

The (lack of) reception of Reformational ideas by English Calvinists: a philosophical enquiry

S Bishop

 **orcid.org 0000-0002-4547-0597**

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Promoter: Prof R Coletto

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Student number: 27155218

Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this thesis, entitled: The (lack of) reception of Reformational ideas by English Calvinists: a philosophical enquiry, and the work presented in it, is my own and has been written by me – as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly while in candidature for a PhD degree at the North-West University.
2. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly acknowledged.
3. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.

Stephen Bishop
May 2018

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the philosophical reasons behind the lack of a reception of Reformational ideas within the UK. The adoption of a nature—grace ground-motive, in English Calvinist circles, has thwarted the acceptance of a Reformational perspective. This has resulted in positions that are inimical to the Reformational perspective. These include the reluctance to accept a broad view of creation, an over-emphasis on the fall component which meant that creation was regarded as fallen nature, and philosophy was viewed with suspicion – and Christian philosophy, in particular, was regarded as an impossibility.

The nature—freedom ground-motive ('grafted' into the nature-pole of the nature—grace motif) also led to an adoption of objectivism as *the* Christian position. The Reformational approach was regarded as a threat to that position.

English Calvinism was shaped by a number of contrasting ground-motives; a variety of slightly different sub-versions of the nature—grace worldview or ground-motive were adopted. Unfortunately, it can be said that none of these positions is a typically Reformed position. This is the key reason for the lack of acceptance of the Reformational perspective.

Key words:

Reformational movement, Calvinism, English Calvinism, neo-Calvinism, Dualism,, Cultural mandate, Common grace, Presuppositions, Antithesis, Nature—grace models, Creation-fall-redemption models, Worldview, Ground-motive.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Some background

In June 1987, the historian George Marsden was able to speak of the ‘triumph of Kuyperian presuppositionalism’ in the North American Evangelical scholarly community.¹ A few years earlier, in 1975, commenting on Abraham Kuyper, D.M. Lloyd-Jones said in his address to the Westminster Conference:

‘the Christian is not only to be concerned about personal salvation. It is his duty to have a complete view of life as taught in the Scriptures. (...) As far as the Christian is concerned – and that is what we are interested in now – we are not to be concerned only about personal salvation; we must have a world view. All of us who have ever read Kuyper, and others, have been teaching this for many long years’ (Lloyd-Jones, 1976:101).

While we may question Marsden’s optimistic view, the question is why, given Lloyd-Jones’ endorsement, hasn’t Kuyperianism ‘triumphed’ in Britain?²

Lesslie Newbigin raised a similar point on 21 June 1996 at a West Yorkshire School of Christian Studies (WYSOCS) colloquium.³ He commented that:

‘The Gospel and Our Culture network has hardly begun to answer the questions of mission in the public square (...) the Reformational, Kuyperian tradition has obviously been at work long ago spelling out concretely in the various spheres of society what it means to say “Jesus is Lord”’⁴.

He went on by stating:

¹ This was the plenary address at the June 1987 Wheaton conference ‘A New Agenda for Evangelical Thought’. Subsequently published as Marsden (1988).

² It should be noted that a large Dutch immigration to North America in the nineteenth and twentieth century brought familiarity with Kuyper and Dooyeweerd. Nothing similar occurred in the UK. Also both Kuyper and Dooyeweerd lectured in the States, but not in the UK

³ The title of his un-published paper was ‘A Christian Society? Witnessing to the Gospel of the Kingdom in the Public Life of Western Culture’.

⁴ Newbigin went on to express the wish that this tradition ‘would become a powerful voice in the life of British Christianity’.

‘unfortunately this Kuyperian tradition is almost unknown in Britain’ (as cited in Goheen, 1999).

The aim of this study was to examine the reception – or perhaps better, the lack of reception – of the Kuyperian-Reformational thinking among British⁵ Calvinist scholars, although the focus, with one or two exceptions, will be on English Calvinism. The term *Reformational* is used to designate the perspective initiated by Abraham Kuyper and developed philosophically by Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven among others. In this study, the terms *Kuyperian* and *Reformational* are closely linked. The reason is that I regard the Reformational movement as providing the most ‘natural’ or most consistent development of Kuyper’s ideas. In fact, while other schools and traditions appeal to Kuyper, they usually do not develop Kuyper’s original approach but rely on ideas that the Dutch leader holds in common with the broader Christian tradition. However, Kuyper himself (1931:100) insisted that, in order to understand and adopt a ‘life-view’, it is necessary to discern and endorse its original traits, not whatever it may have in common with previous traditions. In this sense, I regard the Reformational position as the most consistent elaboration of the Kuyperian worldview (cf. Klapwijk, 2013:222; 1997).⁶

⁵ ‘British’ here is taken to include England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The focus of this study will be on English Calvinism.

⁶ For example, Kuyper’s notion of sphere sovereignty was developed by Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven from a sociological theory to a cosmological theory and Kuyper’s doctrine of the heart and faith and his doctrine of creation ordinances were developed in and foundational to Dooyeweerd’s philosophy (Klapwijk, 1987:111, 113). As Klapwijk points out:

‘The view that sin affects science via the central notions of “the origin, coherence, and destiny of things” is fundamental for Kuyper (...) This view reappears in Dooyeweerd’s thesis (...) that religious ground-motives influence science via a set of central notions, the so-called “cosmonomic idea” (2013:230 fn 11).

‘On Kuyper’s notion of an “archimedean point,” be it outside or inside the cosmos (...) Dooyeweerd expands systematically’ (Klapwijk, 2013:230 fn 12).

Dooyeweerd was very clear that his philosophy was in Kuyper’s line:

‘The rise of a philosophy that is re-formed from within by the Christian religion (...) is directly related to the Calvinist revival that occurred under the inspiring leadership of Dr. Abraham Kuyper’ (Dooyeweerd, 2013b:1).

See also the acknowledged influence of Kuyper on Dooyeweerd (Dooyeweerd, 1996:1-2).

This study on the reception of Reformational ideas is focused on *Calvinists* because (a) Kuyper saw himself in Calvin's line and (b) it is the Calvinists who have interacted most with Reformational ideas.⁷ Reformational proponents and Kuyperians are neo-Calvinists; they would largely also regard themselves as constituting a sub-set of Calvinism. Calvinism is a large and diverse group, the main defining characteristic is a belief in the sovereignty of God, which has been elaborated especially in relation to redemption, church and theology. Neo-Calvinists would see the sovereignty of God extending over all of life.⁸ The terms *Calvinist* and *Reformed* are used here as synonymous.

The study also focused on England as there are unique philosophical, cultural and sociological currents operating there and contributing to shaping the unique identity of English Christianity, including Calvinism. The results of this exploration, however, will hopefully be useful not only to British readers, but to the broader academic community worldwide, to the Christian community and to the Reformational community in particular.

The Reformation in England was largely a top-down political expedient, which resulted in a state denomination: the Church of England. As a consequence, British Christianity tends to be less assertive, less intense and less sectarian, but more moderate, more restrained and more reserved than elsewhere, particularly the US. There are fewer fundamentalist and right wing influences in British Christianity. In addition, Britain is a small island and so it is easy for networks to develop, as the distances to travel are small. Finally, there is increasing secularisation within Britain and British philosophy has had a strong influence particularly initially with (British) idealism and then positivism and logical positivism; this meant that scholarship was deemed to be religiously neutral.

Although all these factors contributed to shaping the typical traits of British Christianity (including Calvinism) in this thesis, I did not examine all of them (e.g. the economic, social or geographical factors). I rather focused on the ideas, worldviews and philosophical factors that were relevant in the interaction between English Calvinism and the Reformational school of thought. To do this, I firstly briefly examined the life and work of Kuyper, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven and identified some key themes of their thought. Key people such as church leaders, Henry Atherton and D.M. Lloyd Jones, academics, Donald MacKay,

⁷ The term *idea* is used in this study as an umbrella term to cover key (Reformational) themes of both scientific and pre-scientific nature. In this sense, it is a synonym of 'thinking' or 'thought' and it refers to all types of views, theories, doctrines or conceptions that might emerge from a philosophical, special-scientific worldview-ish or religious level of reflection. This use is therefore different from a 'classical' Reformational use, in which 'idea' is contrasted with 'concept'.

⁸ Neo-Calvinism should not be confused with New Calvinism. Neo-Calvinism dates back to the nineteenth century and Kuyper; New Calvinism is a modern twenty-first century phenomenon, associated with John Piper and the Gospel Coalition movement in the United States.

Reijer Hooykaas and Paul Helm, as well as popularisers, Oliver Barclay are discussed. Some of these, for example MacKay, Barclay, Lloyd-Jones, are mainstream figures that would also identify with Evangelicalism, others such as Atherton were primarily Calvinists. The reason for focusing on this seemingly disparate group – with only their Calvinism in common – is to assess the impact of Reformational thought on the diverse sets of Calvinism. This involved teasing out the philosophical presuppositions and the ground-motives at work. The approach taken will not necessarily be chronological but rather more systematic in an attempt to tease out the philosophical implications.

1.2 Problem statement and sub-questions

The key question of this study is: given the fact that Reformational ideas were not widely adopted by Calvinist communities within England, what prevented a wider/ broader acceptance or caused the rejection of the Reformational worldview, philosophy or specific ideas?

This problem-statement can be further un-packed in the following sub-questions.

Sub-question 1: Why was the integral/ public model of religion and its implications for reformation 'in all spheres' of culture, not widely accepted by Calvinists in England?

Sub-question 2: Why was the integral project concerning the establishment of Christian socio-political theories and institutions (e.g. unions, political parties) not widely accepted by Calvinists in England?

Sub-question 3: Why was the project of an integral Christian philosophy and scholarship not widely accepted by Calvinists in England?

Sub-question 4: What is the worldview or ground-motive at work in English Calvinism? What are the philosophical influences?

Sub-question 5: What attitudes, approaches and ideas have been culpable in making a Reformational perspective less acceptable? What lessons can be learned from the English experience?

Sub-questions 1 and 2 are mainly discussed in Chapter 3. Sub-question 3 is mainly discussed in Chapter 4 and sub-question 4 in Chapters 3 and 4. Sub-question 5 is addressed in Chapter 5.

1.3 Leading theoretical arguments

In response to the main question introduced by the problem statement, the following is argued. Kuyper advocated an integrated all-of-life understanding of the Christian religion. His was a comprehensive perspective or ground-motive. By contrast, English Calvinism has taken a reduced approach to religion. Reduced is not meant in any pejorative sense, but rather as a description, as the view is reduced in comparison to a Reformational perspective, which is more comprehensive. The latter, while obviously including a soteriological focus on humans, also regards creation and culture as ‘targets’ of redemption. This comprehensive—reduced clash may be one of the key reasons for the lack of adoption of the Reformational perspective and for the sometimes vehement rejection of Reformational ideas within the English Christian scene. The narrow soteriological approach is rooted in the adoption of a soft dualism between ‘nature and grace’ at the ground-motive level.

In response to the five sub-questions the following are argued.

1. A reduced and dualist approach often leads to the privatisation of religion. This is the result of a nature—grace ground-motive and is one of the main reasons why English Calvinism has often been individualistic and pietistic in its cultural outlook.

One of the results of the particular version of the nature—grace perspective adopted by many English Calvinists is that they down play the motif of creation and focus on fall and redemption. Redemption is then seen in anthropocentric terms rather than in terms of a restoration or transformation of creation (in this context: *culture*). Hence, their focus on soteriology and ecclesiology.

2. One of the consequences of this approach has been to elevate the role of the church over other kingdom activities and institutions, to prioritise evangelism and mission above any social involvement or cultural transformation. And where social involvement has been advocated it was usually seen as a form of pre-evangelism or as something done out of mercy and compassion rather than a desire to express the lordship of Christ over every area of life. From this starting point, the project of establishing Christian socio-political theories and institutions was not sufficiently supported.

3. The nature—grace ground-motive can accommodate, in its pole of ‘nature’, not only themes derived from Greek philosophy (as in Scholasticism) but also modern humanist notions. This can explain a tendency of English Calvinism to lean towards a positivist (i.e. rationalist, scientist) approach and the acceptance of the autonomy of theoretical thought with the consequent rejection of a distinctively Christian philosophy and scholarship. Theology still tends to be viewed as the queen of the sciences and this view results in

prioritising the role and study of theology over the other sciences. This again stems from the nature—grace ground-motive and results in a reduced view of Christian scholarship.

4. There seems to be a number of different variations of the nature—grace model (and at times an adoption of a science-ideal, which is typical of the nature-pole of the nature—freedom ground-motive) within English Calvinism. I attempted to clarify whether the different variations or sub-versions are amalgamated in a somewhat new worldview, typical of English Calvinism, or if different sub-versions operate rather ‘independently’, in a plurality of approaches. I argued that the second option seems to me more plausible, although one can trace a degree of ‘unity’ among the worldviews adopted by English Calvinists. In any case, I also argued that the worldviews adopted by English Calvinists are not particularly in tune with a Calvinist line of thinking and living.⁹

5. Too often, Reformational literature can be too academic and jargon-filled to be accessible. Often the attitude of Reformational proponents has been defensive and entrenched and they have not made good conversation partners, which may have resulted in an appearance of arrogance and triumphalism. A number of accusations have been made against the Reformational perspective such as the promotion of relativism and idealism, the minimising of the role of theology (and the consequent elevation of philosophy over other sciences) and the denigration of the role of the church. These accusations were investigated. I argued that it is necessary to pay attention to these allegations and to learn lessons that may be important for the future of the Reformational movement.

1.4 Objectives

Main objective: The main objective of this study (see problem-statement) was to examine the reception of Reformational thought within English Calvinism and to examine the reasons as to why it has not been widely accepted.

The specific objectives of this thesis were:

Sub-objective 1: To identify the philosophical and pre-scientific roots of the public/private dichotomy and the consequent rejection of the Reformational approach concerning the reformation of culture.

⁹ Contra VanDrunen – see § 3.4.1.

Sub-objective 2: To explore to what extent elevating the role of the church over against other social institutions has resulted in a reduced view of the tasks of the Christian community. To explore the philosophical and pre-scientific roots of this position.

Sub-objective 3: To see whether/ which approach has caused a rejection, by English Calvinists, of the project of an integral Christian philosophy and scholarship. To identify the pre-scientific and philosophical assumptions in such a move and to explore their clash with Reformational proposals.

Sub-objective 4: To reach a good assessment of the ground-motives (and their particular sub-versions) underlying English Calvinism. And to assess if we find in these circles an amalgamation of sub-versions that creates a unique model or a variety of sub-versions operating with relative independence.

Sub-objective 5: To find out what mistakes were made and what lessons can be learned from the English experience to make the Reformational perspective more attractive in future.

1.5 Proposed contributions

This research provides for the first time a study of Reformational ideas and their reception within England. In fact, even though there are a few studies of Calvinism in Britain, they are mostly of a historical nature. Furthermore, there are no studies of the reception of neo-Calvinist ideas in Britain.¹⁰ Finally, studying the problems that hindered the reception of Reformational views may help promoting the acceptance of Reformational thought in future, in Britain and elsewhere.

One intended contribution of this study was to identify the pre-scientific and philosophical roots of the reception (or lack of reception) of a biblically directed philosophy (and other Reformational proposals) by Calvinism in England.

For the first time, Dooyeweerd's theory of ground-motives and Vollenhoven's tools for the study of the history of philosophy were used to understand the ideas of Calvinists in England. The study of the worldviews (and their sub-versions) adopted by these movements will be valuable for at least someone interested in the history of ideas and in worldview-and-religion studies. The study of the implications of those ideas and worldviews can be of

¹⁰ One British Reformational thinker that has worked on some of these areas with regard to aspects of Evangelicalism is Russell (1973). While his study focused mainly on sociological issues over a narrow time frame, here I dealt with more philosophical concerns and over a wider timeframe, while also looking more specifically at Calvinism.

interest to a broad range of scholars (e.g. theologians, historians, sociologists), not necessarily adopting a Christian position.

1.6 Area of study

The study was primarily philosophical (i.e. focusing on the philosophical views, on the worldviews and ground-motives adopted by certain English authors and movements). Occasionally and secondarily, I also utilised historical and theological perspectives where necessary. Where theological ‘topics’, such as soteriology, the doctrine concerning Scripture or the church, are discussed, the philosophical underpinnings were considered. Creation, fall and redemption, are according to Dooyeweerd, related to a religious ground-motive, which is not to be necessarily or only regarded as belonging to the theological field of study.

Although the term reception is used in the title of this thesis, it should be noted that the tools of reception studies, that is the investigation of ‘how texts, and materials have been received, reshaped, used and abused across time and space’,¹¹ have not been utilised as the reception here is the *lack of* reception of Reformational *ideas* rather than *texts*.¹²

1.7 Method

Use was made of the theory of ground-motives and of Vollenhoven’s method for the identification of presuppositions, types and time-currents. Immanent and transcendental criticism was therefore employed where possible. These ideas were devised as critical methodologies aimed at uncovering hidden religious and philosophical presuppositions in other thinkers or schools of thought, so it is appropriate to deploy them even in critiquing the ideas of a movement which rejected Reformational thought itself. It is acknowledged, however, that, if dialogue were to ensue, the school being critiqued in this case would need to be persuaded of the value of the critical methodology employed in the thesis. The project does not itself engage in that task of persuasion but only provides preliminary resources for engaging in it.

¹¹ UCL, Department of Greek & Latin, Research: Reception Studies: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/research/research-reception> . Date of access 16 August 2018.

¹² This might prove a useful exercise for further research and the development of a non-reductive approach to reception studies would be beneficial for that purpose. It is however, beyond the scope of this study.

It should be noted at the outset that I have written as a participant-observer of the Reformational movement and as a critical friend of Calvinism. The approach taken was to interrogate English Calvinism from a Reformational point of view using Reformational philosophical tools, in an attempt to understand the reasons for the lack of reception of Reformational ideas. I have thus often utilised ideas internal to the movement to critique the reasons why thinkers outside the movement have rejected the Reformational approach.

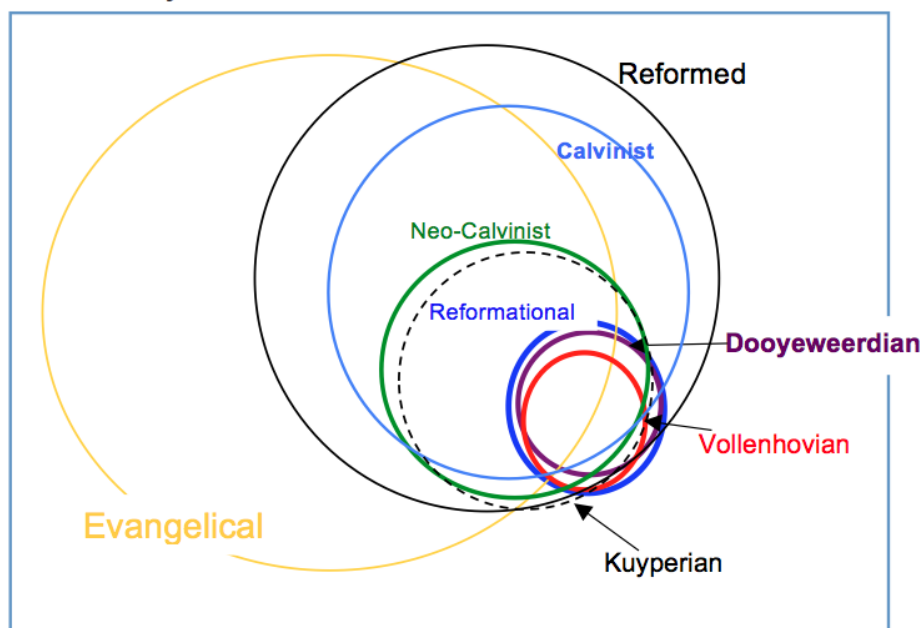
1.8 Definitions

1.8.1 An overview of the movements discussed in this study

Defining Christian movements can be a problem. Nevertheless, it is worth setting out some working definitions of the movements discussed in this thesis. One issue is the boundaries between them which can become very blurred. There are always counter-examples (or perhaps exceptions that prove the rule), as well as subtle nuances that can't be caught in the wide net of a definition. The Venn diagram below (Table 1.1) is a working model in an attempt to show how the different schools are related.

FIGURE 1.1 A Venn diagram illustrating the relationship between different Christian schools of thought.

Christianity



(Source: S. Bishop)

1.8.2 Kuyperian and neo-Calvinist

The term *neo-Calvinism* was coined in 1897 by one of the first lecturers at the VU Universiteit Amsterdam, Anne Anema (1872-1966) (as cited in Van Deursen 2008:88). The term had negative connotations but it stuck and became a convenient term to describe the movement. Neo-Calvinism had its origins in the Netherlands, Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck were the main initiators. Kuyperians would regard themselves as neo-Calvinists and the majority of neo-Calvinists would be Kuyperian. In this study I use them as being broadly synonymous.

Elsewhere (see for example Bishop 2011:1-9 and Bishop, 2016b),¹³ I have outlined some of the characteristics of the Kuyperian neo-Calvinist standpoint. These include the following:

1. The sovereignty of God over every sphere and aspect of creation
2. The idea that all of life is to be redeemed
3. The importance of God's cultural mandate (Genesis 1:26ff)
4. Creation, fall and redemption
5. Sphere sovereignty (see § 2.2.7)
6. A rejection of dualism
7. Common grace (see § 2.2.4)
8. The antithesis (see § 2.2.6)
9. The role of worldviews
10. The role of God's laws or creational ordinances.

1.8.3 Reformational

Reformational philosophy arose out of a neo-Calvinist perspective. This is a philosophical perspective pioneered by Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven in the Netherlands. This movement has been called the philosophy of the law idea (a loose translation of the Dutch *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* (WdW)), cosmonomic philosophy and even the Amsterdam school. Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven and others built on the ideas of Kuyper to develop into a school of philosophy (see § 2.2-4) for a fuller discussion and

¹³ The points there were first suggested in one of my blog posts and then added to the Wikipedia entry under 'Neo-Calvinism'. It should be noted that these characteristics are not a straitjacket for all neo-Calvinists – the list should not be taken to presume that neo-Calvinism is a monolithic movement. Any living movement is 'elastic' and there is debate over boundaries. For example, not all who would self-designate as neo-Calvinists would agree with the addition of common grace here. Klaas Schilder, in particular, objected to the doctrine of common grace (for a comparison of Schilder and Kuyper see Douma, 2017).

overview.) The following could be added to the list of distinctives that make up neo-Calvinism, for the Reformational movement:

11. The rejection of the autonomy of theoretical thought
12. The rejection of the concept of religious neutrality
13. The idea that reality has different modal aspects
14. The distinction between structure and direction

These themes are picked up in § 2.2-4.

1.8.4 Calvinist

Kuyperians, Dooyeweerdians and neo-Calvinists would largely regard themselves as Calvinists. Calvinism is a larger set than neo-Calvinism, it is also a diverse set – it may be better to describe it as Calvinism₂ (see § 2.5). Calvinists largely hold to the Three Forms of Unity (i.e., the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, and the Heidelberg Catechism) and/or the Westminster Standards. Calvinists have been described as ‘five pointers’. The five points being abbreviated or summarised as TULIP: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and Perseverance of the saints. For Calvinists, the starting point is usually the sovereignty of God. Moderate Calvinists would broadly hold to four of the five points (placing less emphasis on limited atonement).

1.8.5 Evangelical

Evangelicalism implies a high regard for, and commitment to, Scripture. The term *Evangelical* literally means ‘of the gospel’. David Bebbington in his *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (1989) opens the book with this statement describing four ‘qualities’ that are ‘the special marks’ of Evangelicalism:

‘*conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed;
activism, the expression of the gospel in effort;
biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be termed
crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ at the cross’
(Bebbington, 1989:3).

It is also important to note that many Calvinists are Evangelical and many Evangelicals are Calvinists as the Venn diagram in Figures 1.1 shows.

1.8.6 Science, scholarship, worldview and ground-motive

Some other key terms used in this study also need clarifying, namely, *science* and *scholarship*, *worldview* and *ground-motive*. In the English-speaking world, science is usually used as a synonym for the physical or natural sciences. However, here I used it in a much broader sense to describe any academic discipline or any form of academic knowledge or scholarship and use it in the same sense as the German *Wissenschaft* or the Dutch *wetenschap*. I used *scholarship* (and the phrase *science and scholarship*) as synonym of science, as defined above.

Defining worldview is as problematic (see the discussion in § 4.7) as is defining the relationship between worldview and ground-motives. However, in this thesis, I shall use the terms *worldview* and *ground-motive* as *broadly* synonymous.¹⁴ *Ground-motive* is a term that Dooyeweerd used to describe the religious (ultimate) source from which all human activity, including culture-making and theoretical thought, results. Dooyeweerd identified four main ground motives: form—matter, nature—grace, freedom—nature and the biblical one creation, fall and redemption. These are dealt with in more detail in §§ 2.3.6, 3.4 and 4.7.

It should be noted that some Reformational thinkers have reservations concerning Dooyeweerd's use of ground-motives. It has been a point of extensive critical discussion (see below §§ 2.3.6 and 3.4.1). However, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to assess these critiques.

1.9 Outline of the chapters

Chapter 1 is constituted by the present introduction.

In Chapter 2, I look at the historical development and key ideas of the Reformational movement and English Calvinism. I start by examining the perspectives of three key thinkers in the Reformational tradition: Abraham Kuyper, Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven. I then move on to look at the distinctive nature of English Calvinism from a broad historical overview. The largely top-down nature of the English Reformation is identified and the establishment of a state church with dissenters having to adopt a more privatised view of the gospel, especially after the Great Ejection, is displayed. The historical factors that hindered the reception of a Reformational perspective are outlined.

¹⁴ The term ground-motive is used primarily and almost exclusively by Reformational scholars. Worldview is used by a much wider range of scholars and is a much older term. Ground-motive was first used by Dooyeweerd; it is much harder to identify the origins of the term worldview (see, for example, Naugle 2002). Both are pre-theoretical. I shall usually use the term ground-motive where it is in the context of a Reformational approach.

In Chapter 3, I analyse the main characteristics of English Calvinism and their attitude towards politics and social action. Politics has been chosen as illustrative; the focus could equally have been on, for example, education or art. The tendencies towards individualism, the elevation of the role of the (institutional) church, and the depreciation of creation are also pointed out. Ecclesiastical issues tend to take precedence over social or political issues. I then attempt to identify the pre-scientific roots of their approach. In particular, I identify variations of the nature—grace ground motive that characterise the work of different English Calvinist authors. At this stage, the question is asked whether we deal with an amalgamation of sub-versions (of the same worldview) that creates a unique sub-version, or with a variety of sub-versions operating in relative independence.

Chapter 4 then looks at English Calvinist views of science and scholarship. After pointing out the possible philosophical trends influencing English Calvinism in this area of reflection, I focus primarily on three key players: Reijer Hooykaas, Donald MacKay¹⁵ and Oliver Barclay. I examine their apparent rejection of the worldview-notion, their tendency to prioritise theology and their adherence to an objectivist approach to science and reality. Their acceptance of the autonomy of theoretical thought, and of the religious neutrality of scholarship meant that Christian philosophy was considered impossible. Again, I examine several sub-versions of the nature—grace ground-motive that seem to shape their positions. It becomes gradually clear that within English Calvinism there is a variety of ground-motives at work; however, this variety does seem to show some coherence: the liberal version of the nature—grace ground-motive is predominantly avoided and the adopted versions are those that emphasise the fall-component of the biblical worldview.

