Scholasticism and Reformed Scholasticism at Odds with Genuine Reformational-Christian Thinking[1]

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It seems important that, within Reformed theological circles especially, we reach a better understanding of what an integrally Reformational-Christian scholarship really means. To maintain a historical perspective – and first of all to place in relief what anxieties are registered against such scholarship – we have to look at Scholasticism, and with that, at Reformed (Protestant) Scholasticism. By including their relationship in our treatment of the subject we will clearly see lines that run back through Scholasticism to Greek paganism. Against that background the true intentions of an integral Christian scholarship will stand out; it will be seen clearly that trying to accommodate or reconcile non-Christian traditions of thought with a Christian theory of science completely extinguishes the chances of survival for genuinely Christian scholarship.

Scholasticism

In the 13th Century, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) brought the inheritance of earlier centuries' Roman Catholic philosophy to a comprehensive completion. Right up to the present time Roman Catholicism accepts the basic structure of his thinking as its official standpoint (cf. the encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI, namely *"Rerum Novarum"* (1891) and *"Quadragesimo Anno"* (1931) respectively).

Thomas' "synthesis-thinking" grew out of his effort to throw a bridge between the Greek understanding of nature (Aristotle's, to be precise) and the Scriptural teaching of the creation of the cosmos. That Greek conception was governed, in whole and in part, by the dualistic form-matter scheme of Greek paganism, radically opposed to Scripture's creation-motif. In the form-matter scheme there is actually no room for creation, merely the recognition of an amorphous, chaotic matter that, by a (divine) forming activity, achieves a coherence of form and matter. The Greek concept of substance is associated directly with this; in it, temporal reality is divided into sensory and supra-sensory realms (the phenomenon and the noumenon). The "nature" of things must lie behind their visible changing and becoming, since it always remains possible amidst their flux and alteration to make a judgment of identity (e.g. a tree remains *tree* in both its winter and summer appearance). In this manner, the "nature" or "substance" of things is shifted to the supra-sensory realm of our experience, where the authentic "being" of existing things is concentrated.

Led by the form-matter ground-motif, the Greek metaphysical concept of substance imprinted itself on their view of humankind, which still survives among us. Human nature is seen as assembled from two components, distinct in principle i.e. a mortal material body and an immortal rational soul. Plato acknowledged the substance-

[1] Translated by *Dr. David Hanson*. [It originally appeared in *Ned. Geref. Teol. Tydskrif* (*Dutch Reformed Theological Joural*), March 1969 (pp.97-114).]

character of only the soul-part of the human being, considering that the body was merely its "tool".[2] According to Aristotle, form is the divine, higher principle that is embedded in non-divine, chaotic matter as its "essential nature". For him, neither soul nor body is substance; however, together they do indeed make up a substantial unity in which the soul figures as the "essential form".[3] The active "nous" (general principle of thought) that makes itself busy in human thinking from the outside, is certainly a substance for Aristotle, but it has a supra-individual character.[4]

Thomas Aquinas tried to accommodate this dualism to the Christian religion, but in doing so, he robbed the central Scriptural ground-motif, namely: creation, fall into sin and salvation by Christ Jesus in the communion of the Holy Spirit, of its life-encompassing, all-controlling power. The psycho-creationist standpoint of Scholasticism further accentuated the Greek soul-body dualism by demanding the independence of the human body, as substance, over against the soul. While Aristotle had taught that the soul was implanted in the body from without (but did not see the body as substance), for Scholasticism it had to be a substance, since only when the human body was readied by a so-called organic life-principle, was God able, by special creative act, to permit the soul's entry into that prepared bodily substance. This understanding is a necessary consequence of the orthodox-Scholastic standpoint that the soul is "indestructible" (so, must always exist as actual substance in the human composite.) On this account, the attempt to reconcile the Greek form-matter scheme with the Scriptural doctrine of creation brought the Greek dualism itself into sharper relief in Scholastic thought: the inescapable problem it confronts is how to understand the substantial unity of the human being if we have to view it as an assemblage of two independent substances i.e. body and soul. We cannot find a third (unity-)factor as a last resort to protect the real survival of the two substances. In consequence, the soul's "indestructibility" forced Thomas' original conception of the substantial bond of soul and body, to let go of the independent status of the body alone.[5]

By stowing away this dualism within the Christian creation-motif, the integral (life-comprehending) character of *fall into sin* and *salvation* were lost. In agreement with the Greek view of human nature which found the non-divine in the earthly matter of the body, Scholasticism found the source of sin in humankind's "lower desires". Sin thus brings human lust into rebellion against our natural reason which actually ought to be in control, but is wounded (but not radically perverted) by the fall. Human nature has been robbed by the fall of its supernatural gift of grace, namely faith, which is restored to us through Christ and the church (itself a supernatural perfect institution of grace).

