face the common question of communication among human beings as human beings. What is the meaning of reflective communication? How do we discover it while interpreting in communication?

(We already know that this question can never be meaningless, since meaninglessness itself could only be spoken of where we had at least presupposed the meaning of its anarchy.)

On the path of thought—including that of theology—behind the question concerning the state-of-affairs, and behind the fact that the problem of “state-of-affairs” had to arise, presses the question of the final interpretation. The final interpretation—that is, the one at which the suspension of judgment reaches its definitive end in the law of “interpretation,” from which one therefore begins to interpret.

It is perfectly clear that here we could equally well have used the terms law and subjectivity. We have repeatedly refrained from doing so because misunderstandings and the threat of confusion appear to surround those terms, partly understandably and partly most incomprehensibly. But the issue concerns Christian philosophizing, and therefore two things must be clear from the outset at the point intended.

First, that by means of schemata and schematic distinctions we cannot arrive at a correct understanding of things. If philosophy is philosophizing, then only by thinking together dynamically can we help one another in the search for the path.

Second, that for us the idea of law may not be connected either with ancient Greek or ancient Jewish lines of thought, still less with those arising from positivism, and can have nothing whatever to do with a “logos”-speculation composed from all these elements. For us it can mean nothing other than the will of the one Sovereign, Who alone as such possesses the competence of the first and last word in the determination of meaning of creation, and Who reveals that will and word to us along creaturely structural paths.

This structure of creation itself bears a dynamic character, and our understanding is subject to this dynamic. Here lies the significance of the structurally individual and moving modalities. And along this path the presence of God manifests itself in His creation—a revelation from which even the heathen, though blind, cannot escape. It is concentrated in a focal point.

At this focal point law and subject meet, for it is the point where the fullness of the law coincides with its fulfillment itself in Him in Whom the Lawgiver of Love gave Himself to His creature.

In communication we enter upon the path of creation, and within it upon the path of thought. Our principled steps on the path of thought occur in philosophizing, which leads humanity to boundaries and derives its own meaning from this. But there transcendental critique brings us to the question concerning the competence that determines all competencies, and the choice falls from beyond the boundary.

But—this statement itself is already the consequence of a choice. One can also choose the opposite direction, as we have seen the West do in its conscious, and preceding pagan-unconscious, choice for the autonomy of thought.

Even in that choice God remains present, for nothing can be done outside the boundary He gave to the space of choice. It belongs to His revelation.

But this revelation is centered and can only be understood from its center. By philosophy? By theology? If I maintain this, then I have already sought and supposed the center on this side, namely in my theological or philosophical thinking; I have already chosen from there and toward there. We have seen this repeatedly.

The Jewish law mentioned earlier, and also cited by Prof. VAN PEURSEN in his first article, had everything to do with the law of meaning as we intend it. Without theological, much less philosophical, pretension it placed itself within the full life of times and places in order from afar to point toward the center of the fulfillment of God's revelation. It was in this center of fulfillment that the concretely true fulfillment occurred which has forever disclosed the meaning of creation. In the surrender of Him Who Himself established meaning and was the Logos—not the Logos of scholasticism but the Word, the power of the Gospel. Whose Spirit was and remains the motive of creation and, in order to liberate it, has integrally set Himself against every “last word” spoken from the motives of this world.

Even our most abstract thinking and speaking, if it is to retain its true meaning, remains related to this utterly concrete center of fulfillment and cannot free itself from it even in its furthest apostasy. The concreteness of the fulfillment of the revelation of meaning is the Cross.

Whoever would still say that I know this in one way or another by determining it through thought has—as we have seen—made the counter-choice. For the creature finds no other basis from which its disclosure begins, no other consummation toward which humanity can lead it, if it does not wish to perish. The presence of God—but a presence that makes the ground tremble beneath one's feet as on Good Friday afternoon.

How does humanity stand communicatively around this hill of fulfillment? For from there proceeds “the law” which judges the ground-motives.

That from between the poles of apostate origin-dialectic God's appeal resounds to humanity can only receive confirmation from our side, for even this dialectic can prophesy only from what has been given, and what is given is originally revelation. A revelation that intends to save by calling beyond itself toward that which governs its meaning. And in its historical aspect it calls throughout the ages. The history of God's faithfulness.

It proclaims the law of communication, which can only be found at the place where the law is fulfilled. But from now on the word belongs to the “subject.” The subject which in acting and thinking begins to “interpret.” And therein—however erring otherwise—either accepts this law of communication or, “autonomously,” turns away from it.

How can, how ought, the one who—in weakness (2 Cor. 13:4)—accepts, communicate with the one who rejects? Can it be otherwise than under the openness of the very law of communication itself, which from the beginning of our essay we placed in the foreground? What is that law: “divine logos,” “culture,” with or without historical gravitational fields? But the question concerning their meaning rises again, awakens the dynamic of disclosure, drives us onward through the movement of the modalities—not historically-horizontal, but along the path of integral

transcendental disclosure vertically. The choice cannot be escaped; the issue is only whether we see it and are willing to make it.

The world was made through the Word, and the world did not know Him. Participation in His suffering (Phil. 3:10)—which includes participation in one another's suffering—lays the "cornerstone" of the fundamentally irreconcilable antithesis at the foundation of our reflection upon life, which according to its structure, elevated above all arbitrariness, must be an answer to the revelation of Love. It is in this antithesis, rejected by the builders of wisdom, that this answer, amid the confusion among Christians, continues to find the firm test of truth—and not least in philosophy, to which for centuries the world has granted final authority over its word.

Only in the community founded by this antithesis can communication approach its true meaning.