Some lessons, from the preceding chapters for those in the Reformational movement, are identified in Chapter 5. Some of the problems that have allegedly marred the Reformational movement include a tendency towards arrogance and triumphalism, lack of piety, and issues with presentation; namely, opacity and lack of relevance. There are also complaints that I have called ‘issues of content’: these include the minimising of the Scriptures and of the (institutional) church. These allegations are reviewed, together with some common misperceptions about the Reformational movement. I briefly look at the attitude of a British Reformational author, Andrew Basden, and examine if his ‘enrichment outlook’ may prove to be a fruitful way forward.

Chapter 6 serves as a conclusion about the findings of this study.

¹⁵ Although MacKay was a Scot, his outlook was very much English and he spent all his academic life in England.

Chapter 2

A brief introduction to Reformational ideas and English Calvinism

2.1 Introduction

In order to look at the reception of Reformational philosophy in the UK, it is first necessary to outline what is meant by Reformational philosophy. This needs to be done in part because not everyone is familiar with its perspective, but also to show the richness and the relevance of such an approach. From this vantage point, the fact that Reformational ideas were often rejected by English Calvinists appears particularly remarkable. In the first part of this chapter (up to § 2.4), I want to provide a rather brief overview of the contributions of three of the main proponents of Reformational thought, namely those of Abraham Kuyper, Herman Dooyeweerd and Dirk Vollenhoven.¹⁶ It is not the intention to examine these thinkers in great depth but rather to trace the main contours of their thought. All three of these have had works published in Britain. Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism* was republished by the Sovereign Grace Union in 1933 and both Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven have had papers published early on in their careers in the *Evangelical Quarterly*. Kuyper, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven shared the Calvinist notion that the lordship of Christ knows no restrictions.

In the second part of the chapter (from § 2.5), the rise of Calvinism within England is addressed, in part to show the context within which the discussion concerning the reception of Reformational thought took place. Furthermore, knowing the historical roots of the Calvinist movement in England should also help in understanding some of its perplexities over Reformational ideas. In fact, partly due to the particular historical factors shaping the development of English Calvinism, this movement was characterised by a certain 'duality' in its worldview. It was, for example, a duality between a public and a private sphere and between individual and corporate action. Christian corporate action was mainly reserved to

¹⁶ Several introductions to Reformational thought have appeared in English in recent years notably Clouser (2005), Strauss (2009a; 2015a), Troost (2012), Bartholomew and Goheen (2013) and Ouweneel (2014a). Some of the problems with introductions, and the latter two in particular, have been discussed in Strauss (2014).

the church-institution. This, in turn, led to a certain preference for Christian individual action outside the church-borders (i.e. in the majority of cultural activities).¹⁷ These and other characteristics placed English Calvinism in a position that was not the most conducive to the acceptance of Reformational ideas.

As already mentioned, the first part of the chapter is dedicated to Reformational philosophy, also known as the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea - a translation of the Dutch *de Wijsbegerte der Wetsidee* (WdW) - and the Amsterdam philosophy.

Dooyeweerd is one of a number of mainly Dutch Calvinists who were associated with the development of this philosophy. A few notable others were his brother-in-law Dirk Hendrik Theodoor Vollenhoven (1892-1978), H. van Riessen (b. 1911), J.P.A. Mekkes (1898-1987), K.J. Popma (1905-1987), S.U. Zuidema (1906-1975) and the South African H.G. Stoker (1899-1993).¹⁸ But the origins of this philosophy can be traced to ideas first formulated by Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876) and the one-time Dutch Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920).¹⁹

2.2 Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)

2.2.1 A brief biography

Kuyper is perhaps the best known of those associated with the Reformational perspective. He took over the leadership of the Anti-Revolutionary party from Groen van Prinsterer, who can be regarded as the very first 'father' of neo-Calvinism.²⁰ Van Prinsterer was an aristocratic Dutchman. He studied at the Calvinist University of Leyden. He became a Christian in Brussels under the preaching of J.M. Merle d'Aubigné. Van Prinsterer's *Unbelief and Revolution* (1847) was an important work for the birth of the neo-Calvinist movement. In it, he argued that the elimination of Christianity from public life could only result in violent revolution. He was the founder of the Dutch Anti-revolutionary movement (the revolution in question being the French). The movement never really flourished until van Prinsterer found in Abraham Kuyper a natural successor who developed it into a political party.

¹⁷ There were, of course some notable exceptions (see, for example, Shaw, 2003).

¹⁸ For a recent and insightful critique of Stoker see M.F. van der Walt (2016).

¹⁹ In recent publications Friesen (e.g. 2015) maintains that the origins of Dooyeweerd's philosophy lie not in van Prinsterer but in the Christian theosophy of Franz Von Baader. This thesis has been severely challenged by Strauss (2005) and others (e.g. Geertsema, 2009; Glas, 2009).

²⁰ On Groen van Prinsterer see Schutte (2016).

Kuyper eventually became Prime Minister (1901-05). He founded a Christian university (now called the VU Universiteit Amsterdam) in Amsterdam and was editor of a daily and a weekly newspaper. He also found time to write over 200 books and articles.²¹ His main works, in English, include *The Principles of Sacred Theology* (1968), *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (1946) and the 1898 Stone Lectures: *Lectures on Calvinism* (1931). In the latter, he developed the idea of Calvinism as a *Weltanschauung*, a whole 'world-and-life-view'; his Calvinism was not a narrow five-point doctrine.

A full account of Kuyper's life and work can be found in Bratt (2013). We have been reasonably served with Kuyper biographies, ranging from the hagiographic (e.g. Vanden Berg, 1960 — a translation from the Dutch) and under-critical (Praamsma, 1985 – another translation) to the over-critical (e.g. Koch, 2006 – this has yet to be translated into English). Bratt steers a middle course. The first book-length biography written in English was *God's Renaissance Man* (2000) by McGoldrick, who focuses primarily on Kuyper's theological views and draws largely upon Vanden Berg (1960) and Praamsma (1985). Bratt's perspective is, however, wider (Bishop, 2014).

Kuyper was born in Maassluis in the nineteenth century and died in The Hague in the twentieth century, but his impact and legacy stretch well into the twenty-first. In his day Kuyper sought to awake Christians from 'a pietistic slumber' (Bratt, 1997:121) and today his work and writings are helping many to see the fullness of God's good creation.

Kuyper famously declared:

'no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: "Mine!"' (Kuyper, as cited in Bratt, 1998a:488).

No area of life is exempt from the claims of the risen Christ. This was certainly true for Kuyper, who not only preached this vision, but lived it.

Kuyper was a multifaceted and multitalented character. He was born in a liberal Calvinist home, studied at a modernist university and became a church pastor. He experienced an Evangelical conversion. He was a newspaper editor; he edited two newspapers *De Heraut* and *De Standaard*. As mentioned above, he shaped a new Christian political party, the Anti-Revolutionary Party, became a politician and founded a new church denomination — all while working as a church pastor. He was active in the advancement of Christian schools and education and founded a Christian university. He was a theologian; he was the first

²¹ A full list of his works is given in Kuipers (2011).

professor of theology at the Free University (VU Universiteit Amsterdam) and wrote an important work on the Holy Spirit. He also found time to become the Prime Minister of Holland (1901-1905). He certainly took seriously his 'square inch' approach.

It is not surprising that, in 1898, B.B. Warfield, said of him:

'Dr Kuyper is probably to-day the most considerable figure in both political and ecclesiastical Holland' (Warfield, 1968:xii).

Kuyper has been described as a renaissance man (cf the title of McGoldrick, 2000), and nowadays his works are certainly undergoing a renaissance. John Vriend, one of Kuyper's translators, maintained that the twenty-first century would be the 'real Kuyper century' (as cited in Boer, nd). If we look at the number of books, papers and articles that have recently been published on or about Kuyper it certainly looks that way. A 2013 bibliography identifies well over 350 works that have been written on or about Kuyper (Bishop, 2014:453-471).

In an age of individualism and narcissism, Kuyper's transformative message stands in sharp prophetic contrast. The neo-Calvinism of Kuyper provides a clear biblical framework for applying Christianity to all areas of life, which goes some way to explain this resurgence of interest in Kuyper. Many contemporary theologians are looking for a social theology. Kuyper marked out one and implemented it over a century ago. As one biographer writes: 'although Kuyper never preached the social gospel, he did frequently accentuate the social implications of the gospel' (Vanden Berg, 1978:51-52); 'politicophobia is not Calvinistic, is not Christian, is not ethical', wrote Kuyper (as cited in Vanden Berg, 1978:48).

Several key themes shaped Kuyper's approach to culture. These include the sovereignty of God, the cultural mandate, the role of worldviews, common grace, the antithesis and sphere sovereignty. These themes provided the theoretical framework for Kuyper's neo-Calvinism.

2.2.2 Key Kuyperian themes: the sovereignty of God

'If God is sovereign, then his lordship must extend over all of life, and it cannot be restricted to the walls of the church or within the Christian orbit. The non-Christian world has not been handed over to Satan, nor surrendered to fallen humanity, nor consigned to fate. God's sovereignty is great and all-dominating in the life of that unbaptized world as well. Therefore Christ's church on earth and God's child cannot simply retreat from this life. If the believer's God is at work in this world, then in this world the believer's hand must take hold of the plow, and the name of the Lord must be glorified in that activity as well' (Kuyper, 2013a:5).

These words from the Foreword to *De Gemeene Gratie* (Kuyper, 2013a:5) sum up Kuyper's position. It starts and ends with the sovereignty of God. If God is sovereign, then cultural development is essential: retreating from His world is not an option.

2.2.3 The cultural mandate

The term *cultural mandate* was likely coined by Klaas Schilder (1890-1952; cf. Gootjes, 1995). Kuyper's square inch quote, as cited above, is an embodiment of the cultural mandate given in Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 2:15. This subduing, ruling, tilling and keeping is a mandate for the development of culture, for the unfolding of the potentialities within the God-given good creation.²² It is about expressing the kingdom of Christ in all areas of life; no areas are exempt. It implies that although the creation is good, it needs to be developed and opened up; as Al Wolters put it: 'the Bible begins with a garden and ends with a city' (Wolters, 1985:41).

2.2.4 Common grace

One major theme that has been closely associated with neo-Calvinism, and Kuyper and Bavinck in particular, is common grace (Berkhof, 1958:343).²³ Henry Van Til described Kuyper as the 'theologian of common grace' (Van Til, 1972:117-136). Common grace is bestowed on all: Christians and non-Christians.

On this topic, Kuyper wrote a series of articles, over a six-year period, for *De Heraut*. These were subsequently published in three volumes as *De Gemeene Gratie* in 1902, 1903 and 1904.²⁴ A major translation project is under way to translate these works into English. The plan is to publish them in three volumes.²⁵ Kuyper begins his foreword to the first

²² Interestingly Kuyper doesn't make much use of the term *culture*. In his *Lectures on Calvinism* (1931 [1899]) he mentions people being 'highly cultured' (44) and the 'cultured classes' (45) and 'cultured circles' (188) and other than in agriculture and horticulture the term *culture* is not otherwise mentioned. This is also the case in volume 1 of his *Common Grace*; Kuyper prefers the term *common grace*. Nevertheless, the phrase *cultural mandate* became useful shorthand for the view that characterises a Reformational perspective

²³ Louis Berkhof (1958:434) claims that 'up to the present Kuyper and Bavinck did more than anyone else for the development of the doctrine of common grace'.

²⁴ It is worth noting that The Dutch term for saving grace is *genade*, the term Kuyper uses for common grace is *gratie* in an attempt to distinguish it from saving grace. Kamps (2001:354) suggests the term *gratie* would have been better translated as 'favour'. Had that been done it may have alleviated some of the complaints about the term common grace, for example the one based on the idea that 'grace is never common'.

²⁵ A section of *De Gemeene Gratie* was translated in Kuyper (1998b). Parts of *De Gemeene Gratie* project have also been published (see Kuyper, 2011). These chapters didn't appear in the Dutch edition because of a publisher's oversight and had to be published separately. One of the volumes has so far appeared (Kuyper, 2016c) – see my review in Bishop (2017a).

volume (2013a) with this provocative statement: 'The Reformed paradigm has suffered no damage greater than its deficient development of the doctrine of common grace' (2013a:3). He then goes on to lament the lack of doctrinal development in Calvinism after 1650. What happened was that Calvinists were only 'repristinating their well-worn polemic against Arminianism' (2013a:5).

For Kuyper common grace is 'deduced directly from the sovereignty of God' and is the 'root and conviction for all Reformed people' (2013a:5). Kuyper thinks that resuscitating the doctrine of common grace helps the believer 'take hold of the plow' rather than retreat from the world. Common grace provides the foundation for engagement with the world, thus avoiding spiritual and ecclesiastical isolation and thereby helping believers exercise stewardship (2013a:5).

Kuyper distinguished between particular grace – sometimes called saving grace – and common grace. The first abolishes and undoes the consequences of sin completely for the saved, the second does not cause conversion but extends to the whole of humankind (Kuyper, 1988:168). For Kuyper there is a close relationship between the two and separation 'must be vigorously opposed' (Kuyper, 1988:185). He uses the illustration of two branches of a tree that are intertwined - but have the same root system (Kuyper, 1998b:186). The root system is Christ, the first-born of all creation. Kuyper's position on special and common grace is Christological; he writes: 'there is (...) no doubt whatever that common grace and special grace come most intimately connected from their origin, and this connection lies in Christ' (Kuyper, 1998b:187). Special grace, he asserts, 'assumes common grace' (Kuyper, 1998b:169). Common grace is only an emanation of special grace and all its fruit flows into special grace (Kuyper, 1998b:170). Common grace must have a formative impact on special grace and vice versa (Kuyper, 1988:185). In *Common Grace* 1.2 he (Kuyper, 2014) writes of the interrelationship of particular and common grace:

'the glory of common grace would never have sparkled in its springtime if particular grace had not brought it fully into bloom' (loc 1059)²⁶,

'particular grace already presupposes common grace' (loc 1113),

and:

'no matter how we look at the data, particular grace presupposes common grace. Without the latter, the former cannot do its work' (loc 1121).

²⁶ loc references are to the location in the kindle e-book edition.

Common grace means that the creation ordinances of dominion and stewardship over nature, given in the cultural mandate before the fall, are not abolished after the fall (Kuyper, 1988:179).

Common grace has a twofold effect: on the one hand, it curbs the effects of sin and restrains the deeds of fallen humanity; on the other, it upholds the ordinances of creation and provides the basis for Christian cultural involvement; common grace provides the foundation for culture. The cultural mandate to develop and fill the earth has not been rescinded after the fall into sin. Therefore, cultural withdrawal is not an option for Christians.

It is also important to state what common grace does *not* imply. It is not saving grace. It is not a denial of total depravity or of limited atonement – Kuyper was an advocate of both (on the latter see Kuyper's *Particular Grace* - Kuyper, 2001). It does not blur the distinction (antithesis) between the regenerate and the unregenerate, between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, between the church and the world. It does not mean that all things are permissible. Common grace does not nullify the antithesis – they are both important aspects of Kuyper's thought (on the antithesis see § 2.6 below). Though how he holds them together is open to debate – see, for example, McConnell (2013) and Zuidema (2013) – it is important to notice that, for Kuyper, common grace and the antithesis should be kept together. Neither is common grace only associated with the church: 'common grace has operated for ages in China and India without there being any church of Christ in those countries' (Kuyper, 2014:loc 1798).

Incidentally, Kuyper never claimed originality in his development of the doctrine of common grace; rather he described himself as a copyist of Calvin. Kuyper only aimed at making explicit what was implicit in Calvin (on Calvin and common grace see Bavinck, 1909; 1989).²⁷

2.2.5 Christianity as a *Weltanschauung* (creation, fall and redemption)

When Kuyper first introduced Christians to the notion of worldview in his 1888 *Lectures on Calvinism* it was a fresh, innovative and radical notion (Kuyper, 1931:11). Kuyper first identified the Christian worldview in terms of the narrative embedded within creation, fall and redemption – variants of such a schema have become much more influential in recent decades among English Evangelicals, such as that formulated by Stott (etc), though not necessarily due to the influence of Kuyper. As Dooyeweerd puts it:

²⁷ The most explicit mention of the concept of common grace in Calvin is in his *Institutes* Book 2 Ch 3 § 3. 'But we ought to consider, that, notwithstanding of the corruption of our nature, there is some room for divine grace, such grace as, without purifying it, may lay it under internal restraint'.

[Kuyper] 'lifted Calvinism, the most radically biblical movement within the Protestant Reformation, out of the narrow sphere of dogmatic theology where it had languished during centuries of inner decline. He raised it to the level of an all-encompassing worldview' (Dooyeweerd, 2013b:3).

2.2.6 The antithesis

Antithesis means *opposition*. In the nineteenth-century Hegel already utilised the term, however, in Kuyperian thought it took on a different connotation. It marked a difference between those who held to a Christian starting point and those who did not; the difference was in worldview. There is a noetic antithesis between those who start with the knowledge of God and those who do not.

This is, in part, one of the reasons why Kuyper advocates the establishment of specific Christian institutions. A Christian political party will have different starting-points from a party based on, for example, naturalistic lines. The foundations will be different and so the out-workings will also be different. Commitment to Christ can't be accommodated or harmonised with naturalism or any other non-Christian philosophy. There is a cosmic battle between light and darkness, between the kingdom of God and the dominion of Satan. There is a marked contrast between belief and unbelief. This notion of antithesis is integral to the idea of rival worldviews. Of course, rivalry is not the only possible relation between different worldviews: cooperation, emulation and mutual correction will also take place. It should also be appreciated that Kuyper would grant the same freedom to establish distinct schools, political parties or labour unions to those who adopt rival worldviews in a country. This is in fact what happened in the Netherlands.

For Kuyper, however, the antithesis also means that there are two kinds of people (regenerate and unregenerate) and thus two kinds of 'science' (i.e. scholarship) with different starting points. He uses the terms *abnormalist* and *normalist* to show the key difference. The conflict is not between faith and science, but between two scientific systems which are opposed to each other, each based on their own faith (Kuyper, 1933:133). The difference stems from the view one has of sin and how radical was the fall into sin. Kuyper was, of course, an abnormalist:

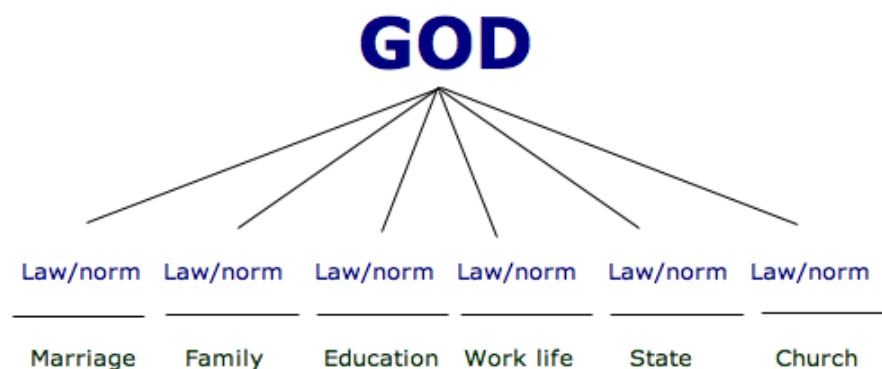
'if the cosmos in its present condition is *abnormal*, then a *disturbance* has taken place in the past, and only a regenerating power can warrant it the final attainment of its goal' (Kuyper, 1933:132).

Abnormal or normal then refers to the state of creation and to the extent of the fall. The normalist denies the noetic effects of sin. Thus, if the creation is viewed as normal, then reason may have a higher place than for the abnormalist. For Kuyper, it seems that ‘reason is incomplete with respect to convincing others’ (Anderson, 2008:49). Hence the rather low value he placed on apologetics. The issue is to know to what extent the fall has affected reason and the rest of creation. For Kuyper, there was an ‘abyss’ between the two kinds of people and the two kinds of science that couldn’t be crossed without God’s revelation; this leaves reason helpless. Any attempt at unifying the two ‘systems’ denies the power and reality of rebirth (*palingenesis*).

2.2.7 Sphere sovereignty

All things are subject to the sovereignty of God. This conviction led Kuyper, following Groen van Prinsterer, to develop a theory that became known as sphere sovereignty. There are different independent spheres within creation but God is sovereign over them all.

FIGURE 2.1 A representation of sphere sovereignty.



(Source: <http://stevebishop.blogspot.co.uk/2009/09/sphere-sovereignty.html>)

This notion provided, for example, a corrective to statism, which maintains that the state, by making laws and regulations, is in control over most areas of life. Sphere sovereignty starts from the sovereignty of God rather than the state or any other created entity or institution. The state is then sovereign in a certain sphere; its regulation of other spheres is limited to the juridical ambit and it should not be regarded as a sort of ‘container’ of all the other social spheres and institutions (see for example Strauss, 2016a).

In his 1880 inaugural address to the Free University Kuyper outlined his idea of sphere sovereignty (Kuyper, 1998a). This provided the justification, for example, for different types of schools and universities reflecting the different worldviews already present in society. The

VU Kuyper founded was to be a free, Christian, university: free from state and even church control.

Sphere sovereignty maintains that God is sovereign. He has established laws or norms for areas of society such as the family, the church and so on. Within their own sphere, these institutions are thus sovereign *under* God's laws and norms for that aspect of life. No one institution should dominate or dictate to another and there is no hierarchy of institutions. The development and flourishing of every institution or area of life is an outworking of the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28-29.

There are a number of unresolved issues with sphere sovereignty including the question of knowing who decides what the spheres are and what are the boundaries. Kuyper never really defines these issues; he maintains that they are organic – i.e. unfolding in their richness according to creational norms, as, for example, a plant grows and develops – each sphere has its own principles or goals. It may be that he deliberately keeps his theory of sphere sovereignty slightly ambiguous.

2.2.8 Theological distinctives

2.2.8.a The church as organism and as an institution

Post-Kuyper neo-Calvinists are often accused of minimising the importance of the church in the kingdom of God. This certainly wasn't the case for Kuyper. Kuyper's first and last articles were on the church. As John Halsey Wood Jr. notes, the church was the bookends of Kuyper's theological writings (Wood, 2013:3). Kuyper was a pastor in a church, led a reform of the Dutch Reformed Church and wrote his doctorate on Calvin's and à Lasco's views of the church. Kuyper always had a deep concern for the church: as he said, the 'church question dominates every other issue' (Kuyper, 2013c). In a sense, Kuyper turned from studying church history to making church history (Bishop, 2014:1).

Kuyper places a strong emphasis on the priesthood of all believers. For the church to be truly an institution and organism, the role of the institutional leaders must be to equip the church as organism to be able to do the works of service in the marketplace, in the classroom, in business, in politics, in the laboratory and so forth.

He uses a number of metaphors to illustrate the distinction between church as an organism and church as institute. The church as an organism is a body and it grows; as an institute it is a house and is built. It is from the organism of church that the institution is born. In essence the institution is the church organisation with its sacraments, its ministers and so forth; the organism is the church in the world, Christians at work in society, the body of Christ, strengthened and served by the church as institute. The church as institute does not run schools, universities, coffee shops or trade unions; that is the role of the church as

organism. For Kuyper, therefore, the church has to do not only with Sunday services or missions but is a nation, busy reforming all facets of life and culture.

2.2.8.b Supralapsarianism and presumptive regeneration

Bratt maintains that the distinction between infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism²⁸ was the key issue that distinguished the neo-Calvinists ('supras') and the Secessionist line ('infrass') of Dutch Christianity (Bratt, 1984:46-47). Kuyper was a supralapsarian. For him supralapsarianism was the consequence of the sovereignty of God. Supralapsarianism led Kuyper to hold to presumptive regeneration and infant baptism. This meant that a 'conversion moment or experience' was the moment of rebirth when one becomes aware of what was anticipated at baptism. As Wood (2012) points out, Kuyper was treading a line between a state church and a confessional church as he developed his view of baptism:

'The basis for baptism was not covenant membership, which Kuyper feared would lead back to the national church, but was regeneration. Regeneration, however, was presumed on the basis of covenant membership, thus to Kuyper's mind avoiding sectarianism' (Wood, 2012:135).

Kuyper defends presumptive regeneration as meaning:

'1. That children of believers are to be considered as recipients of efficacious grace, in whom the work of efficacious grace has already begun.
2. That accordingly they are to receive Baptism as being sanctified in Christ.
3. That, when dying before having attained years of discretion, they can only be regarded as saved' (Kuyper, 1891:388).

He also writes:

'in our days Baptism is generally conceived of as being administered in hope of subsequent regeneration, whereas Calvinists have always taught that Baptism should be administered on the presumption that regeneration has preceded' (Kuyper, 1891:388).

Baptising on the basis of presumptive regeneration was not uncontroversial in the 1930s and 40s. Schilder disagreed with Kuyper and because Kuyper's views were entrenched

²⁸ The stem word 'lapse' here refers to the fall. The difference between the infralapsarians and the supralapsarians is the logical order in which God chooses the elect: supralapsarian, before the fall and infralapsarian after the fall.

within the church hierarchy, Schilder's dissent led him to be suspended (see, for example Mouw, 2012:176-186).

William Young makes much of Kuyper's presumptive regeneration and sees it as being the main point of deviation between what he terms *Historic Calvinism* and *neo-Calvinism*. He uses it to contrast Kuyper with other Reformers to the detriment of Kuyper and thus to drive a wedge between Historic Calvinism and neo-Calvinism (Young, 1973-1974). By 'Historic Calvinism', Young means his own take on Calvinism. It is, however, disingenuous to use presumptive regeneration to distance neo-Calvinism from other forms of Calvinism, as some Calvinists who adopt presumptive regeneration also reject neo-Calvinism; and many neo-Calvinists do not embrace presumptive regeneration.

Even for those who might not fully agree with Kuyper's doctrine of baptism, it is important to notice how Kuyper was trying to safeguard and honour a few convictions that he regarded as crucial for the Reformed faith. These were once again the importance of palingenesis, the rejection of the state-church idea and a desire to maintain the full sovereignty of God.

2.2.8.c The Holy Spirit

One of Kuyper's major theological works was *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (1900). The book, as with many of Kuyper's works, appeared first in one of his newspapers, *De Heraut*, as weekly instalment and was published in Dutch in 1888. It is perhaps the first major treatise on the Holy Spirit since John Owen's (1616-1683) three volumes published in 1674, 1682 and 1693. For Kuyper the work of the Holy Spirit had an eschatological and cosmic side:

'the work of the Holy Spirit consists in leading all creation *to its destiny*, the final purpose of which is the glory of God' (Kuyper, 1900:23 [emphasis in the original]).

He expands on what he means as the glory of God: it is 'the ultimate end of every creature' (Kuyper, 1900:23). The work of the Holy Spirit is then not only in individuals but there is also a cosmic side; the whole of creation is involved – animate and inanimate – he is not limited to work within the Christian:

'the work of the Holy Spirit is not confined to the elect, and does not begin with their regeneration, but it touches every creature, animate and inanimate, and begins its operation in the elect at the very moment of their origin' (Kuyper, 1900:48 – emphasis in original).

2.2.8.d Faith as a function

For Kuyper faith was not something added at regeneration. We all have faith: the difference lies in the direction of that faith. Regeneration is a change not in the substance or amount of faith but in the direction of it. Even the atheist then has faith (e.g. in rationality, progress and so forth). The faith of the non-believer attempts to suppress the revelation of God.

2.2.8.e The role of the heart

It was Kuyper's understanding of the role of the heart that affected Dooyeweerd in a special way (see below § 2.31). For Kuyper, the heart is a human's focal point.

'Personally it is our repeated experience that in the depths of our hearts, at the point where we disclose ourselves to the Eternal One, all the rays of our life converge as in one focus, and there alone regain that harmony which we so often and so painfully lose in the stress of daily duty' (Kuyper, 1931:20).

In his *Lectures on Calvinism* he writes:

'in religion there must be no intermediation of any creature between God and the soul,—all religion is the immediate work of God Himself, in the inner heart. This is the doctrine of Election' (Kuyper, 1931:58-59).