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[2] Cf. Plato's dialogue: *Timaeus,* in which he presents his mature opinion of the matter.
[3] Aristotle defines this in Bk. II of *De Anima* in this way: "It must follow, then, that soul is substance in the sense that it is the form of a natural body having in it the capacity of life". Tr. RD Hicks, Cambridge, 1907, p.49.
[4] *De Anima* (tr. RD Hicks), p.135: "But this intellect has no intermittence in its thought. It is, however, only when separated that it is its true self, and this, its essential nature, alone is immortal and eternal."
[5] Cf. Thomas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Ch. 68: "…the soul by its essence gives life to the body" from which it appears that the body cannot maintain its real existence over against the "indestructibility" soul. (Translation cited from *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* Vol. II, by Anton C. Pegis, New York, 1945, p. 122).

Here, then, we arrive at the result of the Scholastic attempt to accommodate the Greek understanding of nature and the Biblical ground-motif, namely the false nature-grace motif, which didn't just control the Thomistic understanding of human nature, but in fact lay at the foundation of Scholastic thought in its every facet. The whole of life is divided between two territories: the natural sphere – where the state, being the highest community in the so-called temporal order, must lead humankind to the highest rung of morality (the same purpose ascribed to it by Aristotle), which in turn forms the lower threshold of the supernatural sphere of grace where the church leads it to perfection (holy *form*-perfection).

This nature-grace motif of Roman Catholicism gave Thomas a "simple" formula by which to distinguish theology and philosophy (in contrast to Augustine, who united them). Philosophy, as an autonomous science, should receive sufficient light from our natural reason; only theology can be called *Christian* since it investigates the revealed doctrines of grace in Scripture. Therefore, philosophy may propose nothing that conflicts with those supernatural doctrines of grace – a notion that comes directly out of Aristotle, who treats every science as subjected to metaphysical knowledge of god (3rd book of the Metaphysica, Ch. II). The consequence is Scholasticism's reverence for theology as "Regina Scientiarum" (queen of the sciences). (Contrast with this Abraham Kuyper's words in the *Heraut* of 18th June, 1893 (no. 808): "Still they tell us that Theology is Queen of the sciences…There are no underdogs in science, and there is no science that lays down the law as if it were queen. The one who reigns alone, also in science, and sets his laws down there, the one who gave his ordinances for human thought and for the conscious life, is the God of truth".

On Scholastic grounds there can be no mention of a Christian science alongside theology – a view that is incontrovertibly decided by the Roman Catholic ground-motif of nature and grace (which also determines how we see the relation between theology and philosophy).

Reformed (or Protestant) Scholasticism

Resistance to the tension (dialectic) within Scholasticism's nature-grace ground-motif first appeared in the train of William of Ockham's late Scholastic nominalism. Nature here is no longer seen as a threshold for grace but as its opponent. For Ockham, this led to the acceptance of two kinds of truth, for (as Vollenhoven noticed) "what Ockham rejected as a philosopher, he accepted as a believer" – the opposition of nature and grace! Though Luther could not accept this explicit dualism, and to a certain degree overcame Ockhamistic dualism, he could not escape it entirely. This appears mainly in his starting with the Ockhamist statement of the problem as to whether Scripture stands on the ground of law or within the sphere of spiritual life that surpasses the law. This background dualism lies beneath his opposition of law to gospel – gospel freedom throws the law aside, frees us from the law. The biblical truth proclaims otherwise: that Christ frees us from slavery to sin and brings us into obedience to the law. Luther's own words "I am of Ockham's school" demonstrate his affinity with nominalism.

Calvin might perhaps have broken completely with this persistent dualism, but from lack of a Scripturally-impregnated ontology, he too was unable to free himself from Scholastic vestiges. One thinks specifically of his view of the soul-body connection.

The human being he understands to consist of body and soul, but he thinks of the soul as an immortal (though created) "being" "that is the noblest part of man".[6] The soul is placed within the body where it "dwells as in a house" though, when it "is freed from the prison of the flesh", finds in God "its abiding comforter".[7] Soul and body come eventually to stand as independent realities over against each other (Cf. where Calvin writes: "Therefore distinct things can be said about the soul that are in no way applicable to the body, and about the body on the other hand, that do not apply in any way to the soul."[8]) This dualism, which never completely takes in the *unity* of the human being, is likewise of Greek origin. Under the primacy of the form-motif, the Greeks already taught that the soul is the "noblest" part of our being, as compared with its less worthy (and non-divine) material-body. (When this, so-called, less worthy material-body came to be seen after the coming of Christ as the seat of sin, the Mediaeval ascetic-ideal and monastic existence were born.) Compare further just the dualistic view of humankind entertained by Orphism (with its special accent upon light and darkness). In that tradition, light is associated with the stars and darkness with the dark earth. The immortal human soul originated in a luminous heaven. When the soul fell to earth it was placed within a dark body as if in a prison or grave, and can only return cleansed to its heavenly home after a cycle of reincarnation. This agreement with Orphism is clear in Calvin. It's only with fine "adjustment" that this dualism can be accommodated within the framework of Scripture's starting point[9], despite the fact that Calvin genuinely thinks from out of the integral Scriptural ground-motif of creation, fall into sin and redemption (the ground motif that forms the central thrust of his *Institutes* and reappears too in the divisions of the *Belgic Confession,* compiled in 1561 by Guido de Bres from Calvin's *Institutes.*

Calvin's reformational line was quickly pushed aside by so-called Reformed or Protestant Scholasticism because it had still realised no inner philosophical reformation. Under Melanchthon's influence there has ever since existed a Protestant Scholasticism (distinct from that of Rome) "adapted" to the reformational theology.