Here the heart has a key role, it is the heart that is the centre of the work of God: 'God is re-writing on the tables of every heart at its conversion' (Kuyper, 1931:72). Dooyeweerd credits Kuyper with helping him to see the centrality of the human heart.

2.3 Herman Dooyeweerd (1894—1977)

Herman Dooyeweerd (7th October 1894 – 12th February 1977) acknowledges Kuyper's 'great and continuing influence' on himself but does not always follow Kuyper's theology (Dooyeweerd, 1977:48).²⁹ He sees Kuyper's theology as still often following the 'traditional scholastic manner of thinking, and not the Reformational one' (Dooyeweerd, 1977:48). He identifies two strands within Kuyper's thought — a Reformational and a scholastic 'line' (Dooyeweerd, 2013:153-178). For Dooyeweerd, Kuyper's greatest contribution was 'to set the principle of sovereignty in its own sphere against the state absolutism that was dominant'

²⁹ For a helpful, full intellectual biography of Dooyeweerd see Verburg (2015).

in his time (Dooyeweerd, 1977:49). It was this notion of sphere sovereignty that Dooyeweerd developed along philosophical lines:

‘the way in which Kuyper worked it out was not theoretically or philosophically thought through’ (Dooyeweerd, 1974:9-10).

Dooyeweerd was the pioneer of the school of ‘the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea’ or more simply Reformational philosophy. He took Kuyper’s ideas and developed them into a full-blown Christian philosophy.

Dooyeweerd has been described as one of the foremost philosophers of the Netherlands. Paul B. Cliteur, president of the ‘Humanist League’ in The Netherlands and professor of philosophy at the Technical University of Delft, wrote in 1994 during the commemoration of Dooyeweerd’s birth in 1894 in the newspaper *Trouw*:

‘Herman Dooyeweerd is undoubtedly the greatest Dutch philosopher of the twentieth century (...) a philosopher of international proportions’.³⁰

G.E. Langemeijer, attorney general of the Dutch Appeal Court and chairman of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, also wrote in the newspaper *Trouw* that Dooyeweerd was ‘the most original philosopher Holland has ever produced, even Spinoza not excepted’ (Langemeijer, 1975:10). Giorgio Del Vecchio, an Italian neo-Kantian philosopher, viewed Dooyeweerd as ‘the most profound, innovative, and penetrating philosopher since Kant’ (as cited in Witte Jr, 1986:14-15, fn 11). More recently, philosopher Alvin Plantinga stated that ‘Dooyeweerd’s work was comprehensive, insightful, profound, courageous, and quite properly influential’ (Plantinga, 1995:30).

2.3.1 A brief biography

Dooyeweerd was born on 7th October 1894 in Amsterdam to Hermen Dooyeweerd (1850-1919), an accountant, and Maria Christina Spaling (1862-1948). Maria was Hermen’s

³⁰ Translation of ‘Herman Dooyeweerd is zonder twijfel de grootste Nederlandse filosoof van de twintigste eeuw (...) een filosoof van internationaal formaat, veel te groot voor de Nederlandse wijze van filosofie-beoefening’ (as cited in Geertsema, 1999). From Cliteur (1994:19). Cliteur repeated this comment elsewhere:

‘Niettemin staande dit wat sombere begin zal in het volgende worden betoogd dat Dooyeweerd zonder twijfel de belangrijkste Nederlandse filosoof is van de twintigste eeuw. Wij zullen niet in de beoordeling treden of hij nog groter is dan Spinoza, zoals de befaamde jurist Langemeijer nogal voortvarend stelde. Dat het om een uiterst belangrijk wijsgeer gaat is echter zeker’ (Cliteur & Haaksma, 1999:98).

second wife; his first wife had died leaving him three daughters. Herman was the only boy of a family of five children.

Dooyeweerd's father was greatly influenced by Abraham Kuyper and so Dooyeweerd, who became a Christian at a young age, was soon immersed in Kuyperian thought and in neo-Calvinism. He would have heard Kuyper's newspaper articles read aloud at home and he attended the Gereformeerde Gymnasium in Amsterdam whose headmaster, Dr J. Woltjer, was an associate of Kuyper.

In 1912 Dooyeweerd started attending the Vrije Universiteit (VU Universiteit Amsterdam) in Amsterdam where he studied law. However, he was disappointed with the VU as he expected to get a good grounding in the Kuyperian worldview (Dooyeweerd, 1977:38). The VU had been founded in 1880 by Kuyper, and in Dooyeweerd's time, there were only three faculties. The law faculty only had three professors: D. Fabius (1851-1931), Anne Anema (1872-1966) and P.A. Diepenhorst (Dooyeweerd, 1977:38). In 1917 Dooyeweerd received his doctorate for a thesis entitled: 'De Ministerraad in het Nederlandsche Staaatsrecht' ('The Cabinet of Ministers under Dutch Constitutional Law'), supervised by Fabius.

He then took up the post of an assistant tax collector in Friesland. In 1918 he moved to Leiden where he had the post of an assistant to a municipal councillor. He was then asked to become the deputy head of the Public Health department in The Hague.

During this time, he studied legal philosophy independently. He found that there was much conflict between the different approaches to legal philosophy and this made him convinced that there was a need for a 'genuinely Christian and biblically based insight and foundation' (Dooyeweerd Jr., 1996:107).

In 1920 Dooyeweerd began to correspond with his brother in law D.H.Th. Vollenhoven – who was also a graduate of the Free University and had married Dooyeweerd's sister in 1918 (see further below § 2.4). In these correspondences, Dooyeweerd expressed a desire to 'work out the philosophical foundations of science and of developing a theistic position, along Calvinist lines' (Henderson, 1994:27).

In May 1921 Vollenhoven became a pastor in The Hague and this gave the two more time to talk together and develop their ideas. During this time Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven made a 'discovery' (Henderson, 1994) which helped to set them on what Vollenhoven describes as a 'more Scriptural way of thinking' (as cited in Tol, 2010:367). Henderson (1994:30-50) and Tol (2010:364-369) both discuss this 'discovery' but do not identify what it could be. (Friesen (2015:153-176) thinks it may be Okke Norel's (1882-1959) 1920 paper).³¹

³¹ Norel, O. 1920. Prof Gunning als Wijsgeerig Denker. *Stemmen des Tijds* 9:69-80, 139-160.

In October 1922 the newly founded research institute of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, the party associated with Kuyper, appointed the 27-year-old Dooyeweerd as the first director. This gave Dooyeweerd the time and opportunity to develop his philosophical ideas. He married Jantiena Wilhelmina Fernhout on 19th September 1924.

While working at the 'Kuyper Institute', in the same office as had been Kuyper's and reading one of Kuyper's meditations on Pentecost, Dooyeweerd 'discovered' a new Kuyper. In a 1973 interview Dooyeweerd comments:

'I was working in Kuyper's old office, sitting at his enormous old desk, I noticed a stack of little booklets. I picked the first one that came to hand, which was Kuyper's meditations about Pentecost. I would never have picked up such booklets to read earlier in my life, but I thought to myself that I should take a look at what he made of such meditations. I started to read and four hours later I was still there! I was so moved by what Kuyper had to say in these meditations that I realized that this was a completely different Kuyper from the one I knew from his theological works. In theology he is scholastic but not at all in these meditations' (Dooyeweerd, 1973:np³²).

Dooyeweerd was struck by Kuyper's account of the role of the heart as the religious centre of human existence:

'what really gripped me was that Kuyper had rediscovered the Biblical truth that the centre of our human existence lies in our heart, something that had been completely lost in scholasticism' (Dooyeweerd, 1973:np).

He goes on to note the great effect this revelation had on him:

'I can say that this discovery was a turning point in my life. When I began to dwell on this idea, I realized that this insight would mean a complete overturning of my view of humanity and of the whole of reality in which we live, since all reality comes to a concentrated focal point only in our humanity' (Dooyeweerd, 1973:np).

It was also during this time that Dooyeweerd developed the idea of the religious root of theoretical thought – the idea that all the sciences are dependent on pre-theoretical presuppositions (ultimately, religious presuppositions rooted in the human heart). Kuyper's

³² The abbreviation *np* (no page) throughout indicates that no pagination is available – this is often when the reference is a webpage – or as here, a TV interview.

mainly social vision was developed into an (ontological) account of the whole of reality with the philosophical rigour that Kuyper was unable to give it (Ive, 2012; 2015).

Dooyeweerd worked for the 'Kuyper Institute' for four profitable years. He edited the *Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde* (ARS), the journal of the Kuyper Foundation and published numerous papers in it, fifteen of which (from the period 1924-1927) formed the basis of *The Struggle for a Christian Politics* (Dooyeweerd, 2008).³³ Here he sought to show how a Calvinist worldview can shape political thought.

'Despite shared Christian beliefs a shared difference in world views must also lead to difference in political thought' (2008:1).

'Skepticism about the all-embracing Calvinist worldview - and therefore also about a Calvinist understanding of politics - is not limited to historians who study John Calvin (...) I shall attempt to demonstrate to these skeptics why they are wrong and I shall show that Calvinism as a worldview does have a distinctive starting point which determines an independent approach and an independent method of operation in every area of thought and action' (Dooyeweerd, 2008:2).

Surprisingly, he doesn't start with the sovereignty of God but rather from his notion of a 'law-idea'.

'I want to demonstrate that the organon of Calvinism as a worldview is only to be found in its specific idea of law, that is, in its particular conception of a universal law of God that underlies all that exists, including human thought and action, in which all specific ordinances are anchored and determined' (2008:3).

'No Christian politics is possible without a Christian worldview in which every part is architecturally ordered and governed by major, central thoughts' (2008:7).

'The theory of the law-idea, which unfortunately has been neglected far too much in Protestant circles, provides the key to the systematics of Christian thought' (Dooyeweerd, 2008:10).

³³ They originally appeared as 'In den strijd om een Christelijke Staatskunde. Proeve van een fundeering der Calvinistische levens - en wereldbeschouwing in hare Wetsidee,' *Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde* 1:7-25, 62-79, 104-118, 161-173, 189-200, 228-244, 309-324, 433-460, 489-504, 528-542 581-598, 617-634; (1924-5); *ARS* 2:244-65, 425-445 (1926). It continued in the *ARS* (quarterly edn) (1927) 1:142-195.

Dooyeweerd then reluctantly accepted an offer to become the professor of law at the Free University succeeding Willem Zevenbergen (Dooyeweerd, 1977:42). It was a position he held for 40 years until his retirement in 1965 at 70. Dooyeweerd's purpose at the VU was to teach 'Introduction to the Science of Law', the 'History of traditional Dutch law' and 'Jurisprudence'. Dooyeweerd later replaced the 'Introduction' with an 'Encyclopaedia of Legal Science'.

It was at the VU that Dooyeweerd completed his *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* (1935-36). This was translated into English from 1953 to 1958 as *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*. This translation contained extensive revisions of and additions to the Dutch text. His next planned project was *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy* and then the *Encyclopaedia of Legal Science* (Dooyeweerd, 1977:53-54). He was not able to complete these fully during his lifetime. He founded and was editor in chief (1936-1976) of the journal *Philosophia Reformata* and contributed a number of articles.

After the Second World War, he travelled extensively to Switzerland, South Africa, France, Belgium, the United States – several times to Harvard University – and Canada. It was the lectures during one of the tours to North America that formed the basis of *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (1960).

During 1945 to 1948 he wrote a series of articles in the weekly *Nieuw Nederland* and these formed the basis for his book *Roots of Western Culture* (1979). In 1948 he was inducted into the Royal Academy of Dutch Sciences.

Dooyeweerd was a prolific author and wrote around 200 articles and books. The last article he wrote was for *Philosophia Reformata* in 1975 (a full chronological bibliography of Dooyeweerd's work is available in Van Dyke (nd)).

Dooyeweerd's son had this to say of him:

'Dooyeweerd was a gifted man but in ways of a very down-to-earth person with his feet on the ground. We in the family loved him dearly and are, we think justifiably, proud of him. We remember him as someone who was humble before his God and always strove to be in his service. In the days just before his death I personally witnessed how he struggled greatly with the fact that in his own eyes he had not done all that he seemingly felt God had called him to do' (Dooyeweerd Jr, 1996).

The two main influences on Dooyeweerd are Dutch neo-Calvinism and contemporary German philosophy (Wolters, 1985). A few observations on the latter will suffice before outlining Dooyeweerd's philosophical approach in a little more detail.

The main German philosophical influences were neo-Kantianism and phenomenology. Dooyeweerd writes: 'originally I was strongly under the influence first of Kantian philosophy,

later on of Husserl's phenomenology' (1953-58, 1:v). Of the neo-Kantians Dooyeweerd had 'particular affinities' with Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) and Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936) of the Heidelberg school. This is particularly visible in the distinction between norms and laws of nature (Wolters, 1985:12).

Another philosopher that influenced Dooyeweerd is Nicolai Hartmann (1882-1950). Hartmann also went through a neo-Kantian and a phenomenological phase. Hartmann's influence might emerge in Dooyeweerd's theory of modal aspects (see below § 2.3.5), though Dooyeweerd's work is more developed and sophisticated than Hartmann's. However, Hartmann too postulated different ontological levels each of which was irreducible to the previous (Wolters, 1985).³⁴

The neo-Calvinist influence on Dooyeweerd is more marked. This is particularly visible in his emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the necessary distinction between creator and creation and his development of Kuyper's theory of sphere sovereignty.

2.3.2 Key Dooyeweerdian themes: the role of religious presuppositions

One of the main themes of Dooyeweerd's approach is that all thought is based on presuppositions that are inherently religious in character. In the 1935 Foreword to *De Wijsbegerte der Wetsidee* republished in *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* he writes:

'the great turning point in my thought was marked by the discovery of the religious root of thought itself' (1953-58, 1:v).

This is Dooyeweerd's transcendental critique: religious presuppositions are inherent in all theorising. If this is the case, then Christian philosophy is valid and necessary. Dooyeweerd has called this the 'entrance' to his philosophy. Interestingly, neither one of the two main introductions to his thought, published in translation in North American, written by Spier (1973) and Kalsbeek (1975), make much of this part of Dooyeweerd's work and Wolfe (1977) only deals with the modal aspects. This is somehow odd because, as Knudsen (2009:301) writes, Dooyeweerd's philosophy 'must be understood as a Christian transcendental philosophy'. Dooyeweerd once remarked – during the summer of 1966 or 1967 – to Clouser: 'all my theories may need to be altered or abandoned, but the transcendental critique is a permanent contribution to philosophy' (as cited in Clouser, 2009:22).

Dooyeweerd developed two forms of *transcendental critique*. The first, developed in his *De Wijsbegerte der Wetsidee*, sought to show that it was in the nature of philosophy, dealing

³⁴ Verburg (2015:84) takes issue with this claim of Wolters (and Seerveld).

with the integrality and totality of reality, to depend on ultimate religious presuppositions. To avoid some objections to this first approach he developed his second way: this time rather than focusing on philosophical thought he showed that all theoretical thought depended on ultimate religious presuppositions.

Dooyeweerd's approach is transcendental in that it sees everything in creation pointing back to its origin, to the will of the sovereign creator God. Nothing, including thought and thinking, is self-sufficient; as Dooyeweerd put it 'meaning is the being of all that has been created; it is religiously rooted and is of divine Origin' (Dooyeweerd, 2013c:37). All things are dependent on a God-given ordered reality. This reality manifests itself in experience.

2.3.3 The nature of theoretical and pre-theoretical thought

Naïve thought is pre-theoretical thought – everyday experience. Many scholars underestimate pre-theoretical thought, but not Dooyeweerd. For Dooyeweerd, pre-theoretical thought or naïve experience is important. It takes in reality, its richness and diversity, as a whole. There is no contradiction between naïve experience and theoretical thought. Theoretical thought is based on pre-theoretical thought. Theoretical thought studies reality from the point of view of one (or a few) of the modal aspects (see § 2.3.5); pre-theoretical thought experiences the modal aspects as a whole, fully integrated in things and events (see, for example, Dooyeweerd 1953-58, 1:3, 33, 39).

2.3.4 The nature and relation of theology and philosophy

For Dooyeweerd philosophy does not arise from theology. It is not a theological basis that makes a philosophy Christian. He makes a clear distinction between Christian philosophy and theology (Dooyeweerd, 1960 – Chapter 4 below deals with these issues). Christian philosophy is not theology and philosophy is not merely non-Christian theology. Theology is one of the special sciences, such as physics, mathematics, law or sociology; theology has the faith aspect as its entry point to the study of reality. As sociology, as a special science, cannot provide a total view of reality, neither can theology. Theology does not give a total view of reality or of the relation between the special sciences and so must be a special science.

Theology, like all of the special sciences, needs a philosophical foundation. Philosophy can provide the theoretical insight into the inner structure and mutual coherence of the different modal aspects (see § 2.3.5 below). The question is, will the chosen philosophy be subject to a biblical or a non-biblical religious ground-motive? Non-Christian philosophical views cannot be rendered harmless by theological or ecclesiastical accommodation – such

as Thomism tried with Aristotelianism. In response to the question: 'just what is philosophy'? Dooyeweerd responded:

'I believe that a responsible position on philosophy assumes a basic vision of the whole reality, or the totality of reality. While specific sciences only show us certain aspects of our reality, which can undoubtedly be differentiated, none can tackle the totality of our reality' (Dooyeweerd, 1973:4).

Theologians who deny the possibility of a 'biblically-founded philosophy' inevitably take their philosophical presuppositions from 'autonomous' philosophy. This has the consequence of inadvertently importing non-biblical concepts into theology, such as the immortality of the soul or the notion that humans are spirits, with a soul imprisoned in the body. According to Dooyeweerd, a certain philosophy cannot be 'more' (or less) biblical than another – the biblical position is either accepted or not (see, for example, Dooyeweerd, 1960:155). This does not mean that there are no elements of truth in these philosophies, but the total view which they present is ruled by religious basic motives that are not biblical.

We could (over) simplify Dooyeweerd's (early) conception of the relation among presuppositions and among sciences as follows:

Worldview → philosophy → theology

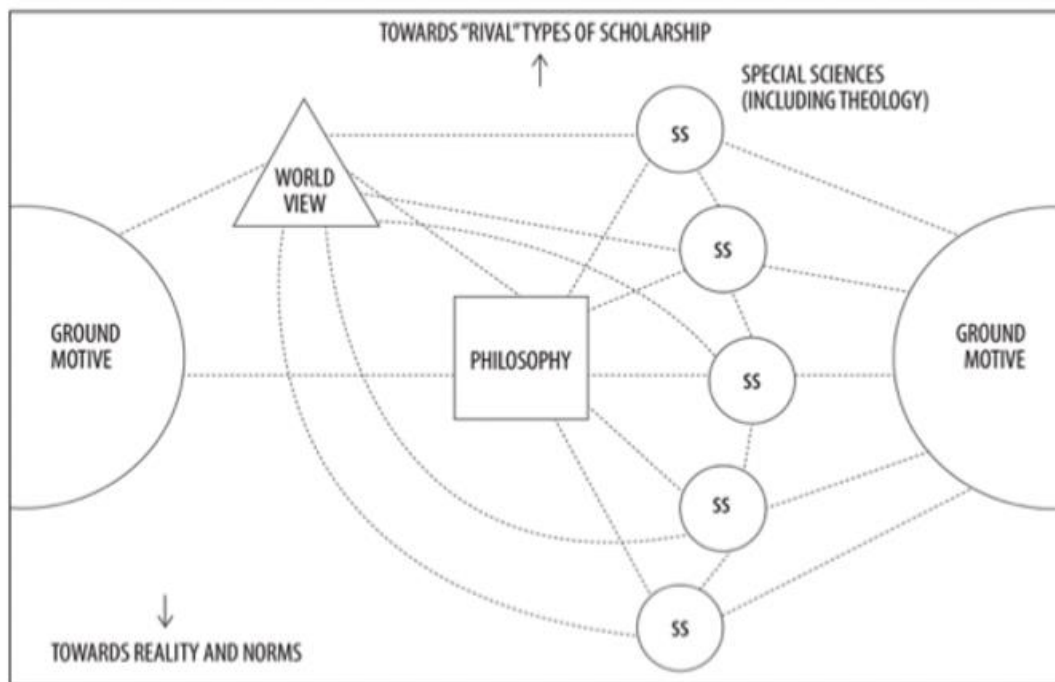
Later it took this form:

Worldview (→ practice)

Ground-motive → philosophy → special sciences (including theology)

This linear/ sequential view has recently been criticised and reformulated by Coletto (2014b). Coletto identifies weaknesses with the chain-metaphor and concentric circles metaphor (cf. Klapwijk, 2008) and suggests 'a *network idea*' (see Figure 2.2 (Coletto, 2014b:107)). This network approach alleviates the need for worldviews to operate as mediators but allows them to act as 'prescientific contributors in a network' (Coletto, 2014b:112).

FIGURE 2.2. Coletto's network model.



(Source: Coletto 2014b:108.)

2.3.5 Modal aspects

In an endeavour to describe the unity and diversity of reality, Dooyeweerd identified fifteen different modal aspects or law spheres (Dooyeweerd, 1955, 2:3-426). With some justification Strauss (2006a:61), citing a comment Dooyeweerd made, has described the theory of modal aspects as 'the best known but least understood part of Dooyeweerd's philosophy'.

Each thing (entity) that exists is subjected to all God's laws and functions (either as object or subject – see below) in each of these modal aspects. Each of the modal aspects has certain laws or norms associated with it. In order of increasing complexity, these modal aspects are: numerical, spatial, kinematic, physical, biotic, sensitive, analytical, cultural, linguistic, social, economic, aesthetic, juridical, ethical and pistic/ certitudinal (see Table 2.1 below). All of these dimensions are present in reality and none can be reduced to another, i.e. they are irreducible.

These modal aspects can be illustrated, for example, in the apparently simple task of buying a bottle of whisky. A theologian might ask: should a Christian buy and drink alcohol? He may want to discuss the issue from the point of view of faith. If an ethicist were watching, he might ask: where is the best place to buy the whisky; should I buy fair trade whisky, is it better to pay more for a whisky that is produced without oppressing the work force? A jurist might discuss the times when it is legal to buy the bottle and ask whether it is legitimate that so much of the price of a bottle of whisky (in the UK) is tax. An aesthetician would consider the size and shape of the bottle and the colour of the whisky, or the way it is packaged. An

economist might be primarily interested in the cost and value of the bottle. A sociologist looking on might consider the impact of alcohol on society and she might also look at the interaction between the shopkeeper and the buyer. The ways of communicating between the customers and the shop keeper would come under consideration by the linguist. A psychologist might think about what drives some people to want a drink of whisky and what motivates the shopkeeper to please the customer.³⁵

The bottle of whisky itself also has a number of aspects: there are a certain number of bottles on the shelf, each takes up a certain amount of space, the whisky in the bottle could be described by a chemical formula, but of course it is more than that; the whisky stays on the shelf because it obeys the laws of motion explored by Newton and so on.

Clouser notes that these modal aspects were arrived at by taking every large-scale kind of properties and laws which has been distinguished in the history of philosophy and science (1991:205). They are not identified in an arbitrary manner. Their order is also significant: the higher modes presuppose the lower. For example, the economic mode presupposes a social and a lingual mode. Without the social mode then there is no purpose for an economic mode, and without a lingual mode how could economic values be communicated? This is not to suggest that the higher modes are more important or that the lower modes are more fundamental. The earlier modes are 'foundational' for the latter. Each mode equally depends on God.

Each modal aspect – among other things – is characterised by the following:

- a meaning nucleus or modal kernel – these indicate the core nature of each aspect. Table 2.1 indicates these kernels:
- a law side – this is God's ordinances or laws for creation;
- a factual or subject side – which is the totality of created reality subject to God's laws i.e. the cosmos; and
- relations with the other modal aspects in terms of anticipatory and retrociprocal analogies (anticipations and retrociprocalities).³⁶

³⁵ With apologies to Calvin Seerveld for adapting his cigar illustration (Seerveld, 1985:46-47).

³⁶ The modal kernels express themselves in what Dooyeweerd terms *analogical moments*. These can be retrociprocalities or anticipations. If the kernel referred to is part of a preceding aspect then it is a retrocipation; if it refers to the kernel of a successive aspect then it is known as an anticipation. For example, the meaning kernel of the sensitive aspect is feelings. Emotion refers to the mode of movement and is thus a retrocipation to the movement aspect. Moral feelings are an anticipation to the moral aspect (Dooyeweerd, 1960:7-9).

TABLE 2.1. The kernels of each modal aspect.

Modal aspect	Modal kernel
Numerical	Quantity
Spatial	Continuous extension
Kinematic	Motion
Physical	Energy and matter
Biotic	Life and vitality
Sensitive	Feeling
Analytical	Distinction
Historical	Formative power
Linguistic	Symbolic representation
Social	Social intercourse
Economic	Frugality
Aesthetic	Harmony
Juridical	What is due
Ethical	Love (self-giving)
Pistic/ certitudinal	Faith and vision

(Source: Dooyeweerd, 1960:7-11)

Strauss (2006a) identifies several misunderstandings that are prevalent regarding these modal aspects, including:

Aspects are sometimes viewed as ‘cuts’ or ‘layers’ within reality, in the sense that they are seen as a way in which reality could be ‘divided’.

Aspects are interpreted by some as mere properties *of* entities.

Aspects are sometimes regarded as mental constructs.

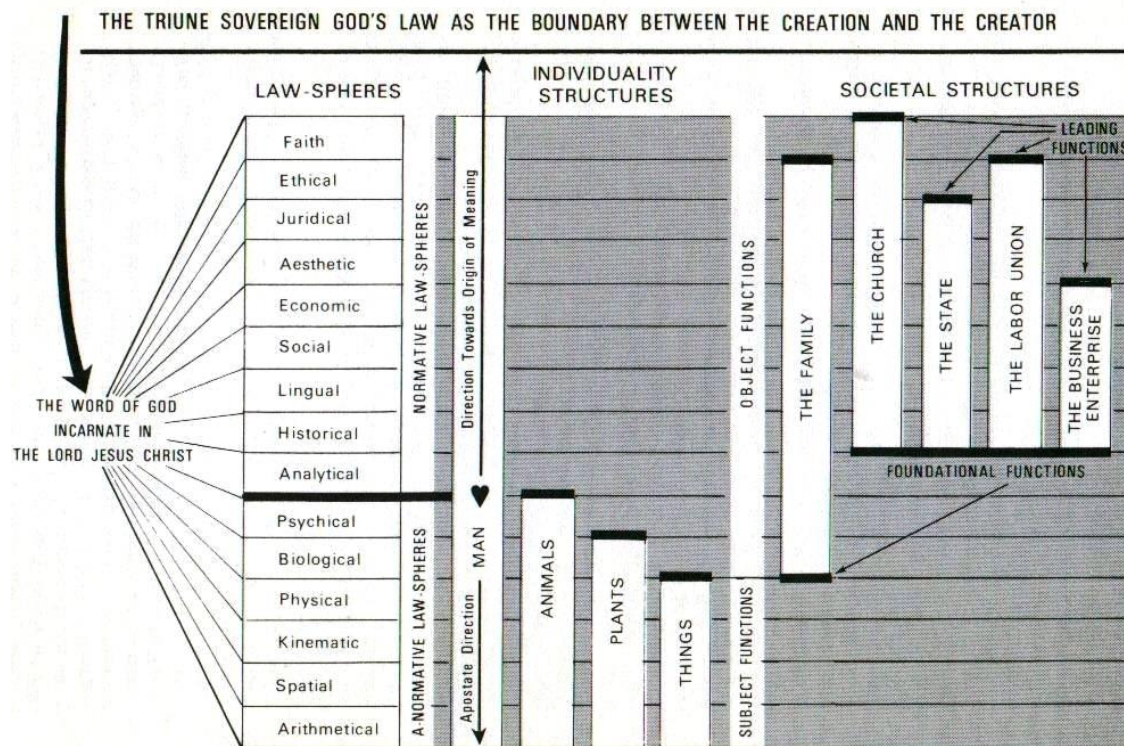
Aspects are confused by some as the fields of study of the various disciplines (Strauss, 2006a:61-62).

2.3.5.a Qualifying functions

Each entity has one aspect that is so important that it characterises it; this is called its qualifying function. The bar in Figure 2.3 represents this qualifying function. The qualifying function for animals is the sensory; for plants, biotic; for rocks physical. In other words, the qualifying function is the highest aspect in which an entity functions actively or as a ‘subject’ (see § 2.3.5b). (This is obviously a broad classification; some Dooyeweerdians suggest that

animals may function at higher modes (e.g. Hart, 1984:181). Another (Zylstra, 1981) suggests that some single-celled organisms cannot be classed as animals or plants).

FIGURE 2.3. A diagrammatic representation of Dooyeweerd's modal aspects and some qualifying functions of social institutions.



(Source: Hebden Taylor, 1970:626).³⁷

2.3.5.b Subject and object functions

In Reformational philosophy, a distinction is made between subject and object functions. Every 'thing' (entity, event or process) has a qualifying aspect. In (animal or human) artefacts or social institutions, this qualifying function is constituted by a foundational and a leading function. In modes higher than its qualifying or leading function (sometimes called its superstratum) the entity or institution has object functions (indicated by the full line in Figure 2.3). For all aspects lower than its leading function (sometimes called the substratum) it has a subject function (indicated by the broken line).

For a tree, for example, the qualifying aspect is biotic. Hence, in aspects lower than the biotic (i.e. numerical, spatial, kinematic and physical) the tree has a subject function. It functions 'actively': it has a size which can be measured, it takes up an amount of space, it

³⁷ It should be noted that the two directions of the human heart (apostate, and towards Origin), do not correspond to the order of succession of the modal aspects.

sways in the breeze, it has certain physical properties and it is a living thing. In the higher modes, it has an object function, it functions 'passively': its size, type and colour can be perceived, but the tree cannot perceive (sensitive) it cannot name but it can be named (lingual), it cannot think, but it can be thought about (analytical), it has a certain economic value but it cannot engage in economics (economic aspect), it can be possessed but it cannot possess or sue anyone (juridical) etc.

Hence, all things have either a subject or object functions in all modal aspects. Humans alone function actively as subjects in all modal aspects.

'An axe is subject to the law of gravity; so is man. But humanity's humanness is more apparent in their being subject to moral, analytical or juridical norms. Think of the roles and responsibilities of man and an axe in a court session. The axe lies on the table as an exhibit in a murder case. The defendant has violated moral and juridical norms, but the axe has not. Still, the axe plays a role in these normative aspects; it is not important in the hearing as legal evidence. Its role is that of an object function in the moral and juridical aspects; its subject function ends with the physical' (Kalsbeek, 1975:122).

According to Clouser (2005:237-268), the value of this analysis has multiple sides. First of all, it allows constructing a theory of reality that is non-reductionist. It also avoids philosophising along the lines of the substance-approach, which is problematic insofar as it attributes a degree of independence to the 'being' of created entities. Furthermore, it avoids the traps of both objectivism (e.g. Aristotle) and subjectivism (e.g. Kant). Objectivists and subjectivists are inclined to place the source of the order that is experienced in creation either in objects or subjects. In so doing they bypass the role of modal laws. For these and for other reasons, this approach opens the door to sound Christian philosophising, as an alternative to both Scholastic and Humanist trends.

2.3.6 Theory of entities

Dooyeweerd maintains that societal structures, for example, church, state, political parties, families and so forth, are humanly established but are governed by transcendent conditions, by structural principles. These societal structures function in all the modal aspects, but they are more than the sum of their modal aspects. They are rooted in the order of cosmic time and so are subject to the law side of reality. They are not merely human creations but are governed by, constrained by, lawful, normative principles that are rooted in the creation order. They are shaped by structural principles. These structural principles have qualifying functions (leading and foundational) (see § 2.3.5b above).

The state, for example, functions in all the modal aspects (see Table 2.2). However, these aspects do not provide the unique structural identity of the state. This is provided by its leading function (i.e. the juridical function).

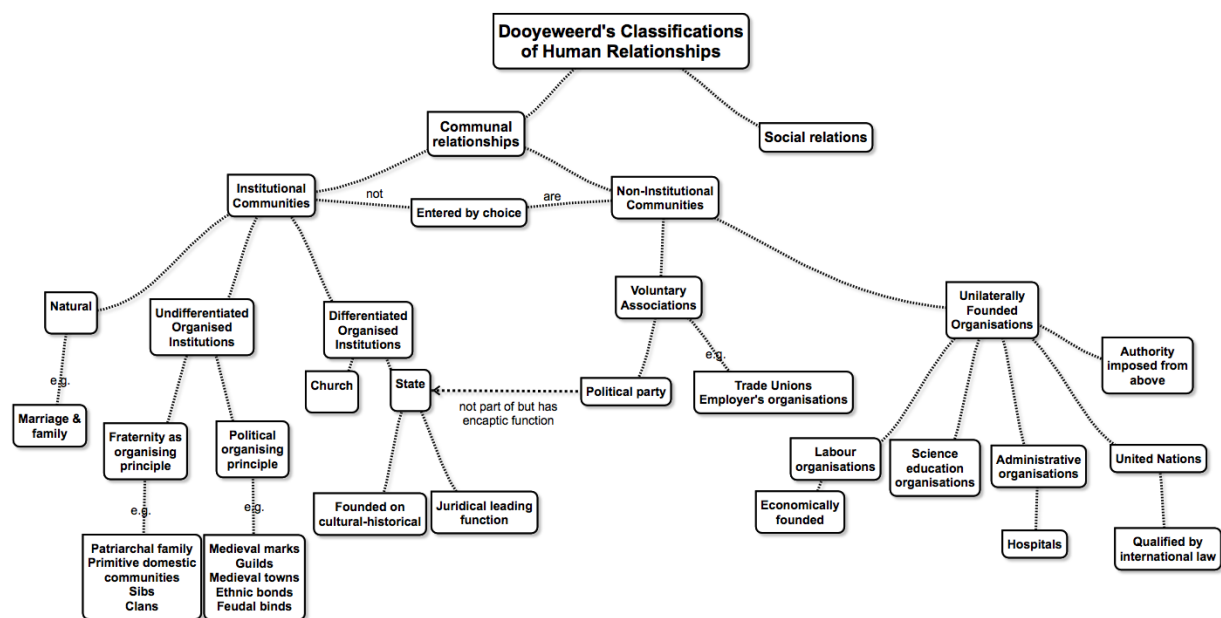
TABLE 2.3. The modal aspects of the state.

Modal aspect	Applied to the state
Numerical	There are a certain number of citizens in the state
Spatial	The territory of the state takes up a certain geographical area
Kinematic	There is (usually) freedom of movement in the state
Physical	The state has the power of the sword - the use of force is permitted
Biotic	The state comprises people
Sensitive	There is a sense of belonging to a state
Analytical	It constructs a realm of public discourse
Historical	There is a national identity
Linguistic	There is (usually) a common language within a state
Social	It respects diplomatic protocols
Economic	The state has a budget that it needs to balance
Aesthetic	Its should work for harmony within its social groups
Juridical	It has the responsibility of maintaining public justice
Ethical	There must be trust between the different departments of the state
Pistic/ certitudinal	The state's authority arises out of some confessional view

(Source: Chaplin (2011) and Strauss (2016))

Dooyeweerd distinguishes a number of different social relationships; these are shown in Figure 2.4 below. Natural institutions are distinguished by having the biotic aspect as their founding function; most of the others have a historical (cultural) foundation (see Figure 2.3 above). For the family the leading function is the ethical aspect; for the state it is the juridical; for the institutional church the founding function is the historical aspect and the leading function the pistical aspect. It is the leading function that characterises it.

FIGURE 2.4. Dooyeweerd's classification of human relationships



(Source: Dooyeweerd, 1986).

2.3.7 Ground-motives

Dooyeweerd identified four religious ground-motives that have shaped the development of Western culture. These are: 1) form-matter; 2) grace-nature; 3) freedom-nature and 4) creation-fall-redemption. The first three are 'internally dualistic and fragmentary' (Dooyeweerd, 1979:11), the latter is, he maintains, biblical. A useful historical overview of these ground-motives is found in Dooyeweerd (e.g. 1979; 2013:b:1-39).³⁸

Ground-motives were a relatively late development in Dooyeweerd's work (Kraay, 1979, 1980). They were first mentioned in *De Wijsbegerte der Wetsidee* (1935-1937), they were developed in much greater detail in *Vernieuwing en Bezinning* (1959) which was translated into English as *Roots of Western Culture* (1979).

There Dooyeweerd (1979:9) comments as follows.

'The development of western culture has been controlled by several religious ground motives. These motives acquired their central influence upon the historical development of mankind via certain cultural powers,

³⁸ Some (see, for example, Ive, 2012:) have suggested these ground-motives were a development of what Kuyper called life-systems (Paganism, Romanism, Modernism and Calvinism) identified in Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism* (1931:9-40) – although Kuyper also included Islam, Klapwijk states rather bluntly:

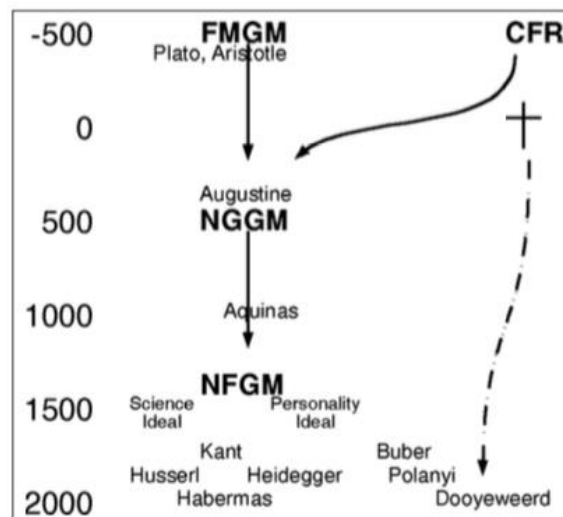
'Dooyeweerd's religious ground-motives of the West are replicas of the life-systems in Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism*' (Klapwijk, 2013:242).

which over the centuries, successively gained leadership in the historical process. The most important of these powers have been the spirit of ancient civilisation (Greece and Rome), Christendom, and modern humanism'.

Dooyeweerd (1979:9) elucidates some of the elements of a ground-motive. It:

- is a spiritual force
- acts as the absolute cultural mainspring of society
- governs all of life's expressions from the religious centre of life and directs them to a true or supposed origin of existence
- places an indelible stamp on the whole of culture and society
- it determines one's whole worldview
- is driven by a spirit that is either the Spirit of God or that of an idol
- is a *communal* motive (not simply personal)
- can never be the object of study of a special science [or of philosophy]
- provides the point of departure for scientific theorising – hence science and scholarship can never be neutral with respect to religion.

FIGURE 2.4. The development of western thought in terms of ground-motives. (FMGM is the form-matter ground-motive; NGGM, nature—grace ground-motive; NFGM, nature-freedom ground-motive; and CFR, creation, fall and redemption.)



(Source: Basden, 2008:38).

The form-matter motive is the fundamental motive of Greek thought and culture. It originates, according to Dooyeweerd, from a meeting of two conflicting views the pre-

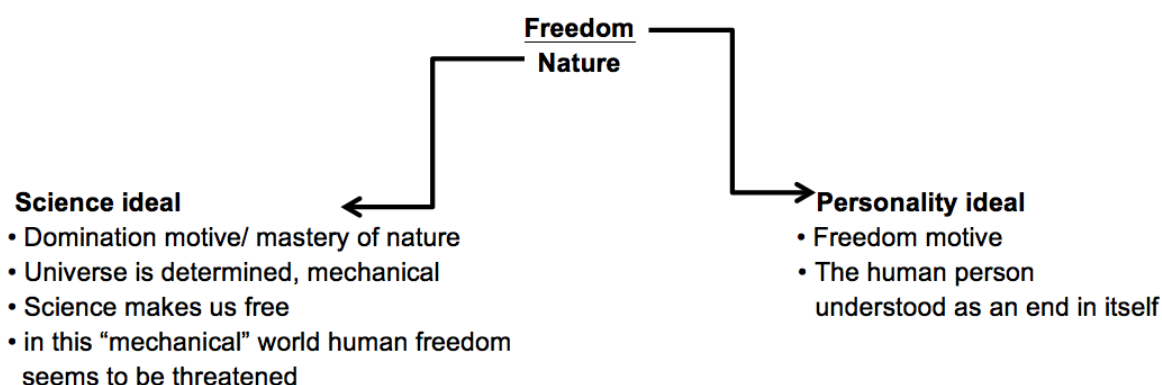
Homeric natural religion – corresponding to the pole of matter – and the Olympian gods’ cultural religion – corresponding to the pole of form (Dooyeweerd 1960:38-41).

Creation, fall and redemption is the biblical ground-motive. This is the genuine starting point for a Christian philosophy and scholarship.

The nature—grace motive is typical of Roman Catholicism. It was an attempt to reconcile the opposed religious motives of Greek and Christian thought (Dooyeweerd, 1960:44-45).

The fourth ground-motive is that of nature and freedom. Modern Humanism introduced it. It takes two forms: one gives priority to the freedom-motive, with its emphasis on liberty and autonomy; the other gives priority to the nature-motive with its emphasis on the domination of nature through science and mathematics (Dooyeweerd, 1960:45-51). It entails a dualism of freedom and nature:

FIGURE 2.5. The ground-motive of freedom-nature and its two poles: the science ideal and the personality ideal.



(Source: S. Bishop, <http://ciots.blogspot.com>)

The two poles of nature and freedom resulted in two cultural ideals: the science ideal and the (freedom of the autonomous) personality ideal. The science ideal emphasises nature and the personality ideal emphasises freedom. The science ideal resulted in rationalism and modernism and in a mathematisation of nature; mathematics became the origin of all laws and of temporal life. The personality ideal did not become popular until the eighteenth century. It resulted in Romanticism and more recently in post-modernism.

The term *ground-motive* is a translation of the Dutch *grondmotief*. In the 1940s Dooyeweerd had been using the term *grondthema* (see, for example his 1941 article in *Philosophia Reformata*). It was in a series of lectures at the Technical University of Delft in 1946-1947 that he used the term *grondmotief* (Wolters, 1983:1). Wolters suggests that the term *motive* in Dooyeweerd is used to suggest a dual meaning of ‘a recurrent pattern in

philosophical thought' and 'a deeper and more encompassing religious power which motivates human life in general' (Wolters, 1983:2).

Not all Reformational scholars are completely convinced by the notion of religious ground-motives. Vollenhoven, according to Klapwijk (1987:107), 'found it unfeasible to summarize the richness of the biblical message in "such a formula" (he meant Dooyeweerd's Christian religious ground motive)'. Vollenhoven developed his own ways of analysing the history of philosophy (see § 2.4.3). However, the differences between Dooyeweerd's ground-motives and Vollenhoven's approach have been shown to be compatible (see, for example, Bril, 1995 for a discussion of the difference and similarities between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven).

Chaplin (2011:44-45) identifies some critical questions regarding the ground-motives. These include the charge of acting like an interpretative grid, which can be misleading; if they are rooted in religious presuppositions it poses the issue as to if genuine philosophical communication can take place; and they can give the impression that they are the product of theoretical debate.

Bos has expressed doubts over the Dooyeweerdian description of the origin of the form-matter ground-motive, but nevertheless maintains it 'contains a valid perspective on the inherent dialectic of Greek thought' (cited in Strauss, 2009a:616).

2.3.8 Biblical contours of Reformational philosophy

Dooyeweerd's main work is the four-volume text *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*. The main thesis of the first volume is that 'an intrinsic connection exists between a philosopher's theoretical activity and his religious faith' (Freeman, 1958:46). The subsequent volumes developed a systematic philosophy based on the Christian 'ground-motive' of creation, fall and redemption.

Several themes dominate his Reformational philosophy most of these arising out of the sovereignty of God, sphere sovereignty and the necessary distinction between creator and creation.

Bernard Zylstra in his introduction to Kalsbeek's (1975:31) book, writes: 'the most important premise of this philosophy lies in its assumption that reality is created by God whose will is the sovereign and redeeming law for reality'. Let us briefly examine these themes.

2.3.8.a The sovereignty of God

It was Abraham Kuyper who declared: 'there is not a single square inch of the entire cosmos of which Christ the sovereign Lord of all does not say, "This is mine"'. This sums up the

motivation of Reformational philosophy: to reassert the lordship of Christ in every area of life. God's sovereignty means that he is lord of all including art, history, philosophy, theology, business, politics, mathematics, science and so forth. In Clouser's (2005:241) terms, this is expressed by stating the 'principle of pan-creation'. Everything apart from God is created; this means that nothing is independent of God but is on the contrary subjected to his sovereignty.

2.3.8.b Sphere sovereignty

As mentioned earlier (§ 2.2.8) Dooyeweerd saw that one of Kuyper's greatest contributions was the notion of sphere sovereignty. Kuyper's notion of sphere sovereignty was a social one; Dooyeweerd developed it philosophically (ontologically). Dooyeweerd's development of sphere sovereignty is perhaps better called modal irreducibility (cf. Clouser, 2005:241), in that none of the fifteen modal aspects can be reduced to another. No aspect should be regarded as the only real or genuine aspect; no aspect should be regarded as making possible or actual the existence of other aspects. This reflects the biblical teaching that all creatures depend on God directly and equally.

2.3.8.c Law as the boundary between Creator and creation

In Reformational philosophy, a strong emphasis is placed on the idea of law. Indeed, so strong that in Dutch the approach is called the philosophy of the law idea, or cosmonomic philosophy. For Dooyeweerd there is a law side and a factual side to reality. Dooyeweerd saw the law as the boundary between God and his creation. This is sometimes interpreted as a kind of barrier preventing the Christian from 'reaching out' to God. It should be remembered, however, that (no matter what limitations are intrinsic to the creational status) nothing prevents God from 'reaching' his creatures, hearing them, knowing them and so forth. The law is a boundary for creatures, not for God. God transcends the law; he does not violate it though he is not subjected to his own laws. This idea was aptly summed up in Latin in the Calvinian motto: *Deus legibus solutus est sed non exlex* (God is not subjected to laws but is not law-less). This formulation allowed Calvinism to avoid both the idea that God is subjected to laws and the idea that God can act arbitrarily (see Duns Scotus) because of his *potestas absoluta*. The emphasis placed on the importance of the law by Reformational philosophy is in line with the best Calvinian tradition.

2.3.8.d Archimedean points, immanent and transcendental philosophies

Archimedes placed so much faith in the principle of the lever that he is reported to have asserted 'give me a place to stand and I will move the world'. In Reformational circles this

place is called the Archimedean point. All philosophies need an 'Archimedean point', a point of reference from which to base their ultimate support. According to Dooyeweerd, two fundamental classes of philosophy can be distinguished: the immanent and the transcendent ones. Immanence philosophies place their Archimedean point within philosophy or creation; transcendental philosophies place it outside philosophy and creation.

An example may help in clarifying the distinction. Immanence philosophers include Descartes and Kant. Descartes' starting point was thought, whereas Kant's was reason. Reformational philosophy is a transcendental philosophy, its Archimedean point is Christ, who is the source and sustainer of all things. Immanence philosophies are inherently reductionist in nature; i.e. they are inclined to 'deify' an aspect of creation by making it self-existent. Linked to the Archimedean point are the religious ground-motives.

While concluding this section it is worth remembering that Dooyeweerd never regarded his work as the last word in philosophy:

'It has been said so many times that repeating it almost becomes boring: *The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea* does not pretend infallibility either in respect of its positive philosophical conceptions or with regard to its critique on traditional philosophy' (Dooyeweerd, 2013a:154).

A reformed philosophy can only be *philosophia reformanda*. Moreover, Dooyeweerd was not the only one involved in the development of Reformational philosophy. Another fundamental thinker was his brother-in-law D.H.Th. Vollenhoven (1892-1978).

2.4 Dirk Hendrik Theodoor Vollenhoven (1892- 1978)

The following words by Calvin Seerveld summarise quite well the close cooperation between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, as well as the original role that Vollenhoven played in the development of a Calvinist philosophy.

'Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd in an unparalleled manner gave personal expression to the ideal of Christian learning during the second half century of the existence of the Free University. On the basis of the heritage of Christian thought throughout the ages and the work of their immediate predecessors, they developed a Christian philosophy intended to serve as the interdisciplinary cohesion among the special sciences in the university curriculum' (Seerveld, 1978:5).

A few biographical notes about Vollenhoven are now discussed.

2.4.1 A brief biography

Vollenhoven, like Dooyeweerd, was brought up in a Kuyperian family, though his mother died when he was only four (Kok, 1992:2). Vollenhoven was the youngest of eight children - he had five older sisters, and two brothers (Hendrik and Theodoor - but both died before he was born). He attended the same primary school as Dooyeweerd's sister (Hermina Maria – his future spouse), and attended Woltjer's Gereformeerde Gymnasium in Amsterdam as did Dooyeweerd.

He studied classics, philosophy and theology at the Free University, enrolling in 1911 a year earlier than Dooyeweerd. During this time, he was the founding editor of, and contributed articles to, the student magazine *Opbouw*.

His doctoral dissertation, in Dutch, was *The Philosophy of Mathematics from a Theistic Standpoint* (Kok, 1992:3), supervised by G.H.J.W.J. Geesink.³⁹ Woltjer was his original supervisor, but died before Vollenhoven was able to complete his thesis. Van Deursen notes that the thesis was on a subject with which no professor inside or outside the Free University could really have helped him (van Deursen, 2008:79).

Vollenhoven married Dooyeweerd's sister, Hermina Maria (1892-1973) on 10 October 1918 and became a pastor in the Gereformeerde Kerk in Oostkapelle during the same year. In 1921 (Kok, 1992) he moved to a pastorate in The Hague and had many discussions with Dooyeweerd. Some of them developed during walks on the dunes.

Vollenhoven was greatly influenced by Atheunis Janse (1 July 1890- 8 March 1960). Janse was born in Oostkapelle, he was the son of a farmer, Jan Janse, and Catharina Wondergem. In 1910 he became a teacher at Schoondijke, in 1917 he taught at Biggekerke and in 1918 became head of the Christian school there. Janse had asked Vollenhoven for a copy of his doctoral thesis and the conversation began from there. They published one paper together: *De Activiteit der Ziel in het Rekenonderwijs* [The Activity of the Soul in Mathematics] (1918).

Janse was one of the originators, with Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, of the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy (1935). Van der Walt (2011a:226) notes that we should regard Janse, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven as the three joint pioneers of Reformational thought.

Janse's anthropology led him into conflict with the implicit scholasticism of many in the Gereformeerde churches. Janse stressed the unity of the human being which was not

³⁹ In the dissertation Vollenhoven thanks Jan Woltjer, R.H. Wolter, Herman Bavinck, F.J. Buitendijk, Ph. Kohnstamm and L.E.J. Brouwer (Kok 1992). This gives some idea of the influences on Vollenhoven at the time.

appreciated by those accepting the dualistic approach supported, for example, by V. Hepp, H.H. Kuyper and J. Ridderbos. Janse's anthropological views greatly influenced Vollenhoven, who began questioning the immortality of the soul. This brought him into theological conflict with a number of the VU professors including Jan Waterink. Vollenhoven came to realise that Janse's perspective was truer to the scriptural evidence. He later said of Janse that he freed him from many 'infertile traditional speculations' (*onvruchtbare traditionele speculaties*) (Vollenhoven, 1960d:2).

In 1923 Vollenhoven experienced a nervous breakdown. He collapsed while preaching and was admitted to a psychiatric clinic for ten months (Friesen, 2006:20; Nijenhuis, 2000:np). At the time he was wrestling with Janse's suggestion that the idea of an 'immortal soul' wasn't biblical. A human does not have a soul but is a soul – the biblical term *soul* means *living being* (van der Walt, 2011a:240). Yet, Vollenhoven knew that accepting this viewpoint would put him into conflict with many in Reformed circles – as later proved to be the case. His pastorate at The Hague was also very time consuming and arduous. It was the added stress of pastoring and philosophising that led to his breakdown.

Kok has dealt with the changes occurring in Vollenhoven's early development i.e. prior to 1923-1924 (Kok, 1992) in a rather systematic manner. Ive (2012; 2015) points out two shifts that occurred in Vollenhoven's thinking during this period. The first was in his anthropology, the second was about the character of knowledge. The first shift was a result of his discussions with Janse.

Vollenhoven then went on to become the professor of philosophy at the Free University in Amsterdam in 1926, the same year that Dooyeweerd was appointed the professor of law and J. Waterink as professor of pedagogy (van Deursen, 2008:108). Vollenhoven's appointment at the VU was important not only for Vollenhoven but also for the VU: it was the first full-time philosophy post at the VU. His inaugural lecture of 26 October 1926 (Vollenhoven, 2013) contained the first mention of the phrase *Calvinistic philosophy* (Tol, 2013:np). From then on it became Vollenhoven's preferred way of defining Reformational philosophy (Tol, 2010:18). Dooyeweerd later preferred the definition *Christian philosophy* as he thought the term *Calvinistic* would cause misunderstanding (Dooyeweerd, 1996:1).

Vollenhoven's appointment meant that he could devote most of his time to philosophy. The first version of his *Isagôgè Philosophiae* was produced in 1930 and he continued to work on revising it until 1945. The definitive version has now been published in English and in a Dutch-English version (Vollenhoven, 2005f, 2005g) - a full critical edition in Dutch has been edited by Anthony Tol (Vollenhoven, 2010). Vollenhoven's Calvinistic philosophy was developed in his *Calvinism and the Reformation of Philosophy* (Vollenhoven, 1933).

Tol (2013) aptly describes the relationship between Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd:

While Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd worked in close cooperation, each retained his independence. Dooyeweerd defended Reformational philosophy from the standpoint of a transcendental critique. This critique sought to expose the dependence of thought, particularly theoretical thought, on religion. Vollenhoven was keener on setting out the viable religious presuppositions of any understanding of reality'.

2.4.2 Vollenhoven's basic approach

In a series of articles in *The Evangelical Quarterly* (1931-1932), written by invitation for the journal,⁴⁰ a number of important Reformational themes are expounded by Vollenhoven. Not least, he stresses that: '*a synthesis between the Christian faith on the one hand, and the current philosophy on the other, is impossible*' (1931:388 - emphasis in the original). The impossibility 'of such a synthesis places upon us the obligation to make serious efforts to build up our own philosophy upon the sure foundation of the Word-revelation; for Calvinistic philosophy is certainly no contradiction in terms' (Vollenhoven, 1931:388). He then goes on to the 'task in hand' as he sees it. The first task is to define Calvinism, which leads to the distinction between scriptural and non-scriptural philosophy. He begins with the issue of the Scriptures:

'the formal recognition of Holy Scripture as the word of God first acquires content when the question is answered, "What does Scripture say?"

I can state the Calvinistic answer to this question very briefly as follows:

(a) Holy Scripture teaches the direct sovereignty of that God Who reveals Himself in His word, over all things, no matter in what realm, and distinguishes, in harmony with this idea, God as the Sovereign from that which He has created.

(b) The Scriptures view religion as a covenant (*unio foederalis*) which was made known to man before the fall by means of word-revelation.

(c) The Scriptures teach concerning conditions after the fall,

1. The total depravity of man;
2. Death as punishment of sin; and
3. The grace of the sovereign God, primarily as forgiving and restoring, secondarily as saving.

A Calvinistic philosophy must proceed from the same fundamental ideas' (Vollenhoven, 1931:391-392).