Where Roman Scholasticism still saw reason as the relatively autonomous foundation for grace, Reformed Scholasticism wanted to restore the Biblical "connection", yet without truly honouring the life-encompassing reformational principle that Christ is King over the whole of human life, since that "connection" with Scripture is understood only in a narrow religious (faith-) sense. This means that the activity of human *natural reason* (so-called) has to be led by the "light of Scripture". The "connection" implies then that non-Reformed philosophy and the special sciences must be "adapted" to the "light of Scripture" as theology ("queen of the sciences") delivers those "Biblical principles" to which they are subjected. There must be no thought of an inner reformation of philosophy and of the non-theological special sciences (scholarship).

The tempered (adjusted) dualism of Scholasticism would soon show itself in a new dualism within Reformed-Scholastic circles. Kuyper shows us in this connection, as it were, a double dualism in that he first thinks within the tension between a truly Reformational pull (Cf. above all his *Calvinism*) from the one side, and a Reformed-

[6] Calvin, J.: *Institutie,* Vol I, tr. A. Sizoo, Delft, p.173.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid*. p. 523.
[9] Cf. *Ibid*. p. 181: "…as the spirit is given by God and, leaving behind the flesh, returns to Him…"

Scholastic pull from the other; then secondly, the dualism within Reformed Scholasticism unfolds in his doctrine of common and special grace.

His return to the teaching of a radical perversion of human nature makes clear to us that Kuyper has left the Roman Scholastics far behind. The addition within creation of a supernatural grace to human nature, which they had taught, was unacceptable to Kuyper because he identified creation and nature.[10] This informed his Protestant-Scholastic view of nature and super-nature, and his view of the relation between state and church, got its shape within that. "The starting-point of the State lies in nature as it exists; that of the Church by contrast is supernatural." Further, " The contrast is and remains this, that the starting-point of the State lies in Creation, in nature as it exists, in common grace, while the starting-point of the Church lies in Re-creation, in miracle and in particular grace."[11]

Christ, as head over special grace (and the church) exercises no "direct" but only "indirect" influence upon the territory of common grace. This occurs as "the lamp of the Christian religion alone inside the walls of this institution, shines its light through the windows into the far distance and upon all those sectors and connections of our human life, that reveal themselves in the diverse expressions of human life and activity".[12] That is why the congregation of Christ with "its influence upon state and civil society desires nothing other than *an ethical victory*, not the compulsion of confessional ties, nor even the expression of high-handed mastery."[13] This "indirect influence" struggles to "lead human life to a higher level, enriching it, ennobling it and encouraging it to flourish in its fullness".[14]

Though Kuyper never sees these two spheres of common and special grace as separated, the confinement of Christ to church and worship will not allow his reforming power as mediator of salvation to work *integrally* through into the full life of the Christian. The last two quotations reveal the recognisable effect of Scholastic dualism (in the Reformed-Scholastic sense), where state (and "society") must bring us, with "indirect" light from Scripture, to "an ethical victory", whereby the church as a result, will "lead human life to a higher level". In orthodox-Scholastic terms this would read as follows: "The state carries humanity to its highest natural level, namely morality (Aristotle's opinion), while the church leads humanity to its supernatural perfection".

Kuyper was unable, with these distinctions, to point the way to an inner reformation of whatever lies in the territory of "common grace" beyond the church and special grace. In principle, therefore, there remains "freedom" for non-theological philosophy and special sciences to find connections with current (non-Christian) philosophy and special sciences within the same framework of "common grace". This entirely external association brought about by theology between so-called natural thinking and the "light of Scripture" opens for Reformed Scholasticism no perspective on the inner reformation of philosophy and the non-theological special sciences.

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[10] Kuyper, A.: *De Gemeene Gratie*, 3rd unchanged impression, J.H. Kok N.V., Kampen, 1931-2 (three volumes). Cf. *Vol. II*, p. 85.
[11] Kuyper, A.: *Ibid.*, III, p. 110.
[12] Kuyper, A.: *Ibid.*, III, p. 272
[13] Kuyper, A.: *Ibid.*, III, p. 279
[14] Kuyper, A.: *Ibid.*, III, p. 249

On the way to Inner Reformation of Thought

If we pay attention to Kuyper's truly reformational fundamental concept (and it has to be seen as the *major line* in his two-fold thought-pattern), we find a perspective that offers the necessary pointers *towards a truly reformational* understanding of science, one that escapes every dualistic accommodation attempted by scholasticism.