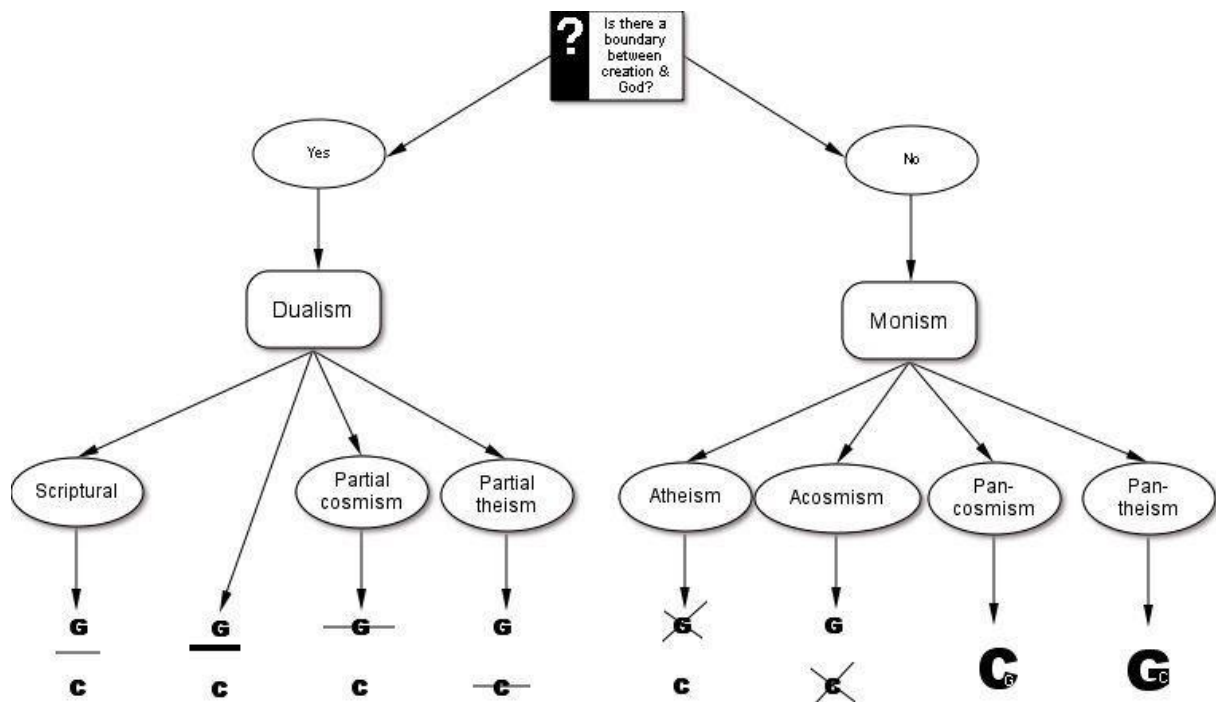
⁴⁰ These are in part a translation of *De betekenis van het Calvinisme voor de reformatie van de wijsbegeerte. Anti-revolutionaire Staatskunde*, (quarterly edition) 5 (1931): 180-198, 266-334. (Bril 1973:215-216).

The second task is to trace the motives at work in non-scriptural philosophy and arrange them systematically; to do so, he writes, it is necessary to 'bathe in history'. He does this, however, while posing a preliminary question: is there a recognised boundary between God and creation?

The terminology used in his (1931) article was not used in his later work. His early approach utilised two factors, namely reality and sovereignty. The law is already a boundary that distinguishes God and creation or 'Sovereignty and subjection'; but the law is simply part of creation (Tol, personal communication 5 June 2003). In 1939, this changed and the law became a factor in its own right, thus introducing a third factor, i.e. the law. The law is now more than merely a difference between God and creation.

Concerning the (philosophical) views of God, Vollenhoven taught that monism denies that there is such boundary; deism affirms that there is one. Unscriptural philosophy either denies there is a boundary or places the boundary in a different place than the scriptural position (placing a boundary between God and his creation). In unscriptural philosophy, the boundary may include part of God (partial cosmism) or make part of the creation divine (partial theism). Monism either denies the existence of God (atheism) or of the cosmos (acosmism). In some cases, God becomes part of the creation (pan-cosmism) or creation becomes part of God (pantheism). I have attempted to show these positions in Figure 2.6.

FIGURE 2.6. A diagrammatic representation of Vollenhoven's systematic arrangement of different philosophies. The letters G and C are taken to represent God and Creation - the line represents the boundary.



(Source: Vollenhoven, 1931-1932).

In his *Het Calvinisme en de Reformatie van de Wijsbegeerte* published around the time of his *Evangelical Quarterly* paper (Vollenhoven, 1933), he looks at 'the ground motives of a biblical philosophy' (Vollenhoven 1933:22-48). In his opinion:

'a biblical philosophy teaches the total sovereignty of God who has revealed himself in his Word. It teaches a sovereignty which is exercised over all things in every context and relationship. Consequently, biblical philosophy distinguishes sharply between God qua sovereign and his Creation' (Vollenhoven, 1933).⁴¹

Here we find echoes of Kuyper's 'square inch' approach. The starting point, for both, is the sovereignty of God.

Both Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd were involved in December 1935 in the setting up of the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy – Vollenhoven was the chair of the Association for

⁴¹ The translations are from 'The ground motives of Biblical philosophy' [s.l.: s.n., n.d.] 16 pages [Book chapter. Notes: An unpublished translation (translator unknown) of the second chapter of: "Het Calvinisme en de Reformatie van de Wijsbegeerte" (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1933) p. 22-48]

Calvinistic Philosophy until 1961 and Dooyeweerd the editor of its journal *Philosophia Reformata*. The Association for Calvinistic Philosophy and *Philosophia Reformata* became the main vehicles for the promotion of Reformational philosophy, certainly within the Netherlands.

Vollenhoven's opening words at the first meeting were:

'[what] brings us together here is something glorious. It is not philosophy, for that is not what comes first in our lives. Rather it is the bond to God's Word, for by grace we have learned to desire to live solely through Christ, [hence] religion, as concern of the heart, has become the centre of our whole existence' (Tol, 2013:np).

The period 1937-1939 was a difficult one for Vollenhoven. In 1937 there was a theological attack on his philosophy by Hendrik Steen (a student of H.H. Kuyper). Later he was examined by the Curators of the VU, as charges were brought against both Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven by Valentijn Hepp (1879-1950) and the theologians at the VU, regarding their orthodoxy. In particular, their denial of the immortality of the soul and denial of a dualism between body and soul attracted criticism. With the onset of the Second World War, the matter was dropped and never fully resolved.

2.4.3 The consequent problem-historical method

In the late 1940s, Vollenhoven developed his consequent problem-historical method. Vollenhoven called it the *consequent-probleemhistorische methode*. It has been variously translated into English as the *consistent* (Dooyeweerd, 1973; Wolters, 1979; van der Walt, 2014b), *consequent* or *consequential* problem-historical method.⁴² The term *Method* indicates a systematic procedure: 'Problem', as it deals with a number of key problems in the history of philosophy; 'Historical', as it provides a framework or map for understanding the history of philosophy, in which 'connections are the most important' (Vollenhoven, 2005a:29).

Vollenhoven describes his own method thus:

⁴² For the problems in translating the name see Tol (2003) who suggested the best translation is 'consequential problem-historical method'. The term *consistent* would imply that the method is of a logical systematic nature, with the implication that there could be an inconsistent method. This doesn't, however, seem to be the meaning implied by Vollenhoven's use. As Tol (2003) points out, there is a very good Dutch word that could have been used if the meaning was only 'consistent' i.e. 'consistent' (the English and Dutch terms have the same spelling).

'every philosopher is dependent upon his predecessors and contemporaries and exerts an influence both on his contemporaries and succeeding generations. These observations applied to the field of history of philosophy necessitate an analysis which takes account both of the predominant philosophical climate and the specific philosophical approach of a particular philosopher. A systematic investigation of this fact leads to a consequent problem-historical method' (as cited in Bril, 1973:213).

One-time student of Vollenhoven, Calvin Seerveld describes Vollenhoven's approach to the history of philosophy as follows:

'Vollenhoven's method arose out of his long preoccupation with the Pre-Socratics. Like Heidegger he believes that the fountainhead of all philosophy lies among the early Greeks before Plato. Unlike Heidegger he does not find it to be a Garden of Eden which we must recapture; it is rather the source of theoretical misery whose sins have worked themselves out to the third and fourth and the hundredth generation. And that is Vollenhoven's method for writing the history of philosophy: tracing the sins of the Pre-Socratics out to the hundredth generation' (Seerveld, as cited in Bartholomew, 2000:83).

Vollenhoven had planned with the help of two of his students K.J. Popma⁴³ and S.U. Zuidema⁴⁴ to publish a multi-volume history of philosophy. The first volume appeared in 1950, this covered the period up to Plato. The work was strongly criticised particularly by Hendrik J. Pos, Willem Jacob Verdenius, D. Loenen and C.J. de Vogel who had convened to

⁴³ Klaas Jan Popma (5 Jan 1903- 18 May 1986), an outstanding scholar in the Reformational tradition, was born in The Hague. From 1928-1955 he taught classical languages in Gymnasium (high school). He received his doctorate in classical languages from the University of Leiden in 1931, his supervisor was B.A. Groningen. From 1954 he held the Chair of Christian philosophy in Utrecht and Groningen. He retired in 1974.

⁴⁴ Sytse Ulbe Zuidema (1906-1975) was also an outstanding Reformational philosopher, born in Kampen on 22 April 1906; originally he wanted to be a pastor and started to study theology. In 1925 he enrolled at the VU Amsterdam and came under the influence of the linguist Hendrik J. Pos who encouraged him to study philosophy. With the realisation that theology and science ultimately depend on philosophy, he transitioned from studying theology to philosophy with Vollenhoven as one of his lecturers. In 1930 he obtained his doctorate on the philosophy of Willem van Occam with Vollenhoven as his promoter. From 1931-1934 he was minister of the Christian Reformed Church of Anna Paulowna Polder, then from 1934-1948 minister of the church of Delft for the Mission in Central Java (Dutch East Indies). From 1936-1946 he was a missionary minister at Soerakarta, Solo, in the Dutch East Indies. During the Second World War he was in a Japanese concentration camp in Java. After the war he returned to the Netherlands in 1946 and took up the newly instituted post of professor of Calvinistic Philosophy at the VU Amsterdam.

discuss the work and as a result of their criticisms, no further funding for the subsequent volumes could be granted (Tol, 2013:np).

2.4.3.a Types, time-currents and other categories

Vollenhoven outlined his method only in two places (Vollenhoven, 1959, 1961) - he seems to be of the opinion that the method was better felt than 'telt'. His method comprised of identifying *types* and *time-currents* within philosophies.

He distinguishes three main periods or time-currents⁴⁵ - derived from how they relate to the law. There are over 60 subdivisions within each of these main three periods.⁴⁶

He writes: 'the position of law has been the most important problem in *systematic philosophy*. From the very beginning it has dominated the struggle between successive "time-currents"' (Vollenhoven, 2005b:13).

These positions, corresponding to historical periods, are

- Ancient philosophy: the pre-synthetic thought of Antiquity (Greek and Hellenistic philosophy);
- Synthesis philosophy: the synthetic thought of the Church Fathers and the Middle Ages;
- Modern philosophy: post- or anti-synthetic thought - rationalism and irrationalism.

He also identifies a number of *types* within the history of philosophy. These he classifies into three main categories: mythologising thinking (M); cosmogono-cosmological thinking (Kg); and purely cosmological thinking (KI). Each group contains dualistic and monistic types. These were then subdivided into three sub-types: individualistic, partial universalistic and universalistic. He identifies 18 different types of M, 39 of Kg and 30 of KI.

Types are represented by vertical columns in Vollenhoven's diagrams (see Figure 2.6), these concern the structure of things, they entail a view of ontology; time currents are the horizontal rows, they concern what is normative. As van der Walt puts it: the '*trend of time-current*, which is determined with regard to a philosopher's view of *law*; and *type*, which emerges from the philosopher's vision of the cosmos' (van der Walt, 2011b:284).

'The texts must be read in immediate connections with the problems and solutions of their philosophical environment' (Wolters, 1979:246).

Three key problems enable Vollenhoven to categorise different philosophies by types:

⁴⁵ The Dutch *tijdstroming* can be translated as time current or trend of the age (cf Bril, 2005:27).

⁴⁶ In Bril (2005:153-156) he provides an overview of 61 different subdivisions of the periods.

1. The problem of mythology or genesis: what is it that constitutes and orders the universe? Here we have a few possible answers:

Mythologising (theogonic-cosmogonic) thought: God or gods as the origin of the universe

Non-mythologising thought implies either:

Cosmogono-cosmological thought – the universe as an unfolding process, or

Pure cosmological thought (*louter kosmologisch*) – the universe in terms of timeless order.

2. The problem of dualism or monism: is the origin of all things a one-ness or a two-ness? Is the universe made up of one or two principles (e.g. form/ matter); monism asserts that there is one reality. Dualism asserts that there is more than one. In monism the one explains the many; in dualism the many explains the one.

3. The problem of universalism or individualism: what is primary, the universal or the individual? Within this there are three possible categories:

(a) Universalism – the universal is primary

(b) Individualism – the individual is primary

(c) Partial-universalism – the universal and the individual exist together.

Within the latter position there are two options:

(i) Macrocosm and Microcosm

(ii) Hylomorphism

FIGURE 2.7. A summary of some of the ‘types’ that Vollenhoven identifies.⁴⁷

	Mythologising (M)		Non-mythologising			
	Theogonic-cosmogonic		Cosmogono-cosmological (Kg)		Pure Cosmological (KI)	
	Dualism (M1-M9)	Monism (M10-M18)	Dualism (Kg1- Kg6)	Monism (Kg7-Kg9)	Dualism (KI1-KI30)	Monism (KI31-KI33)
Universalists	Mousaios	Hesiodos	Empedokles I	Herakleitos	Xenophanes	Thales
Partial universalists	Delphic-Apollin Orphic Thracian Appolin Orphic	Orphic after Eudemos	Empedokles II			
Individualists	Kritias Damos of Oa Thrasymachus	Kallikles	Gorgias Likymnios	Protagoras Euthydemos	Xeniades Hippias Lykophron	Antiphon of Athens

(Source: Adapted from Runner, nd:136; and Vollenhoven, 2005a:157-159).

2.4.3.b Subjectivists, objectivists and realists

Vollenhoven also identified three distinct approaches to the law: subjectivism, objectivism and realism. The first two see the law as being found within the cosmos - the difference between them is whether they see the law originating within the subject or within the object.

Subjectivists deny that there are laws distinct from knowing subjects. Objectivists identify laws with objects, with something within creation. The realists (third option) often sought a middle ground - the law is a thing outside the cosmos. For the Christian, God is the only sovereign lawgiver and the creation is subjected to his law.

⁴⁷ Not all these categories will be employed here. These are included for information, to show the complexity and richness of Vollenhoven's method.

It is sometimes affirmed that Vollenhoven's approach is far more nuanced than Dooyeweerd's ground-motives. However, as Bril (1995:121-146) has shown, it is possible to provide some sort of harmony between the two.

Vollenhoven continued even past retirement to refine his method and to categorise philosophers. He held *privatissima*, private lectures at the VU, to help develop his ideas. To do this he had some assistants; these included: Sander Griffioen, up to 1970; Anthony Tol 1970- 1975; and John Kok from 1975.

The fruit of Vollenhoven's work can be seen in his complicated charts – all 52 of them – in his *Schematische Kaarten* (Bril & Boonstra, 2000).

2.4.4 The enduring influence of Vollenhoven

In the sixties, Vollenhoven made a number of overseas visits. In 1961 he visited North America; and in July 1963 he made a visit to South Africa, where he gave 24 lectures in Dutch between 1 August and 20 September. These are now being translated into English by John Kok, under the auspices of the Vollenhoven Foundation, for publication.

Several Reformational scholars have worked with and developed Vollenhoven's ideas. These include:

North America H.E. Runner, John Kok, Calvin Seerveld, Hendrik Hart, James Olthuis, John Vander Stelt. The first US conference on Vollenhoven's methodology was held in Calvin Seerveld's home in 1971. Attendees were Seerveld, Bob Hassert, Pete Steen, John Van Dyk, Bob Elliott, John Vander Stelt and Jim Olthuis (Seerveld, 2014:22).

South Africa N.T. van der Merwe, J.A.L. Taljaard, J.J. (Ponti) Venter and B.J. van der Walt.

Europe Kor Bril, Anthony Tol. There has been very little work done on Vollenhoven in the UK until more recently (see Jeremy Ive, 2012; 2015).

The Vollenhoven Foundation produced three newsletters (July 2003, October 2005, Sept 2007) with editor Anthony Tol (and treasurer of the Foundation) and an editorial committee comprising Kornelis A. Bril (secretary), John H. Kok and Robert S. Sweetman. The Vollenhoven Foundation was established in 1997 by Vollenhoven's son-in-law, Herman Nijenhuis with the primary aim of promoting the publication of Vollenhoven's work and encouraging the study of Vollenhoven's thought. Sander Griffioen took over the chair from Nijenhuis.

In 2000 the first publication of the Foundation was produced: Vollenhoven's *Schematische Kaarten* (Bril & Boonstra, 2000). The foundation has also been involved in translating and publishing a number of books by and on Vollenhoven (e.g. in Dutch: Bril 2005c, 2005d and in English: Vollenhoven 2005g).

What Kuyper, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven have in common is that they contend that a distinctively Christian approach to scholarship is necessary and possible. Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven in particular developed a distinctly Christian philosophy whose depth and value should become apparent even from the brief introduction with which it was presented above.

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the reception of Reformational ideas by English Calvinist communities. In order to accomplish this task, it is now necessary to provide a sketch of the historical and cultural roots of English Calvinism.

2.5 A Brief history of Calvinism in England

2.5.1 Introduction

Kuyperians, Dooyeweerdians and neo-Calvinists would largely regard themselves as Calvinists. Calvinism is a larger set than neo-Calvinism; it is also a diverse set – it may be better to speak of ‘Calvinisms’. As Pettegree confirms: ‘modern scholars of Calvinism are therefore far more inclined to stress the diversity of the movement’ (Pettegree, 2009:36).

Theologically speaking, Calvinists have been described as ‘five pointers’, the five points being abbreviated or summarised in the acronym TULIP: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and Perseverance of the saints.⁴⁸ For Calvinists, the starting point is usually the sovereignty of God. It is the sovereignty of God that shapes the rest of their theology. The term *Calvinist* has become synonymous with *Reformed* and it is in this sense that I employed the term here. However, I included in this study, not only English Christian denominations that officially adopted the name ‘Reformed’, but also all those who adopted a theology that is Reformed at least in its central tenets. Soteriology was taken as the central core of theology and ecclesiology as less central. As a result, I also included Baptist or Anglican denominations that adopted (most of) the basic doctrines of Reformed soteriology (see e.g. the ‘five points’) in my discussion of English Calvinism, even if they cannot be called ‘Reformed’ in their views of church government, the

⁴⁸ TULIP was popularised by Lorraine Boettner in his *Reformed Doctrines of Predestination* (Boettner, 1941). The first documented use is in a lecture by Cleland Boyd McAfee noted by William Vail:

‘Some eight years ago I had the privilege of hearing a popular lecture by Dr. McAfee, of Brooklyn, upon the Five Points of Calvinism, given before the Presbyterian Union of Newark, New Jersey, which was most interesting as well as instructive. To aid the mind in remembering the Five Points, Dr. McAfee made use of the word Tulip, which, possessing five letters, lends itself nicely to the subject in hand, especially as it ends with the letter P, as will be seen later’ (Vail, 1913:394).

sacraments and so forth. This is in line with Kuyper's understanding of Calvinism: a federation of churches adopting a clear doctrinal core but also different understandings of ecclesiological matters (Kuyper, 1931:17,21).

Wallace (2011) makes a good point regarding the situation in England:

'the name "Calvinist" was not much used at first by insiders, but by opponents, in various English forms such as "Calvinian" or "Calvinistical." Only after the middle of the seventeenth century did it come to be widely accepted with the Reformed tradition, and then it was still used sparingly, for they considered themselves as having reformed the church and its theology in accordance with scriptural and early Christian norms. Only gradually did they accept the term "Calvinists" as applying to themselves, and even then, seemed to think it somewhat limiting, as they were never committed to slavishly following Calvin or any other nonbiblical writer' (Wallace, 2011:10).

Calvinism has rarely had a good press in England. As Hampton notes of Reformed Anglicans:

'the Anglican Reformed after 1662 were certainly conscious of their links with the wider European Reformed tradition, but it was vital to their polemical task to show that they were the exponents of a home-grown and respectably Episcopalian branch of that tradition. "Reformed" was, therefore, an appellation they would have happily embraced. "Calvinist", with its seedy foreign overtones, and its hinterland of regicide and Presbyterianism, was not' (Hampton, 2008:7).

In 1936, The Dean of Durham, Cyril Argentine Alington (1872-1955), wrote a piece for the *Daily Telegraph* with the provocative title: *A Doctrine which Breeds Atheism: Calvin's Travesty of Christianity*. He declared that 'no convinced Christian did ever so much harm to the cause of Christianity as John Calvin', and that Calvin's teaching was 'an immoral travesty of the Gospel' (Alington, 1936). This attitude summed up many English Christians' view of Calvin and Calvinism. This view of Calvinism did nothing to help the acceptance of a philosophy that was first labelled as Calvinistic. Particularly since the name of Calvin was associated with the execution of Servetus in Geneva and double predestination and the term *Calvinism* was 'employed to designate whatever is socially cramping, repressed, over industrious, or intolerant of diversity and the simple pleasures of life' (Fergusson, 2010:274).

The history of English Calvinism is a complicated one. Perhaps for that reason it has largely been neglected. This branch of Calvinism has suffered much ebb and flow and at its inception was subject to the whims of the reigning monarch. It is partly true what Strikwerda

wrote: 'the beginning of English Calvinism and its churches are very complicated and obscure. It is the story of a minority church which had to live' (Strikwerda, 1959:107).

Even so, Hart was right when he wrote: 'the experience of Reformed churches was arguably more explosive in the British Isles than anywhere else in Europe' (Hart, 2013:83). It has also not fared too well on the literature front. Few monographs deal with the broad history of Calvinism. The exceptions are: Toon (2003 [original 1967]), Bratt (1959), McNeil (1954), Hart (2013). Even fewer works deal with the situation in England apart from Cremeans (1949), a short chapter in Bratt (1959) and McNeil (1954) and some mentions in Hart (2013). Most monographs about English Calvinism deal with a short period and primarily before the nineteenth-century (e.g. Wallace 2011). Cremeans deals only with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as does Kendall (1997). When we come to the nineteenth and twentieth century very few works focus on English Calvinism; we have two articles by Bebbington (2011a, 2011b) but little else (one exception is Shaw (2003), who looks at High Calvinists in Manchester and London).⁴⁹ Although several works have been published looking at Calvinist denominations, the Calvinist Baptists (e.g. Oliver, 2006), the Welsh Methodists (Jones, 2004; Jones, Schlenther & White, 2012) and the Presbyterians (McGoldrick, 2012), Christopher Dawson, it seems, was justified to write:

'Calvinism, today, is almost completely *terra incognita* to the ordinary educated Englishman. We see the mark that it has left on history, but we no longer understand its spirit. It is like the bed of a dry torrent whose cliffs and boulders bear witness to the gigantic force of which it was, once, the channel' (Dawson, 1934:28).

In England, even the term *Calvinist* is often perceived as problematic. It has become something of a skip container; all sorts of meanings are dumped into it. Donald Davie wrote: 'the term "Calvinistic" is a catch-all bogey word, possessing, often enough, no strictly accountable meaning at all' (as cited in Wallace, 2011:9). It is modified by a number of different prefixes (including hyper-, high-, low-, neo-, new-, classic-, moderate-, Evangelical-)

⁴⁹ Those he deals with are:

William Nunn (1786 - 1840)
William Gadsby (1773 - 1844)
William McKerrow (1803 - 1878)
Joseph Irons (1785 - 1852)
James Wells (1803 - 1872)
Andrew Reed (1787 - 1862)

High Calvinists were often described with the pejorative term *Hyper Calvinists*. They emphasised the sovereignty of God and minimised the role of human free will. The main proponents of High Calvinism in Britain were the Gospel Standard Baptists (see below § 2.5.5).

and has become associated with the five points of TULIP. The points were first formulated at the Synod of Dordt – though the acronym TULIP dates back only to the early twentieth century (see footnote 48 above).

McFetridge comments that:

‘the Reformation in England, it will be remembered, unlike in other lands, proceeded from the sovereign, and not from the people’ (McFetridge, 1882:69).

Indeed, in the early days of the Reformation, the fight between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism depended largely on the whim of the sovereign – or perhaps in the case of Henry VIII, the whim of his wives. The monarch created much of the theological climate. This is one of the crucial factors that have made English Calvinism unusual and different to European or North American Calvinism.

2.5.2 First phase — the start

Henry VIII’s desire to be rid of Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn was the catalyst for the English Reformation. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer declared Henry VIII’s marriage to Catherine invalid. The 1533 Act of Supremacy severed ties with Rome and established the Church of England with Henry as its head. Cranmer did much to help shape the broadly Calvinist direction of the Church of England. The 1549 Act of Uniformity, passed under the rule of Edward VI, meant that only the *Book of Common Prayer* could be used in churches in the land, this meant that many of the Roman Catholic rituals could not be practised.

It was Cranmer who appointed the European Calvinists Peter Martyr Vermigli and Martin Bucer as Regius Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge respectively. These he hoped would help train up Protestant priests.

Under Edward VI Reform thrived. Cranmer’s 42 articles also helped push the Church of England in a moderately Calvinist direction. Key Calvinists at this time included John Hooper (c.1495-1555), described by Dutchman Maarten Micron as ‘the future Zwingli of England’; and William Whittingham (c. 1524-1579). Collinson describes him as the

‘first Englishman who can be called a Calvinist (rather than a Zwinglian) internationalist (...) He was the first Englishman to receive ordination within the non-episcopal, reformed ministry, indeed at the hands of Calvin himself’ (Collinson, 2006:77).

When Edward died and Mary I (‘Bloody Mary’) took to the throne there was a return to Roman Catholicism and she attempted to eliminate Protestantism. In 1555, the year Latimer

and Ridley were burnt, Cranmer was tried for heresy and in 1556 he too was burnt at the stake.

2.5.3 The second and third phases – suffering and then settlement

The second phase saw almost 300 become martyrs at the hands of Bloody Mary in her five-year reign. She was staunchly Roman Catholic and sought to undo all that these Reformers had done. Under persecution some 800 Reformed believers sought exile on the Continent from 1553-1558. As a result, they came into contact with European Calvinists and many became radicalised and more vehemently Calvinist. When Mary I died many of them returned home with the intention of carrying out greater reforms in the Church of England. Queen Mary's wanton persecution of the Reformed believers also had the effect of alienating the English against her and so made them far more receptive to the Reformed believers when they returned.⁵⁰

The third phase of English Calvinism was brought about by the return of these Marian exiles during the Elizabethan settlement. Elizabeth I reigned from 1558-1603. She appointed several of the Marian exiles as bishops; these included Matthew Parker and Edmund Grindal.

Under Elizabeth I, there was the settlement of Calvinism, although reform was slow. She passed the 1559 Act of Supremacy; this meant that the Pope was no longer the head of the Church of England and Elizabeth I was now the 'Supreme Governor' of the Church. However, the tensions between crown and church were growing and this resulted in a separation and growing fragmentation among Calvinists. It was during this period that saw the birth of Puritanism.