In his lecture on "Sphere Sovereignty" in 1880, Kuyper bluntly confesses the kingship of Christ as the *incarnate Word* from which nothing in this world is to be stolen. In his "Calvinism" of 1898 he naively confronts the fundamental cosmological confession of the "ordinances of God" on the diverse terrains of life.[15] Kuyper's reformational starting point comes to the fore most clearly in his conviction that the Calvinist life- and world-view has to be rooted in the understanding of the human relationship to God. And such a life- and world-view will have to manifest a life-encompassing character: "If such an action is to put its stamp itself upon our entire life, it must start from that point in our consciousness, in which our life is still undivided and lies comprehended in its unity, - not in the spreading vines, but in the root from which the vines spring." That point is the "depths of our hearts" from which "the different streams of our human life spring and separate themselves" and where "all the rays of our life converge as in one focus."[16]

This is how Kuyper describes the reformational basic concept, as he gives greater precision to the meaning of humankind as created in the image of God: "But just as the entire creation reaches its culminating point in man, so also religion finds its clear expression only in man who is made in the image of God, and this is not because man seeks it, but because God himself implanted in man's nature the real essential religious expression by means of the "seed of religion" (*semen religionis*)… God Himself *makes* man religious by means of the *sensus divinitatis* i.e. the sense of the Divine), which He causes to strike the chords on the harp of his soul."[17] Here we find in clear and certain terms, without any adulteration, Kuyper's truly Scriptural confession of the human heart as the focus and religious root-unity of our whole earthly-temporal existence, from out of which concentration-point flow all life's actions. Kuyper's insight here is unique! (Even Bavinck distorts the Preacher's word: "Keep your heart above every other thing, for out of it come the issues of life", in Scholastic fashion and – in line with the persistent dualism in that view of human being – sees the heart only as the seat of innate passions that belong among our "capacities for desire").

If Kuyper had been consistent with this foundational insight relating to humankind, he could have avoided the often-threatening dualism which partitions his doctrine of common and special grace as a consequence of the persistent influence of the Scholastic nature-grace ground motif. It is no imaginary danger that this doctrine of Kuyper's drives a wedge between creation and redemption, and in so doing, robs the Scriptural ground motif of its radical (penetrating through to the root) and integral (all-embracing) character.

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[15] Kuyper, A.: *Calvinism* (tr. H Beets) *Sovereign Grace Union,* London, 1932. p. 114ff.
[16] *Ibid*. p. 42-43
[17] *Ibid*. p. 79-80

Because Kuyper identifies creation and nature (as the terrain of "common grace") the direct relation to Christ is broken, because Christ belongs in the "super-natural" realm of special grace. The non-ecclesiastical sphere of common grace (creation) is thus withdrawn from the Lordship of Christ. For an illustration, compare Kuyper's remark about the position of the State with regard to God and Christ: "In this extremely difficult and complicated dogmatic question, we have to identify the decisive dividing line, allowing sovereignty to come into its own, not losing our way by setting Christ in the place of God, as though earthly order and civil power come from Christ and the *regnum oeconomicum* (tr. – the rule Christ exerts as God-man rather than as second Person of the Trinity)."[18] Compare also the third volume of "De Gemeene Gratie" (p.123) where Kuyper points out that the Apostle doesn't call government the "Servant of Christ" but the "Servant of God". "Neither do we say that the Government rules by "the grace of Christ", but by "the grace of God".

So, though Kuyper, following his own basic insight that the heart is the root-unity and origin of all the life-expressions of a person, might have pressed on to the reformation of the so-called natural terrain (of common grace), he continues instead in Reformed-Scholastic style to maintain a seemingly neutral, natural "substructure" for the supernatural sphere of special grace, one that only stands in need of incidental correction and supplementation by the light of Scripture. This uncoupling of Christ from the "natural terrain" leads Kuyper himself as far as accepting a factually neutral "belief" in God's providence that "almost anyone" could accept as well: so long as Christ does not figure in it at all. He advocated this conception specifically in connection with the "Town-council prayer". "To assure the broadest possible acquiescence" one must place the prayer "within the general territory of Common Grace. Nothing else can then intrude in it than the belief in God's providence, in his providential dispositions and the hiding or manifesting of Divine blessing. A prayer that now remains within this circle of providence can be prayed by almost anyone."[19]

According to Kuyper, it is possible to gain a "natural" knowledge of the "creaturely law-order", outside the compass of particular grace. "Now because this Common Grace is independent of Special Revelation, the whole legal order that made its appearance in every nation outside Israel, and notably in Rome's mighty City State with such exquisite refinement, at least in private law, has to find its explanation in the natural human life."[20] Therefore Kuyper sees "human life, in both its existence and its history" as "source of "knowledge" (see *A-R Staatkunde I* p. 57). Kuyper's view of natural human knowledge reveals that he has "reformed" the orthodox-Scholastic standpoint (in which natural reason, as a relatively autonomous underpinning for the superstructure of the sphere of grace, can arrive without any Biblical revelation at a so-called natural knowledge of the cosmos) in a typically Reformed-Scholastic direction; he understands that "Special Revelation (offers) for law nothing more than confirmation, correction and supplementation"[21] See also p. 84: "Special Revelation then, chiefly provides foundations, correction and supplementation for law which operates out of other sources."

[18] Kuyper, A.: *De Overheid, Locus de Magistratu, 2nd* Ed'n. Kampen (no date) p. 189
[19] Kuyper, A.: *Anti Revolutionaire Staatkunde, Vol. II,* J.H.Kok N.V. Kampen 1917. p. 285
[20] Kuyper, A.: *Ibid, Vol. I,* 1916. p. 31.
[21] *Ibid. Vol. I,* p. 35.

The knowledge and science of the "natural" terrain, is not inwardly reformed, but only fertilised by and "accommodated to" "the light of Scripture" (Special Revelation). This perspective draws Kuyper away from his Scriptural foundation and in consequence of his creation / redemption dualism, he cuts off at the root his path to a radical reformation of (the current) philosophy and non-theological sciences.

But if we concentrate instead on the perspectives that open within on his Christian religious foundational conception, then lines are there revealed that make that inner reformation of philosophical and special scientific thinking possible.

Positive Reformational Thinking

To stay within the confines of an article, we have brought forward repeatedly the anthropological aspect of the problem. From precisely this angle, Kuyper's insights show us how to make clear the meaning of reformational-Christian thought.

As already explained, the common soul-body-dualism is rooted in the Greek form-matter motif, while the substance-problem lurks behind it. The human *anima rationalis* (rational soul) is from the start given independence as a "substantial, *spiritual*, complex of functions" that may exist apart from the body, which is a "substantial, *natural*, complex of functions". In reality, the rational soul as a "substantial, spiritual, complex of functions" is therefore an abstraction from the full existence of the person and can in no way be identified with that complete unity of human self-hood that forms the deeper root of our existence. Human self-hood transcends the temporal order of our existence since it forms the concentration point of all the expressions of human life, as its root-unity – an insight that Kuyper already shared completely. The human "selfhood" or "I" is not to be identified with an ethical function, reason, will, feeling or any other temporal aspect of existence because that diversity of temporal aspects disperses every attempt to find the radical unity of human existence within it. Can human selfhood be sought in the biotic life-function (an organic soul), in the sensitive function (a psychic soul), in the thought life (a rational soul), in the historical function (a self-transcending soul in the sense of historicist existence-philosophy), in the social function (the typical proclamation of humans as communal-"beings") or in the ethical function (e.g. Fichte's "absolute I" as the hypostasis of a person's moral function)? The *dispersal* of human selfhood among the diverse temporal aspects appears clearly from this way of putting the question, which shows that human "selfhood" has to lie at a deeper level. These diverse aspects (functions) find their source and deeper root-unity in human "selfhood" – and therefore the question of who and what is the human being's full selfhood, cannot be answered by the multitudinous scientific disciplines, since science (even theology) is bound to the temporal order of existence. So the eye of science will always be diverted among the different aspects of reality that mark off her research fields, namely the numerical, spatial, motional, energetic, biotic, psychic, analytic, historic, lingual, social, aesthetic, juridical, ethical and pistic aspects; it will be unable to penetrate to that full human selfhood that transcends the aspectual diversity.

To get through to that radical unity and so acquire true self-knowledge, human thought must focus concentrically on the "depths of our hearts" from which "the different streams of our human life spring and separate themselves" and where "all the rays of our life converge as in one focus." (Kuyper). The fundamental human

relationship to God is decided in that root of existence (as, according to Calvin, true knowledge of man depends upon true knowledge of God). Kuyper declares that: "God himself *makes* man religious by the *sensus divinitatis* (experience of the eternal) which plays upon his heart strings". In this statement, his eye falls on the innate human search for its origin. The fall into sin has misdirected that compulsion and steered it away from God on a false course towards something creaturely that is elevated to an absolute status and to which fallen people consecrate their hearts in feigned humility. Doing so, they forfeit true self-knowledge – that depends wholly, as was said, on true knowledge of God. Reliance on the metaphysical substance-concept, which harks back to Greek philosophy, show us how a so-called autonomous reason attempts in *apostasy* to identify human selfhood with an independent "spiritual function-complex" abstracted from concrete existence, and cannot arrive at radical self-knowledge on the basis of the accommodating nature-grace ground motif (which continues to operate in Reformed Scholasticism.)