The Puritans wanted a purer form of worship and church government. For some reform was far too slow. This led to what has been known as Puritan separatism. Some wanted to purify the Church of England and planned to return to it once it was more reformed. Others were 'principle Separatists' (McBeth, 1987). They saw no hope in the reform of the Church of England. They offered several reasons for complaint and for their separation. These included the idea that many members of the Church of England (including its clergy) were not true Christians; they rejected the notion that infant baptism made one a church member; for them the *Book of Common Prayer* was too close to Roman Catholic teachings and they wanted to elect their own church officers; and held to the notion that membership should not be based on being born in the parish.

⁵⁰ C.H. Garret in her 1938 *The Marian Exiles* provided a census of around 800 of those who left England and took refuge in Reformed cities including Geneva, Zurich, Aarau, Basel, Emden, Frankfurt and Strasbourg.

This latter idea, in particular, was the start of a voluntary church where faith and church membership were matters of individual conversion rather than birth. This tendency towards individualism⁵¹ is seen in their understanding of the nature of the church. For the Separatists, it was not primarily the body of Christ (a community) but a voluntary conglomeration of those who had been individually converted. The emphasis for some was on *personal* salvation and *personal* sanctification. The personal is obviously important. The focus on the personal was an important reaction to the subsuming of the individual in Roman Catholic doctrine. But this reaction then had a tendency, for some, to cause the emphasis on the personal to become an inclination to individualism with a prioritising of the individual over the corporate nature of the body of Christ.⁵²

One such church that adopted an assembly based 'on an individualistic basis', was The Ancient Church near St Paul's London. The pastors were John Greenwood and Henry Barrow. Both were insistent that there should be no 'mixed' church (with believers and unbelievers worshipping together). Both pastors were imprisoned and hanged for their beliefs. This notion of the church was an example of this form of individualism – the church for them was a voluntary company of converted *individuals*, even though these individuals formed the church. Francis Johnson (c. 1592-1617) was asked to collect and destroy the works of Greenwood and Barrow. Johnson was a Church of England Puritan, but as he read the books he was supposed to burn became convinced by their arguments and became the pastor of The Ancient Church after the death of Greenwood and Barrow. He too was arrested and imprisoned. The Ancient Church congregation realised that they had to move and made their home in Amsterdam. On release from prison in 1597, Johnson again became their pastor in Amsterdam.

⁵¹ *Individualism* was a term coined by Alexis de Tocqueville when he described democracy in North America (Johnson, 1970:230). I am using it here not in the political sense but rather to indicate an emphasis on individuals, whereby the individual is of primary concern and society, community or church, is secondary.

⁵² Kuyper identifies three views of the composition of the visible church: the individualistic, the independent and the covenantal approach (Kuyper, 2017:224). Regarding the first he makes the following observation:

'but whether the decision to join the church is based on a conversion, on a public confession, or on an unprincipled and entirely arbitrary choice, this model is and remains one in which church members are assembled on an individualistic basis: first you must reach the age of discretion; then you make a personal choice, for yourself alone; in the end you have a church—or sometimes they avoid the title *church*, as in the case of an Anabaptist association—that is created artificially, through an entirely external gathering process. In this first model, the church is reduced to the entirely external notion of a club or association' (Kuyper, 2017:225).

Two books, both by Robert Browne, published in 1582 were very influential at this time: *A Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Anie* and *A Booke which Sheweth the Life and Manners of all True Christians*. Browne was another Puritan who wanted to reform the Church of England and then return to it. He did the latter if not the former by the end of his life. Browne has been called the father of Congregationalism and had been nicknamed 'Troublechurch'. As Tudur Jones points out, Browne saw the church as a gathering of the elect rather than a parish system (Tudur Jones, 2004:14). Browne together with Robert Harrison formed such a church in Norwich around 1580. Again, in Browne we see this notion of church as a company of elect individuals, membership was by individual consent and individual conversion.

This desire for separatism also coincided with an increasing 'privatisation' of Puritanism: the personal and the inward took precedence over the public sphere. This led to a more pietistic approach to life; prayer, purity and personal holiness were prioritised. As D.G. Hart puts it, a 'vein of introspective piety' replaced 'the zeal for a thoroughly reformed church' (Hart, 2013:84). Nevertheless, Philip Schaff, in his *Creeds of Christendom*, wrote: 'It is not too much to say that the ruling theology of the Church of England in the latter half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century was Calvinistic' (Schaff, 1877:§ 77, 604).⁵³

During this time, three main groups of Puritans began to distinguish themselves. Differences were over the issue of ecclesiology. The groups were the Anglicans, the Presbyterians and the Independents. In 1593, a law was passed in the hope it would curb separatism. The law required all over the age of 16 to attend the local parish church or face fine, imprisonment and eventually, for persistent offence, exile or even death. Many separatists thus ended up in the more religiously open Netherlands – such as those from The Ancient Church.

The Presbyterians were strongest in Scotland, thanks to the Scottish Reformer John Knox – who has been described as Scotland's Calvin. The Puritans had high hopes of James I (James VI of Scotland) when he became king in 1603, as he was familiar with Scottish Presbyterianism. The 1604 Hampton Court Conference was convened in response to the Millenary Petition – signed by supposedly 1000 Puritans. The Puritans expressed revulsion against several Episcopal ceremonies including the signing of the cross at baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, and the wearing of the surplice and the cap by the priest.

⁵³ During this period, the University of Cambridge was pre-eminent in furthering Calvinist and Puritan ideas. Founded in 1584 by Elizabeth's Chancellor, Sir Walter Mildmay, the college was intended to breed a race of radical Calvinist scholars. In the event, many of that progeny became the Puritan leadership of Massachusetts. (My thanks to David Hanson for pointing this out.)

Unfortunately, the Puritans didn't win the backing of the king. Some of the Puritans left the conference largely satisfied but the more radical were disappointed.

The main gain of the conference was the initiation of the Authorised Version (KJV) of the Bible, but subscription to the Prayer Book was still enforced and the episcopal structure remained. Bancroft, who succeeded Whitgift as the Archbishop of Canterbury, was even more zealous than his predecessor in enforcing the Prayer Book and the use of copes, caps, hoods and surplices.

Under the monarchy of Charles I the times were even more turbulent for the Puritans. Many during this period left the England for America. In part, religious dissent led to the English Civil War (1642-1651). This then led to the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell. The high point of influence for English Calvinists in the convening of the Westminster Assembly (1643-1646), the writing of the First London Baptist Confession of Faith (1644) then the Savoy Conference in 1658 with the Savoy Declaration of Church and Order. A number of Britons also attended the Synod of Dordt in Dordrecht (1618–1619). Those nominated to attend were George Carleton, Joseph Hall, John Davenant and Samuel Ward. Later Walter Balcanqual and Thomas Goad were invited (Shand, 1999:37-39).

The Westminster Assembly produced the Longer and Shorter Westminster Catechisms and the Westminster Confession of Faith. Toon (2003:26) describes the Westminster Confession of Faith as 'the most comprehensive statement of the general Reformed teaching of British seventeenth-century divines'. However, the evident cracks in the varieties of Calvinism soon revealed themselves during the Westminster Assembly. The Erastians (e.g. John Selden, Thomas Coleman and John Lightfoot) thought that the state should have authority over the church; the Episcopal position (held by e.g. James Usher and Daniel Featley) favoured the rule of the bishops; the Independents (e.g. Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughes, William Bridge and Sidrach Simpson) wanted either a congregational or Presbyterian form of church-government.

These cracks within different forms of Calvinism were exacerbated with the restoration of the monarchy and the imposition of the Clarendon Code.

2.5.4 The Clarendon Code – the separating phase

After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 several Acts of parliament were passed under Charles II that had a direct impact on English Calvinism and non-Conformity. Of particular importance were the four Acts that became known as the Clarendon Code.

1662 Act of Uniformity - The full name of the Act is 'An Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, and for

establishing the Form of making, ordaining and consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons in the Church of England'.

Steps were taken after the restoration to reintroduce a revised Prayer Book. The Act meant that clergy had to use, and comply with, the Prayer Book and failure to do so would mean they were deprived of their living. It also meant that all clergy had to have episcopal ordination. As a result, almost 2000 clergymen were forced out of their parishes. It is sometimes known as the Great Ejection. Edmund Calamy in 1775 published *The Nonconformist's Memorial: Being an Account of the Lives, Sufferings, and Printed Works, of the Two Thousand Ministers Ejected from the Church of England, Chiefly by the Act of Uniformity, Aug. 24, 1666*. This includes a list of the ejected ministers.

1665 Five Mile Act also known as the Oxford Act or Non-Conformist Act. Its full title was 'An Act for restraining Non-Conformists from inhabiting in Corporations'. It meant that clergy expelled by the Act of Uniformity couldn't live within five miles of the parish they had to be excluded from, unless they swore to obey the 1662 Prayer Book.

The other Acts that formed part of the Clarendon Code were: The Corporation Act (1661) and the Conventicle Act (1664). The Corporation Act meant that all municipal officers were Anglicans; and the Conventicle Act forbade the meeting together of five or more - other than of the same family - for unauthorised worship.

The introduction of the Clarendon Code led to the privatisation of non-Conformity. In part this privatisation was a pragmatic necessity as they were barred from the Established church, the universities and from politics – they were excluded from what was ostensibly the public sphere. Consequently, their emphasis was on the personal, the private life of the individual rather than on the public and the social.

1672 Declaration of Indulgences. This was an attempt by Charles II to extend religious liberty to Roman Catholics and non-Conformists. It allowed dissenters to hold services in public places. Parliament saw this as an act of sympathy for the Roman Catholics and so it was withdrawn in 1673 and replaced by a number of Parliament Test Acts. The Test Acts required anyone in public service to denounce Roman Catholic doctrine and be communicant members of the Church of England.

The Clarendon Code and the Great Ejection were a turning point. It crystallised the separation between Anglicans and non-Conformists.

Individualistic tendencies also became a key element in Puritanism. This became more so after the Great Ejection. The non-Conformists were no longer allowed to participate in the public sphere – vast areas of life were excluded to them, including university. Consequently, their circumstances shaped their theology; religion increasingly became a private matter. As McGoldrick notes, in this period there was a decline in Presbyterianism:

'in 1715 there were about 550 Presbyterian congregations in England, but by 1772 there were only 302, and many of them were not orthodox' (McGoldrick, 2012:loc 3372).

This 'not orthodox' eventually meant that many congregations 'became Unitarian and Arminian in doctrine, congregational in polity' (*ibid.*). Cragg, with what we now know as somewhat of an exaggeration, writes:

'Calvinism had suffered an almost total eclipse in the Church of England; it persisted, though probably with diminished vigour, among the nonconformists' (Cragg, 1960:66).

He was right, however, when he identified the 'struggle to survive under persecution' as absorbing 'much of their time and energy', even if there was not yet a total 'eclipse'. As Wallace has shown, Calvinists made 'modifications, adaptations, and transformations' (Wallace, 2011:6) to their doctrines; but they did survive and not only in non-Conformism. The 39 Articles of the Anglican Church were at least moderately Calvinist. According to Wallace (2011:19) 'English Calvinism after 1660 was not exclusively Puritan'. It should also be noted that contrary to the view promulgated by Lloyd-Jones (see, for example, Lloyd-Jones, 1962; 2002a) there were many Puritans that were still involved in the Church of England, there was not such a sharp demarcation as Lloyd-Jones makes out. As Clary helpfully points out:

'While much can be learned from debates in church history—and the parallels Lloyd-Jones highlights are apparent—he ran the risk of seeing too much of his own context in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and defined Puritanism accordingly. Hence the distinction he makes between Puritanism and Anglicanism' (Clary, 2010:43).

2.5.5 The Evangelical Revival

The Evangelical Revival saw the birth, at least according to Bebbington (1995:1ff), of the Evangelical movement. One of the key influencers of this period was George Whitefield (1714-1770) and his friend John Wesley (1703-1791). However, these were soon to disagree over the nature of predestination and the scope of the atonement. Wesley was vehemently anti-Calvinist.

It was during this time that the creation of a postal service and relatively inexpensive printing meant that networking was becoming easier and a more coherent movement could emerge. It was the beginning of what is now recognised as the Evangelical movement. Evangelicals emphasised revival. There were two main streams: a Calvinist stream and an

Arminian stream. The Arminian stream was exemplified by Wesley and from this stream arose Methodism. The Calvinist stream broadly followed Whitefield. The main Calvinist emphasis was felt in Wales with the emergence of the Welsh Methodists. The Welsh Methodists – despite their name – were strongly Calvinist.

One person who was influential with both Whitefield and Wesley was Selina Shirley Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791). She has been described as England's first Evangelical bishop (Cook, 2005). Initially, she adopted Wesley's Arminianism, but later under the influence of Whitefield and his fervent evangelistic methods, she came to embrace Calvinism. As an aristocrat, she was entitled to build a chapel and appoint chaplains. This she did and these chapels became known as the 'Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion'. The first chapel she had built was in Brighton in 1761. All the chaplains she appointed were Calvinist Evangelical Anglicans. She reluctantly had to register her chapels as dissenting meeting houses. In 1768 she started a training college for church ministers at Trevecca, Breconshire in Wales under the leadership of the Welsh Calvinist Howell Harris (1714-1773) and the Methodist John Fletcher of Madeley (1729-1785). Harris, along with Daniel Rowlands and William Williams were the pioneers of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism. The college was solely for the training of people to fill her pulpits. It was 'not to turn out scholars' (Harding, 2003:174). it was more a nursery for itinerant preachers. Some were even encouraged to give up on their studies and to go and preach: 'the more gifted the preacher, the less likely he was to receive adequate training' (Cook, 2005:17).

The late seventeenth and early- to mid-eighteenth century also saw the rise of the Baptist movement (Haykin, 1998:16; Oliver, 2006). The key doctrine that united all Baptists was the need for adult baptism by immersion. The Baptists soon split into the Particular Baptists, or Calvinistic Baptists, and the General Baptists. Particular Baptists were so-called because of their belief in particular or limited atonement; a position that Kuyper too held (Kuyper, 2001).⁵⁴ Another major theological issue that divided the Particular Baptists was regarding access to communion. The split was between open and closed (strict) access to communion. Open Baptists, like John Bunyan, allowed non-members access to the breaking of bread, Strict Baptists did not.

Brown (2012:16-17) makes a 'rough and ready division' of the Strict Baptists according to the magazines that promoted their views:

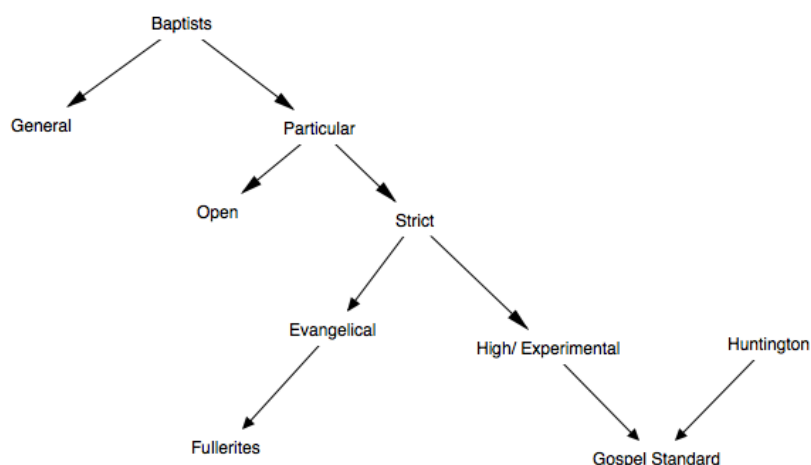
Gospel Standard Baptists were High/ Hyper-Calvinists who advocated a restricted communion
Christian's Pathway High Calvinists

⁵⁴ Dix (1999) has provided a typology of the types of Particular Baptists.

Earthen Vessel (later becoming the *Gospel Herald*) Calvinist but were less theologically rigid than the others and tended to hold to an open communion.

There were a number of continuing debates among the Calvinist Baptists. One was instigated by the publication of Andrew Fuller's *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptance* (1785) and its challenge to the dominant High-Calvinism.⁵⁵ Fuller maintained that the gospel was a free offer to all. John Gill, William Gadsby and others thought that the gospel should be preached but salvation could not be offered to all. The idea of a free offer for Gadsby and others implied that the gospel was reliant on a human response, which suggested Arminianism. The Gospel Standard Baptists developed, as a movement, from Gadsby's work and theology and from the influence of William Huntington, who was not himself a Baptist. Another major issue was the Antinomian controversy: the relationship of the Christian to the moral (Mosaic) law.⁵⁶

FIGURE 2.9. The variations and developments in Baptist churches.



(Source: Based on information in Breed, 2003; Briggs, 1994; Dix, 2001; Oliver, 2006; Underwood, 1961.)

The nineteenth and twentieth century saw the proliferation of Calvinist voluntary bodies⁵⁷ and magazines.⁵⁸ This proliferation is testimony of the fragmentation of Calvinism within England.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Fuller maintained that gospel preaching must include exhortations to *all* to repent and believe.

⁵⁶ Oliver (2006) ably covers the arguments of the key disputants in the controversies that marked out the Particular Baptists from the General Baptists.

⁵⁷ These included: British and Foreign Bible Society (1804); Aged Pilgrims' Friendly Society (1807); Gospel Tract Society (1824); Trinitarian Bible Society (1831); Free Church of England (1844); The Protestant Alliance (1845); Scottish Reformation Society (1850); Scottish

2.6 Summing up and concluding

In this chapter, I sketched a history of the Reformational movement and of English Calvinism.

The legacy of Kuyper developed by Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven is one that is rich, biblical and integrated. Reformational ideas take seriously the cultural mandate to open up and develop the creation. These Reformational ideas, which include common grace, a Christian worldview (based on creation, fall and redemption), the antithesis, sphere sovereignty, the distinction between the church as institute and as organism, the distinction between normal and abnormal, the role of religious presuppositions, the role of – and relationship of – philosophy and theology, modal aspects, ground-motives, the role of law, all provide tools for the development of God's good creation. And this, so that humans can be responsive and responsible stewards. This opening up and developing of the creation includes socio-political ideas and scholarship.

I have then sketched a brief introduction to the development of English Calvinism, which seems to have ignored these cultural aspects. So, what can we learn from these historical developments? What is their significance for the dialogue between English Calvinism and the Reformational 'party'?

In England, the Reformation and hence the introduction of Calvinism was initially from the top down. The role of the Established Church within English culture, and the fact that it is Established, stands against Kuyper's concept of sphere sovereignty. The English

Reformation Society (1851); Church Association (1865); The Protestant Truth Society (1889); The Bible League Trust (1892); The National Church League (1906); The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (1952); The Church Society (1950); Sovereign Grace Union (SGU) (1914); Fellowship of Evangelical Churchmen (1918); Bible Churchmen's Society (1922); British Evangelical Council (1952); Banner of Truth Trust (1957); Latimer Trust (1960); British Reformed Fellowship (1990).

⁵⁸ These included the following: *Gospel Herald* (1833-1970); *Gospel Standard Magazine* (1835); *Earthen Vessel* (1845); *Bible League Quarterly* (1892); *Christian's Pathway* (1897); *Protestant Alliance Magazine* (1898); *Peace and Truth* (1917); *Free Grace Record* (1920-1970); *Evangelical Quarterly* (1929); *Banner of Truth Magazine* (1955); *Eternal Truth* (1959); *The Evangelical Times* (1967); *New Focus* (1996); *Reformation Today* (1970); *Grace Magazine* (1970) (This was formed by the merger of the *Free Grace Herald* and *The Gospel Herald*); *Foundations* (1978); and the *British Reformed Journal* (1993)

⁵⁹ It should be noted that there is a large overlap in personnel in the organizations and in the magazines. For example, S.M. Houghton (1899-1987) was an editor for the *Banner of Truth*, he edited and wrote for *The Bible League Quarterly*, his pamphlet on William Tyndale which was published by the SGU and he wrote a biography of William Tiptaft, which was published by The Abbey Baptist Church – a Particular Baptist church (Houghton, 1988). Another example is Michael Kimmitt, (1929-2016) from 1982-1993 he was active within the SGU and was editor, at different times, of *Peace and Truth* and *The British Reformed Journal* (Williams, 2016).

Reformation is very much linked to the state; it was the state – or the monarch – that dictated whether the country was Roman Catholic or Protestant. In this way, however unconsciously, the state linked to the church and church linked to the state – this symbiotic relationship formed part of the English ‘psyche’. This may in part explain some of the reluctance to adopt Reformational views which seemed to advocate sphere sovereignty and a church-state independence which went against ‘English-ness’. The notion that Reformational philosophy was a foreign (Dutch) import was also a point against it. Interestingly, it was its importation from North America, via the Dutch immigration, that seemed to make it that little more palatable.

The Great Ejection led to a privatisation of the gospel among many of the non-Conformists and this, with the incipient individualisation of the Puritans, led to a reduced view of the scope of the gospel and to the seeming attractiveness of a Christian sub-version of the nature and grace paradigm (to be discussed in the next chapter). Although English Calvinists had a corporate view of the church this went only so far. The corporate view envisaged only an aggregation of elected individuals. In addition, the concept of the church focused primarily on the church as institute, there was little that could be seen as Kuyper’s organic body. For some (e.g. Engelsma (2002) in an article on Northern Ireland’s Covenant Protestant Reformed Church website⁶⁰) this meant the church institution was seen as the kingdom of God, what occurred outside of the church’s metaphorical walls such as scholarship, science, philosophy, politics and so forth were seen as being religiously neutral activities. There is little notion within English Calvinism of Christians organising together, as the church-organism, to engage in educational, social or political action. This is a symptom of a grace and nature dualism and of a pietistic approach to Christianity.

These were some of the factors that meant that the Reformational perspective could not find fertile soil in the UK. These issues are examined in more in depth and are discussed in the next chapters.

⁶⁰ Available on line: <http://www.cprf.co.uk/pamphlets/kingdomofGod.htm#churchwork>

Chapter 3

English Calvinism and socio-political relevance

3.1 Introduction

Kuyper advocated an integrated all-of-life approach to the Christian religion. His was a comprehensive perspective. In the previous chapter, we have seen that one of the fruits of Kuyper's Reformational heritage was the creation of a rich, integral Christian tradition in philosophy and scholarship. This, in turn, has stimulated concrete educational, political, and other forms of social action and the creation of Christian associations, political parties, unions and so on. By contrast, English Calvinism has never reached such outstanding results. At a certain stage, however, English Calvinism and the Reformational community came into contact and had ample opportunities for dialogue and interaction (see, for example, Bishop, 2015, 2016b). It would be natural to imagine that English Calvinism would immediately take advantage of the rich resources developed by fellow-Calvinists. Yet, this was rarely the case.

The key questions in this chapter are: why was the integral or public model of religion, proposed by the Reformational school, not widely accepted in Britain and particularly by English Calvinists? To what extent has an ecclesiastisation of English Christianity reduced the importance of developing an integral all-of-life-redeemed approach to Christianity? What has affected English Calvinists in their view of the scope and range of the gospel? Is it possible to penetrate to the pre-scientific roots of their theorising? In other words, can one get a precise idea of the worldview or ground-motive that they adopted?⁶¹ To answer these questions, I attempted to identify the philosophical as well as the deeper pre-scientific roots of the public/ private dichotomy adopted by English Calvinism and of the consequent rejection of the Reformational approach.

⁶¹ Ground-motives can be differentiated from worldviews, but like worldviews they are fundamental for life and faith, and both operate at a pre-theoretical level. In this study, I use the two terms as synonyms (see § 1.8.6 above).

This chapter focuses especially on issues pertaining to the possibility and necessity of Christian politics and social action, Christian cultural formation, the role of the church-institution and so forth. In the next chapter, the focus is restricted, so to speak, to more specific issues concerning scholarship, the relations among sciences, philosophy and theology and the like.

Coming back to the lack of enthusiasm of English Calvinism for the 'all of life' Reformational approach, my hypothesis is that it is mainly due to the fact that, traditionally, English Calvinism had taken a reduced approach to religion. This comprehensive—reduced clash may be one of the key reasons for the lack of adoption of the Reformational approach and for the sometimes-vehement rejection of its Christian philosophy within the English Calvinist scene.

Such an approach may also lead to the privatisation of Christianity. According to my hypotheses, this may be the result of a nature—grace ground-motive and is one of the reasons why English Calvinism has often been inclined towards pietism. In what follows, the roots of a certain inclination towards individualism are also investigated and I suggest that a 'creation deficit can lead to a cultural deficit with the result that Christianity becomes individually focused. This individualism may be traced back, as I have suggested, to some specific events in the history of English Calvinism. Yet one might also wonder, for example, whether it has anything to do with the influence of the Keswick movement and of the charismatic movement. Both of these movements emphasise the private over the public and accept the privatisation of religion. Apart from these 'external' influences, however, the focus of this study is on identifying the particular worldview that shapes the views, attitudes and characteristics of English Calvinism. My hypothesis is that this worldview is a particular version of the nature—grace paradigm.

One of the consequences of the particular versions of the nature—grace perspective adopted by many Calvinists and Evangelicals⁶² is a downplaying of the motif of creation and an emphasis on fall and redemption. Redemption is then seen in anthropocentric terms rather than in terms of a restoration or transformation of creation and culture. Hence, the focus on (a narrow understanding of) soteriology and ecclesiology.

Another consequence of this approach has been to elevate the activities of the church-institution over other activities and institutions, to prioritise evangelism and (church-) mission above any social involvement or cultural transformation. And where social involvement has

⁶² Many British Calvinists such as J.I. Packer and D.M. Lloyd-Jones also regard themselves as Evangelicals. From an international point of view there is an overlap between Evangelicalism and Calvinism, although some Evangelicals are strongly anti-Calvinist. The downplaying of the creation-motive, mentioned above, is also typical of many non-Calvinist Evangelicals.

been advocated it was usually seen as a form of pre-evangelism or, in the case of the High Calvinists, as something done out of mercy and compassion. In the next section, I provide a brief sketch of the English Calvinist attitude towards socio-political involvement. I do so by briefly referring to the work of some of the most outstanding authors within English Calvinism.

3.2 English Calvinism and socio-political involvement: a preliminary exploration

There can be no doubt that the Reformational approach to scholarship, society and culture has not been widely adopted in the UK. One of the key English Christian thinkers and promoters of Christian social involvement is the Evangelical moderate Calvinist⁶³ John R.W. Stott (1921-2011). Stott was the founder of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC). His successor at LICC was Elaine Storkey - a Reformational thinker.⁶⁴ Stott was also the person who suggested the establishment of a Yorkshire version of LICC which was to become the West Yorkshire School of Christian Studies (which became known by the acronym WYSOCS).⁶⁵ One would then expect to find a strong Kuyperian, if not Dooyeweerdian strain, within Stott's writings. However, this appears not to be the case. There is no mention of Kuyper or of any Kuyperian influence in any of Stott's biographies (Chapman, 2011; Dudley-Smith, 2001).

Likewise, in Stott's main works on social issues, there is no mention of Kuyper. The only mention (I could find) of Kuyper is in his *The Contemporary Christian* (1992). In the chapter on 'Jesus Christ is Lord', he identifies six dimensions to commitment to Christ: the intellectual, moral, vocational, social, political and global dimensions. In the social dimension, he quotes Kuyper.

'It was his inaugural address at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880 that Abraham Kuyper, who was later to become Prime Minister of the Netherlands, said: 'There is not one inch in the entire area of human life about which Christ, who is Sovereign of all, does not cry out "Mine!"' (Stott, 1992:97).

⁶³ I use the term *moderate Calvinism* to describe those who may adhere to only four of the classical 'five points' of Calvinist doctrine; they hold their Calvinism lightly and may often prefer the term *Evangelical to Calvinist* because of the perceived dogmatic elements within Calvinism.

⁶⁴ Storkey was awarded the Kuyper prize in April 2016.

⁶⁵ It is now known as ThinkingFaith Network.