It is only revealed to us that we are in the grip of the Absolute when in complete surrender to the central Biblical ground motif of creation, fall and redemption. This central meaning of the Biblical ground motif has to be distinguished from its significance as simple articles of faith. The ground motif must in fact be the *starting-point* for both our theological and our philosophical thinking activity, as it cannot be "made dependent on theological interpretations and concepts, which are fallible human endeavour, tied to the temporal order of our existence and experience".[22]

Kuyper had already observed this distinction: "So one stood before two different things. On the one side before the knowledge of God, as God himself offers it in Holy Scripture to all those he calls. But also, on the other side, before a broad field of varied, intricate, outworked and difficult studies that were of a scientific nature."[23] And that's why: "on his death-bed it will profit the theologian not a bit that he knows an astonishing amount of divinity, and the one and only question his children ask will be whether he possesses that knowledge of God, of which John says: 'This is everlasting life, that you know the one, true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.' "[24]

Therefore, the radical meaning of the Biblical ground motif "can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit, because he opens our hearts so that our faith will no longer be a mere acceptance of formal articles of our Christian confession, but a *living* faith, serviceable to the central working of God's Word in that heart – the religious centre of our life. Naturally creation, fall and redemption through Jesus Christ (the incarnate Word), in the communion of the Holy Spirit are also articles of faith that every dogmatic theology handles – along with other articles that actually or by implication are founded in Holy Scripture. But in their radical meaning – as the ground motif of the Word-revelation and the key to true knowledge – creation, fall and redemption are no simple articles of faith; they are rather the Word of God itself in its central spiritual power, directed to the heart, the religious centre of our existence. Confronted by the Word of God in his heart, man can offer nothing, but only listen and receive. God does not speak to theologians, philosophers and scholars, but he does speak to sinners – lost in themselves and reborn as children of God by the work of the Holy Spirit in

[22] Dooyeweerd, H.: *Wat is die mens?*, Sacum (no date), p. 15.
[23] Veenhof, C.: *In Kuyper's Lijn*, Oosterbaan, Goes, 1939, p. 57.
[24] *Ibid*. p. 58.

their hearts. The Word of God in this central and radical meaning must penetrate to the root of our being and become the central motive-force of our whole Christian life – a life with its rich diversity of aspects, spheres of calling and departments in temporal reality. As such, this ground motive of creation, fall and redemption ought to be the central starting-point and motive-force of our theological and philosophical thinking."[25]

Under the influence of this central Biblical ground motif, thought escapes in principle from all the dualistic attempts at accommodation that bisect human existence between an "immortal rational soul" and a corruptible "material body". In no way does Scripture teach that an abstract complex of functions (as form substance) departs the body at death, but it confesses that the heart is the complete, central, root-unity of the human being as created in the image of God, impossible to identify with any abstract portion of the temporal body-structure. It is precisely the created-ness of every creature that eliminates the very possibility of non-dependently existing substances in temporality. All things exist in an interwoven coherence, dependent equally on the cosmos-encompassing law of God from which each creature acquires the determination and boundary of its meaning. By "law", as Kuyper already noted, is not intended only the "Ten Commandments; not even the Mosaic law, nor the moral or ceremonial law." Instead, "what must come into view is that whole concatenation of laws, in every creaturely thing, by which everything exists that God created on, or above, or under the earth."[26]

At the same time, it is this *meaning*-determination and *meaning*-character of the creature that stands radically opposed to the substance-concept of the Greek philosophy (as it persists in Scholasticism and Reformed Scholasticism too), because it is exactly the meaning-character of reality that demonstrates the *non-independent* mode of existence – finding no rest in itself – of reality under the law of God.

The fall into sin, therefore, brought into being no independent power over against God, but only brought about an apostate direction for creatures, whereby the inherent compulsion towards an origin has come to serve the fall. Sin, thus, does not reside in some or other abstract complex of functions of human temporal existence, or even in its so-called "lower desires". Such a conception still hangs on to the Greek dualism in which the un-formed chaotic principle of matter represents the non-divine in the cosmos and locates this imperfection in humans in their "earthly material body". The common psycho-creationist standpoint, which understands that God implants the human (rational) soul, from without, in a pre-prepared bodily substance by a special act of creation, runs up against the second part of the central scriptural ground motif, namely the radical (it penetrates to the root) corruption of humankind in its fall into sin. (The psycho-creationist standpoint has sometimes been accepted by reformed theologians).[27]

If we were serious about the radical corruption of humanity, this would have to mean that God's special act of creation (of a so-called *anima rationalis)* would bring forth a sinful soul: an absurd consequence and totally unacceptable. The only escape is to

[25] Dooyeweerd, H.: *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[26] Veenhof, C.: *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[27] See Honig, A.H.: *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, J.H.Kok N.V. Kampen 1938, p. 362. (He even speaks of the body as the "tool" of the soul – the well-known image of Plato!)

refer sin Scholastically to the body's lower lustful capacities, but this too appears directly in conflict with the Scriptural motif of human *radical* depravity as a result of the fall. The perseverant form-matter dualism, backed up by the Greek substance-concept, self-destructs in dissolving antinomies, because the Scriptural ground motive *reveals* its emptiness and inner tension and indeed makes it *meaningless* in this central confrontation.

The fall into sin penetrates for that matter through every temporal branch of human existence and into the religious root-unity of self-hood. As religious centre this self-hood is the full unity (the I-ness) of the human being, in the transcending of the temporal human function-mantle and the focus of its existence. It is not a theoretical abstraction, since, as heart or soul (also called the inner person in Scripture) human self-hood forms the root-unity of the personality (which is concentrated in it). Within the cadre of this bi-unity of the human full self-hood and its bodily function-mantle (which extends it over the whole temporal spectrum of its existence) we have arrived at an image of the person that has been sculpted under the influence of the Biblical ground motif and which makes every dichotomy or dualism of human existence impossible. And that is the same self-hood that is radically corrupted by sin. See only Gen. 8:21; Matt. 12:34 and 15:19. When Paul speaks of the "lusts of the flesh", he points only to mankind's sinful nature, and that sinful nature is concentrated in the heart as the religious focus of our existence. Because this is not merely a "supernatural" gift of grace that was lost in the fall, Christ as mediator of redemption claims the regenerate *heart* for the whole-hearted service of God in Christ. Christ, the king of the whole life and not solely of the church and worship! As Kuyper put it already: "There is not a square inch of the whole territory of our human life, of which Christ who is sovereign over all, does not shout: 'Mine!' "[28] The entire cosmos finds in Christ, in his human nature, i.e. as the Root of the reborn human race, its fullness of meaning and its totality of meaning. Christ's radical turning-round of the unfaithful apostate root of the cosmos reveals him in his conserving and renewing work in temporal reality (currently known as common and special grace).

In Christ, as the second Adam, God looks upon the fallen cosmos in grace because the temporal structure of reality in which faithful and unfaithful share alike, is maintained by his conserving activity of grace. Renewing grace (also known as regenerating and special grace) includes only the "ecclesia invisibilis" (invisible church). In this way, Christ maintains the fullness of meaning of the creation and necessarily comes to be revealed in time also as the root of conserving grace.[29] The revelation of the body of Christ is therefore not restricted to the church, since the Christian university, school, state, marriage and family etc. are equally revelations of the body of Christ – Christ, the transcendent-religious root of every Christian life-form.

It is impossible to speak of a neutral sphere within so-called common grace, where the total antithesis, for or against Christ, does not radically apply. Whoever tries therefore to trace back the so-called common grace only to God as creator, opens a gulf between creation and salvation and robs Christ of His Kingship. Conserving grace too (common grace) finds its religious root in Christ as its King, without which God does not look upon his fallen creation in grace.[30] To recognise the church as an institution

[28] Veenhof, C.: *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[29] Dooyeweerd, H.: *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, Vol. III, Philadelphia, 1957, p. 525
[30] Cf. Dooyeweerd, H.: *Vernieuwing en Bezinning*, Zutphen, 1963, p. 37

of special grace *within* the temporal created world-order, concerned to restore of a God-focused disclosure to the creational human faith-function, cannot lead, with the foregoing distinctions, to a partition of human existence into two zones, of common and special grace; a separation that only perseverant Scholastic nature-grace dualism demonstrates (with the wedge between creation and redemption).

Life embracing Reformation

In Christ, human life over the whole line is brought again into obedience to God. This is an obedience to the God-ordained norms for all human life that are firmly laid as universally applicable into God's creation order – an obedience only possible in Christ, because he as the incarnate Word has fulfilled the law for us.

This shows us that the practice of radical-reformational-Christian scholarship (philosophy and special sciences) isn't just the "adaptation" of traditional philosophy to Christian teaching by "the light of Scripture"; it fights for the reformation of our philosophical (and special scientific) focus – the whole-hearted service of God. By Reformed Scholasticism, this reformational struggle will understandably be seen as a threat to the position of theology as "judge" over Revelation, the source of the "principles" to which philosophy and the non-theological special sciences must "adhere". A heart gripped by the Scriptural ground motif and inwardly reforming as its starting-point even thought itself, represents for Reformed Scholasticism an idea that betrays rank subjectivism. Some understand that in this way philosophy is grounded in *religio subjectiva* rather than revelation (*phanerosis*). This opinion always obstructs the actual inner reformation of thought since it implies that all the principles for our life are given in the Bible – an idea that easily issues in rigid Biblicism.

When the Biblical ground motif lays hold of one's heart and becomes in fact the central motive-force of one's life, this centre of our existence newly re-directed towards God gives birth to obedience to the principles (given in God's law) that hold for our intellectual life; the way opens to the flowering of a genuinely Christian scholarship. The Biblical ground motif gives only *direction* and *focus* to our scientific thinking – it brings us back to obedience to those creation-norms that God has ordained in a constant structured law-order. The norms that must guide praxis in Christian scholarship are not given as such in Scripture; but the *Biblical ground motif* at work in the heart, the religious centre of our being, brings us into obedience to the appropriate creation norms as the outcome of a new *focus* upon God. As the presupposition of any radical Christian thought act, the Biblical ground motif (gripping the human heart) forms the wholly transcendent *a priori* of Christian scholarship; it directs and governs our entire thought-life as a supra- and pre-theoretical religious ground motif in the root of our being. ("Religion" is understood here as what, from the heart, the religious centre, or root-unity of human existence, directs the whole of life, including its worship or religion in the narrower sense.)