Stott continues:

‘similarly, Dr David Gill of New College, Berkely, has written: “Jesus is Lord not just of the inner life, after life, family life, and church life, but of intellectual life, political life – all domains”’ (Stott, 1992:97).

Stott provides a reference for the Gill quote but not for Kuyper.

Another ‘elder statesman’ of English Evangelicalism and Calvinism is James Packer. Again, there is no mention of Kuyper in Packer’s biography (McGrath, 1977). Packer is aware of Kuyper as he mentions him in several of his books and papers (e.g. Packer, 1954). However, there are little or no Kuyperian emphases in Packer’s works, as in most social or public theology produced by English Calvinists (or Evangelicals). In fact, very little was produced on social issues.

In his book *Transforming the World?* (1998) David W. Smith examines ‘the social impact of British Evangelicalism’ but omits any discussion of Kuyper or Kuyperians until this at the conclusion of the book:

‘however, there is evidence that Evangelicals are beginning to realize that historical Calvinism represented a “fundamental alteration in Christian sensibility” in which flight from the problems of the social world to a privatized religion of personal devotion was replaced by “the vision and practice of working to reform the social world in obedience to God” (Wolterstorff: 1983, 11). The discovery of rich traditions of social theology to be found in the Dutch Reformed movement enables Calvinist Evangelicals to develop a Christian response to the problems of the modern world and this tradition, which anticipates the rejuvenation of the wastelands of modern society instead of their abandonment, may yet have much to contribute to the future of Evangelicalism’ (Smith, 1998:110).

Why did it take so long for English Calvinists (and Evangelicals) to start looking at social ethics or at political issues? The topic of Christianity and science had long been debated and discussed, so why not art or politics? As I hope to show, one reason is the perceived neutrality of, for example, art and politics in regard to the Christian faith. Art and politics posed no threat to the Scripture, whereas science seemingly did. Being in a minority has meant that English Calvinists have had a defensive mentality. Hence, the focus and resources were placed on apologetics and the apologetic battlefield was over science. This perceived neutrality was in contrast to a Dooyeweerdian approach and thus provided one more reason for ignoring the Reformational approach.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth-century a number of Evangelical organisations had sprung up to fight against the (alleged) conflicts with science: Christians in Science and

the Victoria Institute (1865) were two main ones. Christians in Science and its previous incarnation as the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship (1950)⁶⁶ are examined further in Chapter 4. On the political, social or cultural scene, however, there was much less activity and organisation.

In the next section, I take a look at some of the characteristics of English Calvinism that are relevant in relation to social involvement, cultural and political relevance – and where possible I substantiate them in the words of English Calvinist authors – hence the rather extensive use of quotations, for which I appeal to the patience of the reader.

3.3 Some characteristics of English Calvinism

3.3.1 Individualism

I broadly define individualism as a position that deems the individual to be more important or primary than society as a whole. In this sense, individualism has been a key component of English Calvinism and Christianity in general. The Keswick movement with its emphasis on personal holiness and the charismatic movement (with its emphasis on the personal infilling of the spirit, on evangelism and on the personal decision to follow Christ), are all symptoms of an individualism that is prevalent in UK Christianity.⁶⁷ Extreme individualism has been avoided by Calvinists yet there is still an individualist inclination, especially in their approaches to extra-ecclesiastical matters.

A.N. Triton⁶⁸ has as the subtitle to his (1978) book: *The Christian and Social Involvement*. The phrase *the Christian* is a recurring one in the book. In it he expounds a number of propositions. The first is:

‘Proposition 1: The Christian is divinely intended to be part of society and to have an influence on it’ (Triton, 1978:10).

⁶⁶ It began in the 1940s as one of the professional groups of the UCCF – it became known as the RSCF from 1950 onwards – in 1980 it became known as Christians in Science (Rios, 2014:73-104).

⁶⁷ For the Calvinists holiness was a gradual achievement, for the Keswick and holiness movement it was sudden. As Bebbington puts it: ‘the contrast between the new holiness teaching and traditional views was probably most marked on the issue of whether sanctification is sudden or gradual’ (Bebbington, 1995:168). The origins of the holiness movement in Britain can be seen in the conference Kuyper attended in Brighton with Pearsall Smith (see Chapter 2). Calvinist works that were anti-Keswick included: G.T. Fox *Perfectionism* (1873); J.C. Ryle *Holiness* (1952 [1877]); and Popham (2006 [original 1930]).

⁶⁸ The complete title is: *Salt to the World: The Christian and Social Involvement*. Triton is the pseudonym of Oliver Barclay – Barclay could be described as an Evangelical Calvinist.

It is noticeable that he writes the 'Christian' and not 'Christians'. There is no sense - or at least no emphasis on - Christians organising together for involvement. He later writes about politics:

'in practice it is often not possible to do much unless you are willing to join a political party and play a part in politics. This can be especially difficult if you are not fully in agreement with any party's politics' (Triton, 1978:44).

This at first seems like good advice; however, on closer inspection, it raises one important issue: the notion of a Christian political party doesn't seem to be an option.⁶⁹ (This idea is examined below.)

Russell (1973:66) cites Douglas Johnson:

'while emphasising that there is a distinctive biblical worldview and while inculcating the more general implications of the Gospel with regard to society, [the Christian's] *primary* concern is with the individual's experience of the saving work of Christ in his own life' (Johnson, 1964:177).

Likewise, the Evangelical Calvinist, Fred Catherwood states in these terms the aim of his book, *The Christian in Industrial Society* (1966):

'the purpose of this book is to work out the implications in industrial society of the Christian doctrine of the individual, rather than to prove this doctrine all over again to people who substantially accept it' (Catherwood, 1966:xiv).

Brian Griffiths,⁷⁰ the editor of *Is Revolution Change?* (1972) writes:⁷¹

'if revolution is so categorically rejected, what then is the Christian way? As these essays have pointed out, the Christian starts not with society and its

⁶⁹ It is worth mentioning here that the existence of a Christian political party, even within the Reformed tradition, does not imply the acceptance of Reformational principles or philosophy. There could be a number of reasons why Reformed political parties exist that are not connected to Reformational views. For example, the Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP) is a Dutch political party that was founded by conservative members of the ARP in 1918. However, it is not based on Reformational principles but reflects more a right wing Christian fundamentalist view.

⁷⁰ It's not clear if Griffiths is a Calvinist – yet he writes as part of IVF/UCCF, an organization that was strongly influenced by Evangelical Calvinists, although many of them didn't 'advertise' their Calvinism. This was in an attempt to maintain unity with Evangelicals who were wary of the label Calvinist. Griffith's views here, however, are typical of many Evangelical Calvinists.

⁷¹ Catherwood and Griffiths were both prominent in the IVF and both were involved with the Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher. Neither was therefore against Christian political involvement. Catherwood was married to D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' daughter.

problems but with the individual. It is he himself who first needs to be changed — and not just superficially, but radically' (Griffiths, 1972:108).

The final pages of the book have this statement from Griffiths:

'and through the unglamorous daily round of individuals living out their Christian lives, ultimately society itself can be renewed and changed' (Griffiths, 1972:110-111).

This despite earlier, in the same collection of essays, Samuel Escobar, from a South American perspective, argues:

'so often the most urgently-needed social changes will not come just from changed individuals but also from changed social structures' (Escobar, 1972:105).

Christian action is thus often regarded, in English Calvinist circles, as church action or as individual's action - seldom as a communal non-church or extra-church action. (It should also be noted that the church is often also regarded as being constituted by individuals.) In the next section, this dilemma is discussed and a possible alternative suggested.

3.3.2 Individual or communal involvement? What about Christian political parties?

Tingle, writing from a Reformed perspective, in her *The Church of England and Politics* (1990) at the start makes a distinction between the involvement of the individual Christian in politics and the church's involvement:

'when I talk about Church involvement in politics, I am referring to the involvement of the Church as an institution. I am not referring to the responsible involvement of Christians as individuals in political processes, since I hope we would agree that this is part of good citizenship in a democracy and, as such, is something which should be encouraged' (Tingle, 1990:235).

Tingle is concerned with what she perceives as the Church of England's 'marked preference for a left-wing stance' (Tingle, 1990:237), a view that, in her opinion, comes close to an endorsement of liberation theology. She quotes the conservative MP Sir Hal Miller, who claims that churchmen are 'speaking with a great deal of certainty in the realm of politics but with increasing uncertainty in the realm of the things of the Spirit' (Tingle, 1990:238). Tingle sees this politicisation of the church as being a new phenomenon. She notes that some churchmen claim to have some support from William Temple; she admits he

wrote 'profusely on political matters' but she insists that 'he never claimed that his views constituted a political programme which the Church as a whole ought to endorse' (Tingle, 1990:238).

She then itemises three dangers:

- '1. Political statements by bishops or in Church reports are, by their nature, vested with a certain amount of authority—but do they really deserve it? (...)
2. Equally important is the fact that this preoccupation with politics has, to use the jargon of economic theory, an 'opportunity cost' in that it diverts time and energy from the Church's primary mission of proclaiming the Christian gospel—surely something which is desperately needed in Britain today.
3. Turning specifically to the theologies of liberation and their growing influence on the Church of England, evangelicals in particular should be aware that although they have political implications, their profoundest implication is for the Christian Church. By so redefining Christianity as to empty it of the heart of the Christian gospel of salvation, they pose a fundamental threat to the Church itself' (Tingle, 1990:243).

She concludes that the priority for the church must be evangelism. Tingle makes the mistake of assuming that the choice is between individual Christian involvement and engagement of the institutional church. She is right that the priority of the institutional church should not be political activity. But she is wrong when assuming that the only political option is for the individual Christian to be involved. In fact, individual Christians can become members of Christian political organisations.

One of the issues in Britain has been the question 'Can there be a Christian party?' This is an important question for a Christian social and political philosophy. In the collection of essays edited by Chaplin (1992), Donald Shell (1992a, 1992b) of Bristol University, and Paul Marshall (1992a, 1992b) debate the question. Shell, who retired as a lecturer in politics after over 40 years in 2009, defended the position that a distinctively Christian politics is impossible.⁷² His reasons for this are worth examining.

For Shell, the formation of a Christian political party will do more harm than good (1992b:69). He doesn't, however, articulate what that harm would be. He seems to suggest

⁷² Shell was an editorial consultant for *Third Way* and wrote a political column for them for two years: 'Shell Guide to Politics'. He now lives in Oban, Scotland, and is a lay reader and people's warden at St John's cathedral. It's not fully clear if he was a card-carrying Calvinist, but his views are typical of British Calvinism and of twentieth-century British Evangelicals.

that the arguments proposed ‘wish to limit God’s activity in the world of Christians’ (*Ibid.*:69), but again he doesn’t explain why this limitation would be implied. He makes the case for distinctive Christian principles rather than policies. Then he maintains that Christian principles are already expressed within existing political parties in Britain. Therefore, we should be working to fight to regain that heritage. From a Reformational point of view, of course, to do this doesn’t negate the need for a Christian political party. It is not a case of either/ or but rather both/ and. The fact that some prefer to work within present parties, working out their Christian faith, doesn’t necessarily mean that others should not form a Christian political party. Shell notes:

‘the true life of faith involves working in a committed way within this world of institutions, while very deliberately withholding one’s ultimate commitment from any of them. This is a fallen world: the effects of sin are pervasive’ (Shell, 1992b:68-69).

Indeed – but this is also why there is a need to be involved in institutions, to transform them and to create new institutions, such as political parties, as a means of transformation as well.⁷³

Shell also poses the question: ‘how seriously do we take the doctrine of the sovereignty of God?’ The question is posed to show that God can be and is involved in working through governments. This is not in dispute. But this again suggests that Shell is thinking in terms of *either* work through the present parties (as God in his sovereignty is doing) *or* set up Christian political parties. For Shell, furthermore, Christian distinctives are seen in terms of input (attitudes, values) rather than output (political policies) (*Ibid.*:70). Here it seems we have a private/ public dualism manifesting itself in terms of attitudes and motives being more identifiably Christian than policies and praxis. As he says, ‘it is not the policies themselves which are distinctly Christian, but the pattern of policies espoused’ (*Ibid.*:67). However, it could be asked: if there can be Marxist politics why not Christian politics?

Oliver Barclay (writing as A.N. Triton), wrote a chapter on politics with the title *Material Progress and Politics* (Triton, 1970:44-79). He starts by noting that we have a mandate to subdue the earth. The fall has made it ‘doubly important (and also relatively distasteful), but it has not altered the basic mandate to control nature and use it for good’ (Triton, 1970:44). He maintains that the state is part of God’s providential plan to ‘create good order in society, and to maintain it’ (*Ibid.*:48) and that ‘there is no indication in the Bible that the church’s job is to govern society’ (*Ibid.*:51). He poses a question: ‘what then is the relation between the

⁷³ Of course, institutions are able to deal with issues where individuals cannot do much.

function of the church and the function of the individual Christian in this area?' (*Ibid.*:52). Here again the dilemma lies in a choice between the church and the individual – these, it seems, are the only options. Yet again there is no notion of Christians organising corporately together for political action.

As editor of the papers on an Affinity Conference, Clark poses and answers this question:

'could there conceivably be a Christian political party with the specifically Christian answer to this question? Surely not!' (Clark, 2005:291).

Helm, a English Calvinist and philosopher, in the same volume discusses the characteristics of the pluralist society in which we live (Helm, 2005). Again, despite Kuyper's doctrine of sphere sovereignty providing a clear Christian framework for pluralism there is no mention of Kuyper or his approach. Of the six main papers in this volume, two deal specifically with historical aspects (Samuel Rutherford and Edward Miall), two with biblical texts and only one with any philosophical or political theory (Helm, 2005). None provides an approach to *Christian* politics.

As I shall show, having excluded (or at least heavily discouraged) the possibility of forming Christian political organisations, the focus of English Calvinism remains on the institutional church to the exclusion of the church as organism. As a consequence, the whole Christian life will tend to be 'church-ified'. This issue is explored in the next section.

3.3.3 Ecclesiastisation

What is the role of the church? This is an important question. Some criticism has been made of the Reformational movement in that it appears to devalue the role of the church. One could argue that it appears to downplay its role because others have elevated it too much. Thus, giving the church its rightful place appears to be a downgrade. However, that is not the full picture. Kuyper certainly had a high consideration of the church, yet he did not regard it as 'superior' to other Christian institutions. The same is true for Dooyeweerd (1953-58, 3:525-526) (see further my discussion in § 5.4.4).

A few themes emerge in the English Calvinist approach to socio-political issues. First, individualism is maintained. It might seem that giving priority to the church goes against the notion of individualism mentioned above. However, this need not be the case if the church is viewed as a collection or aggregation of individuals. Secondly, 'the church' usually participates in extra-ecclesiastical activities not communally, but through the voluntary involvement of *individual* members. Thirdly, the visible church is regarded as the pre-

eminent institution among other institutions. In this section, instead of dealing with these three themes separately, I keep them together, to better show the interplay between them.

In the Editorial to the first edition of *The Banner of Truth* magazine the staunch Calvinist editors Sidney Norton (1907-1994) and Iain Murray (b 1931) (Norton & Murray, 1955:2), make an illuminating statement: 'God values nothing in a nation apart from His Church'. Norton at the time was the minister of St John's Church, Oxford,⁷⁴ and Murray his assistant.⁷⁵ Norton was struck by the relevance of Psalm 60 to the situation Britain:

- '1 You have rejected us, God, and burst upon us;
you have been angry—now restore us!
- 2 You have shaken the land and torn it open;
mend its fractures, for it is quaking.
- 3 You have shown your people desperate times;
you have given us wine that makes us stagger.
- 4 But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner
to be unfurled against the bow'.

The opening lines of the editorial echo these of the Psalmist:

'Dear Reader, — We are living in the midst of a dying nation. Throughout this century successive partial judgements — wars and bloodshed — testimonies of the displeasure of God, have fallen upon us' (Norton & Murray, 1955:2).

The key to the revival or judgment, for Norton and Murray, is the church:

'Therefore when the church in a nation departs from the truth, God has no longer any cause to keep that nation in being' (Norton & Murray, 1955:2).

They also warn about a false confidence among Evangelicals, that 'has arisen out of certain recent events and evangelistic campaigns' (Norton & Murray, 1955:4). This was a reference to the recent Billy Graham meetings in London 1954-1955.

⁷⁴ St John's was a Free Church of England. The Free Church of England was formed in 1844 as a reaction against the Tractarian movement within the Church of England. It united with the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1927. The Oxford congregation began in 1930. Norton was the pastor until his resignation in 1976. The church closed in 1978.

⁷⁵ Murray was the assistant to Norton from 1955-1956. He was instrumental in the start of the Banner of Truth Publishing Trust, the first books were published in 1957.

Murray saw these events as a watershed in English Christianity (Murray, 2000). Graham had the audacity to work with English Christians who were not Evangelicals and were even against Evangelical approaches. A second watershed for Murray was D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' call (at the 1966 Evangelical Alliance Conference) for Evangelical unity and for distancing themselves from mixed congregations. Stott as chair responded to Lloyd-Jones.

The difference between the two was over the nature of the church. Lloyd-Jones wanted the Anglicans to be Anglican Evangelicals (with the stress on Evangelicals), but Stott Evangelical Anglicans (with the stress on Anglicans). The difference is subtle, but it forged a wedge theologically and philosophically between Stott, a moderate Calvinist, and Lloyd-Jones, a self-declared Calvinist. The nature of the church was important to both.⁷⁶

For Murray, who had been an assistant to Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel (1956–59), the key issue is 'who is a Christian?'; for Duffield, an Anglican Calvinist, the issue is the doctrine of the church (Duffield, 1973:164). For Duffield the church is never 'pure', consisting only of believers, it is always a 'mixed' church. This is his basis for involvement within the *Anglican* church (Duffield, 1973:164).

From a Reformational point of view, Revd Richard Russell (1973:10-20) raises some important points. Not least, Russell notes the distinction made by Evangelicals (and English Calvinists influenced by the Westminster Confession) between the invisible and the visible church. He notes three points; the second and third points are quite important.

2. The visible church becomes identified with and equated to the ecclesiastical organisation. The church is then reduced to a worshipping organisation.
3. The invisible church is the sum of individuals rather than members of the body of Christ.

The Individual or *the Christian* are again the preferred terms, used by Evangelical Calvinists, rather than collective nouns like nation, body, community.

When church is mentioned, in most English Calvinist literature, the context is usually that of the local or institutional church, which is the church as institute in Kuyper's terms. Little mention is made of the church as organism. One major problem with English Calvinist

⁷⁶ Lloyd-Jones' call was in many ways similar to that of Robert Browne (1550-1633) who was a separatist Puritan and has been described as the founder of Congregationalism. He gave his name to a separatist movement: the Brownists. In 1581 he wrote a *Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Any*. Browne was one of the first seceders from the Church of England. Browne later returned to the Episcopal fold. He realised that reform was slow within the confines of the Established church.

ecclesiology is the failure to recognise, the church as organism (on the institute/ organism distinction in Kuyper see § 2.2.8.a).

This failure is evident in Oliver Barclay (writing as Triton, 1970):

'what then is the relation between the function of the church and the function of the individual Christian in this area [philanthropy and political action]? There are two levels of action — philanthropy, to meet the needs of individuals or groups, and political action to alter the laws or structures. Each of these can be tackled by three categories or types of action: personal, corporate but unofficial, and corporate and official church action' (Triton, 1970:52).

No mention is made of Christians organising together (e.g. for political action) as members of the church organism.

'But what we have said so far implies also that Christians should be individually and corporately involved in political action, although we believe the church, as an official church, should not' (Triton, 1970:54).

Here again is a reinforcement of the impression that the church is thought of as the institutional church — despite the mention of corporate action. However, he does go on to remark:

'if individual political action is justified, then corporate action by groups of Christians raises no fresh problems and is far more likely to be effective' (Triton, 1970:56).

And further:

'as we will show, official church action is another matter, but that Christians who can influence affairs should often act corporately seems certain if Christians are to act at all' (Triton, 1970:56).

This seems to open up the possibility of communal Christian political action outside the ecclesiastical sphere. Yet this possibility seems to be again denied in the next few pages.

'The most controversial problem, however, is whether the visible church as such (i.e. the denominations or local churches) should become a pressure group or should enter directly into politics. We would maintain that it should not do so for six main reasons, most of which can apply equally to the proposal to form officially Christian political parties' (Triton, 1970:62).

Note the use of the concept 'visible church' here. What, then, are the six reasons?

1. All political action is in the nature of a compromise. It is always a question of more or less - as much good as possible. (...) A church directly represented in Parliament, therefore, has at times to support compromise measures which the public will mistakenly imagine to be the church's ideal (*Ibid.*:62-63).
2. Much legislation, even when it is entirely wholesome, has side effects or implications which the church, as a church, could not entirely and unanimously endorse (*Ibid.*:63).
(...) But again, and again, where the church has entered politics, or a political party has been created specifically to stand for Christian principles and to be the political representative of the churches, this has been damaging in the long run. What may have started by being a progressive and constructive policy has become fossilized and after a generation or two has tied the church to an outlook which is reactionary and even unjust (*Ibid.*:63-64).
3. It is this kind of issue also that often divides Christians. On the main objectives they may be agreed, but when it comes down to practical policies, they often are not. (*Ibid.*:64) (...) Political issues are hardly ever clear moral issues - least of all if they are party political issues (*Ibid.*:65).
4. It would be difficult for a politically involved church, if it is ready to commit itself on many matters, to refuse to take any line at all on other aspects of legislation which might be exceedingly controversial from the point of view of interests totally irrelevant to the Christian position (*Ibid.*:65).
5. The church leaders who are expected to speak may not themselves be sufficiently equipped technically to express a firm opinion (*Ibid.*:66).
6. Active political involvement by the church leads people to think that its main witness today is secular (i.e. good works in society and political programmes) (*Ibid.*:66-67).

Often the distinction is made between the individual believer and the institutional church.

'The Bible stresses the need for the Christian to do good works if he is a true believer and the church must lay upon the Christian the responsibility of being a good member of his family, society and state, and of playing a constructive part in these roles, including politics. (...) But since the church is a company of believers who meet for worship, fellowship, instruction and corporate witness, its primary concern in society is that there should be Christians worthy of the name. They are members of the community and must there be 'light' and 'salt'. We have agreed that there is an important place for corporate philanthropy by the local church. But even that can be dangerous, because practical philanthropy cannot be the main task of the local church, and where it has been so the revealed truths of the gospel have as a rule soon been lost sight of. When it comes to politics, however,

God has appointed someone else to be chiefly concerned with the social order that is the state. The Christian minister is not, and should not be, primarily a social worker' (Triton, 1970:67).

The following story from Barclay is telling:

'a prominent minister who recently resigned his pastoral charge to become a full-time worker with a relief organization may have been merely recognizing where his true gifts lay. Perhaps he was not gifted as a minister. He justified his action, however, by saying that relief work was a greater Christian priority than the ministry and that both he and others could do far more good by entering into relief work than by leading a church. In this he was wrong. Relief work is only treating some of the symptoms of man's disorder. It is at best superficial and shortsighted to make this the main concern of Christianity. We must treat the symptoms but, when no-one else knows how to get at the disease itself, we are totally irresponsible if we abandon what we alone can do to become entirely preoccupied with the short-term palliative. If politically-minded people charge Christians with a failure to see beyond philanthropy, we must reply with the charge that they fail to see beyond politics. Philanthropy and political action there must be, but the church's primary task is to go right down to the root of the trouble. The church must be itself and not try feebly to ape 'the powers that be' (Triton, 1970:68).

Barclay obviously reveals an implicit dualism by maintaining that church ministry is more important than relief work.

A similar approach is adopted by Griffiths (1972):

'on the other hand, though the individual Christian has a clear duty to be involved, the church *qua* church should not be involved if that involvement necessitates its taking up a political position. The prime duty of the church is to proclaim the eternal truths which hold true regardless of the characteristics of the society. (...) But if as an institution aligned itself to a specific *political* programme to combat any of these, it is almost certain it would jeopardize its proclamation of the only true gospel, which ultimately is its *raison d'être*' (Griffiths, 1972:110).

Many English Calvinists regret the failure or decline of the church and see the remedy as being a return to New Testament practices. Typical is the view of Fulton in the Calvinist *Gospel Magazine*:

'TRULY the church in our days is in dire need of some sort of boost if it is to survive. Atheism, unbelief, hypocrisy, ecumenism, entertainment and the

media mania prevail everywhere. A return to the old-time Gospel and the old-time Bible — with its old-time message of sin and condemnation and blood redemption — is totally opposed by most of the elite religious professionals of our day. Let us notice the early New Testament church' (Fulton, 2011:61).

He concludes his article:

'the church of today, as a whole, knows nothing about the power of God, about the resurrection of Christ and His eternal glory, nor about grace. What we have is a social gospel and a philosophical approach to man's heart needs - instead of the New Testament Gospel that reaches the condition of a poor sinner who is brought under conviction and sees his need of mercy' (Fulton, 2011:63).

Here a dichotomy is placed between the 'social gospel' and the 'New Testament Gospel' (note Fulton's use of upper case and lower case). The social gospel then is a false gospel and opposed to the New Testament Gospel.

Another symptom of the emphasis on the institutional church is the use of the phrases (full-time) *Christian ministry* or *Christian leadership*. It is, almost without exception, used to describe some form of (institutional) church ministry. Anglican Calvinist Charles Bridges' (1794-1869) book *The Christian Ministry* (1850) is concerned solely with church ministry. His elevated view of the church is expressed in the opening chapter of this work:

'the Church is the mirror that reflects the whole effulgence of the Divine character. It is the grand scene, in which the perfections of Jehovah are displayed to the universe. The revelations made to the Church—the successive grand events in her history—and, above all—the manifestation of "the glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ"—furnish even to the heavenly intelligences fresh subjects of adoring contemplation' (Bridges, 2013 [1850]:1).

My point is not that the church isn't important but that such an emphasis has been placed on the church-institution by English Calvinism, that other areas of Christian ministry have been neglected. Such a book as Bridges' is important, but it would have been better titled *A Church Ministry* rather than *The Christian Ministry*. As it stands it gives the impression that the Christian ministry is limited to the (institutional) church.

This emphasis on the institutional church also leads to a downplaying of creation, so that the church, rather than creation, is largely seen as the target and realm of redemption and as the sole area for ministry.

3.3.4 A downplaying of creation

When we mention the term *creation*, for many Christians it conjures up the conflict between creation and evolution. Creation for most is a limited concept. It is something that happened in the past - God created the universe; the question is how and when did he create it? The keys on the keyboard have made much sound over this issue of creation.

However, for most English Christians, creation doesn't conjure up the idea of a development of culture, a cultivation, the idea of an on-going creation to which the cultural mandate of Genesis 1 and 2 refers. Creation is seen in static terms – see below § 3.5. Fall and redemption receive more emphasis than creation and its development. This results in an anthropocentric version of Christianity in contrast to an integrated Reformational perspective where the whole of creation is the scope of redemption. This is evidenced more in what English Calvinists don't say rather than in what they do say. However, in a book-review,⁷⁷ Ian Shaw openly questions the (Reformational) idea of an 'opening up' of creation and the cultural impact of redemption and maintains that 'evangelism (...) is exclusively personal' (Shaw, 1987:28). The American Calvinist Cornelius Pronk, in an article, reproduced on the British Banner of Truth website, finds Kuyper's common grace approach problematic.

'The question is not whether Christians have a task in this world or not, but what this task consists of and what is the Scriptural basis and warrant for it. Kuyper found the basis in the doctrine of common grace. This doctrine, or at least the way he formulated it, is open to serious question' (Pronk, 2012:np).

He goes on:

'for [Kuyper] common grace is primarily a grace directed to the redemption of the cosmos and culture' (*ibid.*).