Only by starting with that transcendent *a priori* can we can get to the transcendental conditions at the foundation of the practice of scholarship – something that lies outside the scope of this article.

For the Reformed Scholastics, the religious determination of all thinking always appears to be a form of subjectivism since they cannot see the *phanerosis*-(revelation-*)* foundation in this standpoint. How do we actually come to a full acceptance of the Revelation? Is it the *phanerosis* (Revelation) that believes, or does the acceptance of the Revelation presuppose a grip on the centre of one's being by a revelation of the Origin? When you by-pass human self-hood in the reception by faith of Revelation you actually eliminate the subjective (not subjectivist) act of faith. It is first the *total surrender* of a person to the central Scriptural ground motif (through electing grace and the redemptive work of Christ) that causes radical turnaround in the root of our existence. In principle, this is a tying-back of human self-hood to its true Life-root – a tying-back that does not remain restricted to the church and worship, but that lets its integral effect take hold of every sector of life. This diversity of effect finds its concentration point in the human self-hood, which in obedience to God, must refer to God as the integral Origin of all things.

Reformed Scholasticism forces us then to ask the following counter-question: can philosophy be practised regardless of human self-hood? Is it possible that I practise philosophy without my I-ness substantively involved? Human self-hood is the root-unity and nucleus of personality that gives rise to the business of thinking in all people. This doesn't set the footings of philosophy in *religio subjectiva*, but it is true to reality, as an answer to the question: how do I philosophise? It isn't Revelation that practises philosophy but the person in full self-hood under the power of some religious ground motif or other. Christian philosophy and science would only be founded in *religio subjectiva* if it exalted the full unity of our self-hood, where all thinking acts have their source, to be the Archimedean point of philosophy (Archimedes is believed to have said that if he could find a fixed point *outside* the earth, he would move the earth). The Archimedean point refers to that fixed position from which an overview and an insight into the cosmic meaning-totality can be got.

Were human self-hood to figure as Archimedean point for us, then Christian scholarship would represent the most consequent form of humanism, for, where humanism still always absolutises some part or other of the person (the mind or moral will for example, in the absence of radical self-knowledge) Christian philosophy would have elevated the *person in full self-hood* to be Archimedean point for philosophy. Human self-hood (the heart) can actually never serve as Archimedean point since it is precisely one's self-hood (as root-unity of the existence from which one thinks) that, in its lack of self-sufficiency, needs a secure resting place. For that reason, Dooyeweerd writes: "The Archimedean point of philosophy is chosen in the new root of mankind in Christ, in which by regeneration we have part in our reborn self-hood." Of subjectivism, in whatever variety, there is no trace.

Perspectival Summary

We have drawn attention chiefly to the *anthropological* facet of this subject. Scholasticism, it appeared, can in fact recognise only theology as Christian scholarship, because the dualistic nature-grace motif – born in the attempt to accommodate the Greek form-matter-motif and the Scriptural ground motif of creation, fall and redemption – interpreted so-called natural human reason as a relatively autonomous substructure to the superstructure of the sphere of grace. In

consequence, philosophy could be cultivated with adequate light from human reason, needing no tie to God's Word revelation.

Reformed Scholasticism, reacting to that, no longer saw reason as the relatively autonomous substructure to grace, since it considered that theology would furnish Biblical principles to which the non-theological sciences and philosophy need to "be bound". This "binding" by "the light of Scripture" does not amount to their inner reformation, however. Such a reformation asks to break away from every dualistic accommodation-attempt that not only tears temporal reality (supported by the substance-idea) in two, but issues also in a dualistic view of human being which leaves no room for the heart as religious root-unity of the totality of human temporal existence. That religious root-unity is never to be identified with the "rational soul", a theoretical abstraction from human existence in time, and seen as an independent "spiritual complex of functions".

The true reformation of thought, therefore, means the radical turnaround of the *heart* of our being: the *heart* that must be re-directed radically and integrally in obedience to God, by Christ. To use Kuyper's picture in an analogous sense: Scholasticism has imprisoned the "light of Scripture" within the dark walls of the church; Reformed Scholasticism, according to Kuyper, has opened the "windows" so that the "lamp of Christian religion" can be turned upon all the "sectors and connections of our human life". The real reformational-Christian mindset penetrates rather to the *light* which God's life-giving Spirit has turned on in the *root* of human existence, through the grace and saving work of Christ, and which shines out from out of that root's depth on every sphere of life (not only *indirectly*, but radically and integrally) so that Christians can let their whole lives blossom in the honouring of God. The "light of Scripture" means therefore the *illumination* of human *hearts* by the Biblical religious ground motif which as the central motive power allows their whole lives to unfold in Christ to God's praise – whole-hearted service of God.