It is this cosmo-centric view that Pronk takes a dislike to as it promotes, what he perceives to be: 'an essentially optimistic view of culture and the world' (*ibid.*).

The focus on fall and redemption rather than creation is also evidenced in the emphasis on redemption in terms of humanity rather than transforming creation. From this perspective, the gospel is seen in narrow terms. It is generally understood as having an anthropocentric rather than cosmo-centric scope. Then the scope is further restricted to soul-saving, to the

⁷⁷ The book reviewed was the Open Christian College's *Introduction to a Christian Worldview* (Chaplin (ed.), 1986).

detriment of culture. This can be seen in the reluctance to adopt any form of social action, let alone having a Christian justification for social action. For many, social action was and is regarded as a deviation from the core of the gospel: evangelisation. However, it has usually been a kind of evangelisation that lacks discipleship. It was almost as if for some - to put it polemically - the primary concern was about saving 'souls'. Conversion then becomes the primary aim; and conversion solves many social problems.⁷⁸

The profound significance of earthly life has not been properly apprehended in English Calvinism, as 'grace' takes priority over 'nature' (see § 3.4.3 below). This results in a minimising or even a denigration of creation. This is reflected in the over emphasis on the fall. Here a brief discussion of the English Calvinist handling of the doctrine of total depravity – one of the five points of Calvinism, might be helpful.

The doctrine of total depravity was both a strength and a weakness for English Calvinists. It was a strength in that it provided a bulwark against optimistic humanism and its theological variant theological liberalism. Its weakness was that, when over emphasised, it meant an excessive emphasis on the fall. Humans were seen as fallen creatures *over and above* being created in the image of God and being receivers of grace. The biblical ground-motive (creation, fall, redemption) was morphed into:

Creation **FALL** Redemption

The fall becomes overemphasised at the expense of creation. The problem is not with the doctrine of total depravity *per se* but rather with the distortion of it. Ironically, on the one hand, the fall was over-emphasised, but on the other hand, it was 'restricted'.

The individualistic tendencies of English Calvinism were the result of an anthropocentric version of the fall-motive. People were fallen, not social institutions or cultural structures. Public institutions were regarded as being instituted after the fall (cf. Augustine⁷⁹), and therefore as a result of the fall. On the same line, the scope of redemption was humanity (especially the fiduciary and moral aspects) and not the other aspects of creation (e.g. culture). This left a cultural gap – a gap that in many cases was filled by theological liberalism and modernism.

⁷⁸ For the hyper-Calvinists this 'populating heaven', of course, was not an issue as they saw little need to *offer* the gospel. This doesn't however mean that, compared to other Calvinists in Britain, they had a broader view of the scope of the gospel.

⁷⁹ As Skillen points out: 'Augustine says that the institutions of government (and some other institutions) are unnatural. They have been instituted or permitted by God as a response to sin, to restrain and punish evildoers' (Skillen, 2014:55).

Henry Atherton, writing as the first secretary of the Sovereign Grace Union, makes this interesting observation:

‘All false views of theology start from ignorance of God and a wrong conception of the knowledge of sin. Never was there a heresy but it had something to do with an insufficient estimate of sin: this is especially so with the doctrine of Christ. A man [*sic*] who has never been made to realise the depravity and sinfulness of sin, in all its vileness, blackness, hellishness, and all manner of evil, will never realise the holiness, sinlessness and necessity of the fullness of Christ’ (Atherton, 2014:44).

It is worth noting that, although God is mentioned, the main focus is on the fall and on humanity. In terms of the worldview questions Atherton’s response seems to be of the following:

Who are we? We are fallen creatures

Where are we? In a fallen creation

What’s wrong? Total depravity, we cannot save ourselves.

What’s the remedy? The grace of God manifested in salvation for the elect.

This is, of course, the biblical picture, but importantly it is not the *full* biblical story. There is no notion of God’s good – albeit fallen – creation. In addition, the emphasis is on humanity and not on the rest of creation. It is an individualistic and anthropocentric perspective. It also endorses a nature–grace perspective. Nature is fallen, we must escape it and with the grace of God we can. Atherton, although obviously not ignorant of God’s grace, seems to be ignorant of the grace of God *within* or *for* creation. Although he holds to the creation, fall, redemption position, he distorts it so that the fall takes precedence and then morphs the threefold biblical motive into a ‘good grace-bad nature’ motive. Nature is seen primarily as fallen and thus we end up in a nature–grace dualism. A similar approach can be seen in the Victorian Calvinist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

‘Man revolted against his Maker and was determined to continue in revolt. He was evil and would have remained evil if God had not interposed. Men *go astray from God by nature*, but they only *return to God through grace*. Further, and yet further, and yet further, still, will they go away from God!’ (Spurgeon, 1909 – originally preached in 1873; my italics).

The antithesis overwhelms any common grace (see §§ 2.2.4 and 2.2.6), which means that error is to be faced and exposed wherever possible. It is difficult to imagine, for example, that these Calvinists would write about anything positive in Roman Catholicism –

or Popery as they prefer to call it. Common grace for them has no role within Popery or within any other non-Calvinist community. Listen to Atherton again:

‘it is difficult to know which error to attack and which to leave, for practically every error is being actively propagated under some insidious view: Popery, ritualism, modernism, rationalism, negative Protestantism, liberal evangelicalism, spiritualism, Christadelphianism, Christian Science, Russelism (Jehovah’s Witnesses), Unitarianism, and all forms of Arminianism’ (Atherton, 2014:44).

The antithesis triumphs over and overwhelms common grace. The irony of it is that in adopting a nature–grace position, by default it means that an originally Roman Catholic approach has shaped their worldview. These views were not solely Atherton’s own views. Atherton was writing on behalf of the Sovereign Grace Union. The vast majority of the supporters of this association would hold to this view. And it seems that not much changed in the following decades. The republication of this paper in 2014, written originally in the early twentieth century, was to commemorate the centennial of the formation of the Sovereign Grace Union. As the back cover of the book states: ‘in these addresses, [Atherton] speaks to our generation as he did in his own’.

3.3.5 The question of priorities

What are the Christians' priorities? The answer to this question often gives an insight into the worldviews adopted by those who respond.

Oliver Barclay in his 1963 booklet, *The Christian’s Approach to University Life*, makes some good points. The booklet is ‘essentially a plea for an enthusiastic and at the same time disciplined entry into student life’ (Barclay, 1963:62). He highlights that:

‘we should enjoy our work. This is a thoroughly Christian attitude, for our work is the immediate task that God has given us to do. We should find satisfaction in work well done and also take interest in our subject of study for its own sake’ (Barclay, 1963:17).

Unlike some, he does not decry the need for academic studies. However, what is most remarkable is what he doesn’t mention: the need to think Christianly about one’s subject. The inside back cover of this booklet contains adverts for the publisher’s books, ones which presumably they would think pertinent to students who read the booklet. Not surprising all the books are books on evangelism.

And as Duffield has it:

‘single-minded enthusiasm for evangelism, prayer and Bible-reading tended to discourage, in practice if not in theory, any serious examination of sacramental, cultural or Church and State questions’ (Duffield, 1973:162).

As Barclay observes:

‘strong Christians, however, are commonly too busy in church responsibilities, and churches that gladly send one of their members abroad or into the ministry are rarely eager to encourage them into the equally tough world of political life’ (Barclay, 1997:112).

This shows some concern from Barclay of involvement in political life, however, his comment makes clear that it is not a priority for many churches. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his 1979 address to the British Evangelical Council,⁸⁰ makes clear what he regards as ‘lesser matters’:

‘very well then, we are to show men and women that they are not to be over-preoccupied with lesser matters. But it does not stop at that, does it? What is the real business of the church? What is the great call to us at the present time? It is to summon men and women’s attention to the only things that are absolutely essential. Shall I put it to you like this? The great task confronting the church at the moment is to shout one little word. What is it? It is the word ‘and’; “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s *and*, *and*, to God what is God’s.” This is our calling, my friends. We are not here to discuss art, or literature, or politics, or evolution, or any one of these questions. They have their place, a little apologetic place, but not the central place. No, no! This is where we evangelicals are to come in.⁸¹ This is what we are called to proclaim: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s *and* . . .” that which the world knows nothing about and even the church seems to be forgetting at this time. It is that which is surely at the present time more important perhaps than it has ever been. We are living in a materialistic age. We are living in a sophisticated age. We are living in an age when men and women are experts on all these particular matters. You and I ought to

⁸⁰ The British Evangelical Council, originally named the British Committee for Common Evangelical Action, was formed in 1952 in Edinburgh by the Free Church of Scotland Ministers G.N.M. Collins (1901-1989), Murdoch Macrae (1900-1961) with T.H. [Theodore Harold] Bendor-Samuel (1905-1998) and E.J. Poole-Connor (1878-1962) of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches. The latter grouping was founded by Poole-Connor in 1922. The British Evangelical Council ‘re-invented itself’ as Affinity in 2004.

⁸¹ Although Lloyd-Jones is a Calvinist he also regards himself as an Evangelical. The British Evangelical Council, although designated as Evangelical is also a Calvinist organization. This again shows the overlapping boundaries of Calvinism and Evangelicalism in Britain, though of course not all Evangelicals were or are Calvinist.

be experts on the things of which they are entirely ignorant. Our supreme calling is to introduce the 'and', this vital addition.

"I want now to put what our Lord includes under this 'and' in the way in which he put it. *"And to God."* The real tragedy of the world today is that it has forgotten the supernatural. It has forgotten God. Man is in the centre—his interests, his questions, his enthusiasms, his obsessions. Man is ever before us and so our task is to proclaim the everlasting and eternal God. And we must do this in the way that our Lord himself did on this very interesting occasion. Let me remind you how he brought out this truth. It was by means of a contrast. He said, in reply to their question, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Lloyd-Jones, 1991:192-193).

The real business of the church is made very clear here and it appears not to be art, literature or politics - these issues only have apologetic value. Here is a disengaging of the cultural mandate and the discipleship mandate. Matthew 28 subsumes Genesis 1. It sets up a dualism:

God
Caesar

The main priority is what is in God's domain, and that seems to imply that art, literature, politics and evolution - as important as they may be - only have a secondary (albeit apologetic) role.

3.3.5.a Priorities and sermons

When examining Puritan preaching and writings, Davidson (2011a, b) identifies the narrow range of the topics preached on. The focus was mainly on certain doctrinal controversies and practical applications.

'Many of these Puritan books deal with doctrinal controversies, such as Popery, Arminianism, the Sabbath, and the true nature of the church, which were usually handled in a polemic or apologetic manner. The vast majority of these books, however, are sermons that deal with, not doctrine per se, but with the practical application of the doctrines expounded in the sermons' (Davidson, 2011a:100).

Similar priorities are reflected in the number of different Calvinist organisations that arose in Britain during the nineteenth century. Most were characterised by what they were against rather than what they were for. They were anti Roman Catholic; the main ideal they stood for

was orthodoxy, but an orthodoxy that could be seen as very narrow and very exclusive. In that period, there were no distinctly Christian organisations or institutions (other than ecclesiastical ones) founded; there were no Christian universities, trades unions or political parties established.

The question of priorities was often to the fore when discussions took place regarding the possibility of - let alone the formation of - a Christian political party. I shall examine this below (§ 3.3.5c). Coming back to the preaching topics, most English Calvinist sermons on politics focus on Romans 13. The typical sermon's outlines on the topic of 'The Christian and the State' have this structure:

1. Government has a role instituted by God
2. We must obey God rather than men
3. We are to pray for the government especially for freedom of religion
4. We are to do good.⁸²

Sadly, most sermons don't go further than this. One exception is provided by Martyn Lloyd-Jones who, when preaching on church and state in 'The doctrine of the church' (sermon #8301), notes that there are three models: the Roman Catholic, the Erastian and the two-estate model. He advocates the last as the biblical view. In his discussion, he comes close to a sphere sovereignty approach. The topic of church and state is one that Lloyd-Jones has preached on several times. There are thirteen results for this on the mljtrust.org site; this includes six sermons on his exposition of Romans 13:1-7 (sermons #3337-3342). His book on Romans 13 has the subtitle *Life in Two Kingdoms* (Lloyd-Jones, 2002b) - suggesting a type of dualism often associated with a Lutheran (rather than a Calvinist) perspective. These were sermons preached between November 1966 and May 1967.

Unfortunately, there is no mention of a distinctly Christian approach to politics – the main assumption being that 'we can only go as far as the Bible': an exposition of the biblical verses on the state constitutes a Calvinist view of the state. However, if this can be somehow justified when preparing a sermon, it is not justified as a general principle for Christian social life. Here the notion that 'we can only go as far as the Bible' is self-refuting: the Bible does not tell us that, irrespective of the topic, we can only go as far as the Bible. As Kuyper puts it: 'nowhere does Scripture suggest that all of our knowledge about nature and the world should be derived from Scripture' (Kuyper, [1911] 2016:201). Calvin also recognised that the Bible doesn't contain all that we need for our cultural endeavours. In his commentary on Genesis he had this to say:

⁸² See for example, <http://wrbc.org.uk/2013/09/the-christian-and-the-non-christian-state-1/>
Date of access: 12 September 2016.

‘he who would learn astronomy, and other recondite arts, let him go elsewhere [than the Bible]’ (Calvin, 1965 [1578]:79).

Presumably, other ‘recondite arts’ would include, among other things, politics.

3.3.5.b Priorities and social concerns

Social issues were, of course, high on the Reformational agenda, whereas for English Calvinists and Evangelicals the emphasis on evangelism, doctrinal purity and dogmatic controversies absorbed most of their time. Social issues – except perhaps where life (abortion), death (euthanasia) or sexuality (divorce and homosexuality) were concerned – were often neglected, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, it was modernist or liberal theologians that were at the forefront of social thinking in the UK. Two key influential works published in Britain in later years, both by liberal American theologians, were: Paul Van Buren’s *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (1963) and Harvey Cox’s *The Secular City* (1965). Two other key books focused the discussion on the Christian’s place in the world: Bishop John Robinson’s *Honest to God* (1963) and Harry Blamire’s *The Christian Mind* (1963). This often meant that, in the opinion of many Evangelicals, Reformational works were guilty of holding liberal views by association. The reasoning seemed to be:

Liberals deal with social issues;
Reformational works deal with social issues;
Therefore, Reformational works are liberal.

It was only from the late sixties and early seventies that things started to change for English Christians and discussion of social issues began to take place. One may take note, for example, of The National Evangelical Conference on Social Ethics in 1978 and of some discussions in Gibson (1979) and Stringer (1979).

Chester (1993), in his study of the awakening of Evangelical social concern, only once and very briefly mentions Kuyper and the Reformational approach:

‘although most evangelicals in Britain are not overly partisan. A minority, people such as Richard Russell and Alan Storkey, have suggested that evangelicals should consider forming a Christian political party. Among this group the Dutch Reformed tradition is a strong influence. In emphasizing the lordship of Christ over all of life, this tradition, has a long history of involvement in the political life of the nation, most notably when Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) was Prime Minister of Holland (1900-05)’ (Chester, 1993:178).

Unfortunately, the suggestion here, although not explicitly stated, is that Kuypersians are partisans.

3.3.5.c Affirmation 2010

The issue of priorities can be seen in the development of Affirmation 2010.⁸³ The document illustrates the concerns of a large Calvinist grouping in Britain – although most of the signatories are English: the concerns are solely theological.⁸⁴

According to the webpage:

'The Affirmation has been signed by twenty-five brethren, the majority of them are ministers of Baptist, Congregational, Independent, and Presbyterian churches. Three major conferences in the UK have also identified with this document. It is therefore inclusive in the best sense, but also exclusive, because it also states what we do not believe, and what we deplore as departures from Holy Scripture'
(<https://affirmation2010.wordpress.com/> date of access 27 August 2018).⁸⁵

The signatories seek a return to the "Old Path" and they see themselves in the line of Calvinists going back to Calvin. Those whose works are used to support the positions of this Affirmation include: A.W. Pink, C.H. Spurgeon, John Owen, Thomas Watson, Gresham Machen, Richard Baxter, Herbert Bonar, Robert Murray M'Cheyne and John Bunyan.

We can see the concerns and solutions expressed in this document by looking at two of the worldview questions: what's wrong? And what's the remedy?

What's wrong? The preface makes clear:

'there has been [such] a decline both in faith and in practice, that many of us no longer recognise "modern Evangelicalism" as the faith in which we were brought up or as the faith to which we still firmly adhere'.

They go on: 'in not a few churches there has been a serious departure from Biblical truth'

⁸³ The Affirmation is available at <https://affirmation2010.wordpress.com/affirmation-2010/> (date of access 20 August 2018). All quotes from the Affirmation are taken from this webpage.

⁸⁴ The 16 topics covered are: Infallibility of the Scripture; The Trinity; The doctrine of grace; Six-day creation; Penal substitution; Justification by faith alone; Holiness of life; Christian experience; The Sabbath day; Reverence in worship; The regulative principle; The holy Ministry (NB the use of the capital letter. By this is meant institutional church ministry); Separation; Revival; Christ's second coming; and The eternal state.

⁸⁵ As of 27 August 2018 there were a further 360 people who were signatories to the Affirmation.

What's the remedy? The problem is theological (poor theology and the concomitant lifestyle) and the solution is theological (sound, orthodox theology with its out working in church praxis and personal lifestyle). Hence, the Affirmation concentrates on three areas:

The truth presently being undermined in our churches

The out working of doctrine, in practical Christian living; and

The emphasis on genuine Christian experience.

Their hope is that:

'under the good hand of God, [Affirmation 2010] will become a standard to which truly conservative men might rally'.

'A strong theological document to which they [churches] sincerely give adherence' will help in providing the cure. For them it is vital that Evangelicals stand together for vital and non-negotiable truth'.

However, these non-negotiables seem to contain some controversial topics: the regulative principle in worship, six-day creationism, Sabbath keeping (which includes refraining from 'unnecessary work, watching television, the practice of sport, frequenting restaurants, and holiday travel'), and separationism.⁸⁶

This document illustrates the emphasis on good sound theology and on the role of the institutional church in English Calvinism. The gospel is focused, it seems, solely on sound theology, institutional church praxis and personal holiness. There is no mention of any social concern or action, or of politics, education, art, business and so forth or of any cultural aspects to the gospel.

3.3.5.c Social concern or evangelism? Creation or kingdom?

The story that Chester (1993) paints in his book is one of the struggles between evangelism and social action and between creation ethics and kingdom ethics. The latter two

⁸⁶ On these points many Calvinists would not be (or not have been – in the past) able to sign it. Those that would baulk at the inclusion of the regulative principle would include: almost all the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, George Whitefield, William Gadsby, Abraham Kuyper, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John Bunyan, Augustus Toplady and indeed any and all of the Anglican Calvinists. The issue of six-day creation would exclude B.B. Warfield, Oliver Barclay, Donald M. Mackay. Separationism would also exclude Martyn-Lloyd Jones (who worked with G. Cambell Morgan) and George Whitefield (who worked with the Wesleys).

approaches differ in the starting points for the support of social involvement: is it on the basis of the doctrine of creation or on the understanding of the kingdom of God?⁸⁷

The range of positions is shown in the two-way table (Table 3.1) below. The top row indicates the primary emphasis on creation or kingdom or both; it describes the starting point for ethics. The first column shows how strong an emphasis is placed on evangelism and social action. English Calvinists are by and large represented by the creation column – others are added for comparison.

TABLE 3.1. Two-way table indicating the relationship between social concern and the gospel.

	Creation	Creation & Kingdom	Kingdom
No need for evangelism	Hyper-Calvinists		
Evangelism only	E.S. Williams		
Priority of evangelism over social action	Melvin Tinker Rachel Tingle		
Evangelism and social action together	J. N. D. Anderson Oliver Barclay (aka A. N. Triton)	John R.W. Stott	Chris Sugden
Social action a priority			
Social action only			Walter Rauschenbusch Liberation theologians

(**Source:** based on information in Chester (1993); Sugden and Barclay (1990); and on works by authors as cited in the table.)

The English Calvinist attitude to the issue of priorities is well-summarised by Tinker:⁸⁸

‘but evangelism and social concern (...) are two distinct activities not two aspects of the same event. In which case it is legitimate to ask, which is more important? Clearly the Bible itself does distinguish between things of first importance and secondary importance, even if they are both divine commands. In Hosea 6:6 we read: “I desire mercy not sacrifice.” This would

⁸⁷ For Reformational scholars this split is unacceptable – God is the one who established his kingdom which is a restoration of creation. I argued that the split between evangelism and social action is equally unacceptable.

⁸⁸ Tinker states: ‘I stand within the tradition generally referred to as the Reformed or Calvinist tradition’ (Tinker, 2001:49).

indicate that in terms of priority it is mercy that God is looking for rather than ritual sacrifice, although he did command the latter. It could be argued that the ideal is both (cf. Luke 11:42), but that does not detract from the point that priorities do exist and that to ask such a question is not to “create an unbiblical distinction in God’s Word.” The questions are whether evangelism has priority over social action or vice versa or whether the two are of equal importance?’ (Tinker, 2009:56).

Another Calvinist, this time a Baptist, E.S. Williams,⁸⁹ takes a similar approach to Tinker – except that he thinks that Stott’s holistic mission approach is unbiblical as it has a place for social action (and therefore, he asserts, devalues evangelism). For Williams, the biblical perspective is evangelism only (Williams, 2016). Stott’s approach he sees as flawed as it has, in his opinion, roots in Rauschenbusch’s social gospel, which in turn has its roots in biblical higher criticism, which in turn has roots in evolutionary theory. Williams even accuses Stott of prompting a socialist agenda (Williams, 2016: kindle loc. 14893 and 25389).

Looking at the two-way table above (Table 3.1), the implications of the distinction between kingdom and creation are not fully clear, especially when it comes to the practical consequences of each approach. It is interesting, however, that liberation theologians are on the one side and Melvin Tinker and Rachel Tingle on the other, at opposite ends of a diagonal. It is no wonder then that liberation theology is the key target of Tingle. The most scathing description for Tingle is to describe a Christian as being influenced by liberation theologians. This is her description of some Anglican Evangelicals, such as John Gladwin, who adopt in her words, a ‘Kingdom Theology’ (Tingle, 1988:46).⁹⁰

The approaches involving a separation or even a too neat distinction between evangelism and social action do not reflect a Reformational position. They are not as Tinker asserts two different kinds of activities. His approach truncates the gospel message: acts of mercy, distributing bread and fish, healing the blind and the lame, setting the poor and the prisoners free are part of the gospel message; at least the message that Jesus preached (Luke 4:17-21).

Yet Melvin Tinker complains that:

⁸⁹ Williams is associated with the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London where Peter M. Masters is the pastor. The Tabernacle was associated with C.H. Spurgeon who was the pastor for almost 40 years.

⁹⁰ Tingle writes, stressing the individualistic aspects of the gospel: ‘In strict theological terms, therefore, the Kingdom is extended as individuals become Christians, and the way the Church can usher in the Kingdom is through personal evangelicals’ (Tingle, 1998:59).

'the most obvious argument for the primacy of evangelism is not considered, which is in terms of what is ultimately at stake—people's eternal destiny. When this is placed into the equation, evangelism's primacy becomes self-evident' (Tinker, 2009:57).

Tinker again illustrates this:

'in I Corinthians 9 Paul exclaims, "Woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel." Paul never says, "Woe to me if I do not engage in acts of mercy"' (Tinker, 2009:57).

From a Reformational point of view, the separation of gospel and social action – even when some sort of 'concordance' between the primary and the secondary terms is sought – goes against the cosmic-wide scope of the gospel. Sin affects all areas of life and all areas of life are in need of redemption. The good news, the gospel, is meant for all areas of life. The cultural mandate is not to be divorced from the gospel mandate. It is not a case of either/ or, or even both/ and; they are integrally part of each other and cannot be separated out. To do so is to do violence to the gospel message; it truncates it to an extent that it ceases to be the gospel.

Unfortunately, this separation emerges also in Triton (1978:17):

'to put it another way, social responsibility is just one aspect of the outworking of love for all around us'.

'Social involvement is also not a part of the gospel if we use the word "gospel" in the usual sense and biblical sense of the message of forgiveness and reconciliation to God' (Triton, 1978:19).

At times he does seem to contradict himself and to come close to a Reformational position:

'gospel preaching and social action belong together as salvation and good works belong together' (Triton, 1978:21).

But then in his Proposition 4 he argues:

'social involvement is only one part of Christian living and not the most important part' (Triton, 1978:22).

This suggests an ordering of priorities of personal virtues over social action. This once again illustrates an underlying individualism – the private (personal) takes precedence over the public (social).

He follows this up by saying:

‘the New Testament emphasis is without question first of all on the personal virtues. Social action must not become such a priority that it upsets the biblical order and allows us to escape the need to repent of our personal sins and to live a life of righteousness in every area of our life’ (Triton, 1978:23).

And:

‘from a Christian point of view the really *big* issues in life are person-to-person relationships, not the more grandiose political questions’ (Triton, 1978:26).

Once again the personal is placed over the public (political). There is no question that for Barclay (writing as Triton) social responsibility is separated from the gospel and it is of less importance. The personal is more important than the public – this is not quite a personal-public dualism but is close to it. To his credit, it must be said that Triton does see the importance of a Christian social response; but by divorcing it from the gospel and prioritising the personal over the public he ceases to be portraying, what Reformational thinkers would maintain is, a biblical view - despite his appeal to ‘the biblical order’ (Triton, 1978:23). This attitude reflects quite well the general English Calvinist approach.

3.3.6 Calvinism and politics

How should Christians relate to politics? It's often said that religion and politics don't mix. It's also said that politics and religion should be avoided in polite conversation. This apparently is the approach taken by many English Christians, not just in polite conversation or church situations. In an interview for *Vanity Fair* magazine Tony Blair, when he was the British Prime Minister, was asked about his Christian faith. Alastair Campbell, Blair's former communications Chief, immediately interrupted the interviewee and said, ‘I'm sorry, we don't do God’.

However, do Calvinists ‘do politics’? Do they have a political philosophy, let alone a Christian political philosophy? Quentin Skinner says no such thing exists (as cited in Marshall, 1991:2) — and looking at English Calvinist literature published in recent years, would seem to confirm that response. However, an apparent lack of a Calvinist political

theory does not necessarily imply that there is none, or that elaborating one is an impossibility. It may well suggest, however, that the English Calvinist view of politics reflects a nature—grace ground-motive. By neglecting the development of an integral Christian political view, English Calvinism shows that politics would be part of the pole of ‘nature’ and so should either be avoided or seen as needing a Christian veneer on it.

Contrast Alastair Campbell’s approach, mentioned above, with a scene in the film *Amazing Grace*. William Wilberforce, when considering giving up his political career for one in ‘religion’, was visited by members of the Clapham Sect and Thomas Clarkson. Clarkson says to Wilberforce: ‘we understand you are wondering whether to pursue politics or religion’. Hannah More responds: ‘we humbly suggest you can do both’. That is also a Reformational response.⁹¹ We can serve God and do politics – in fact, we can serve God *in* doing politics.

3.3.6.a A Reformational point of view

Paul Marshall (1991), who examines Skinner’s assertion that a Calvinist politics does not exist, summarises Skinner’s position thus: ‘in short, Skinner’s massive work implies that there is nothing original or unique in Calvinist political theory; that, in the sense described, there is no Calvinistic political theory’ (Marshall, 1991:4).

Yet Marshall looks at Calvin and identifies three ‘interrelated motifs’ in his thought that have political import. These are:

- (1) God is sovereign over everything
- (2) Sovereignty resides in God, therefore no earthly institution can claim sovereignty for themselves; and
- (3) God’s sovereignty requires a voluntary human response.

These motifs alone did not produce a Calvinist political theory in Calvin’s writings but, Marshall argues, they did inspire it in some of his followers; for example, Johannes Althusius (Marshall, 1991:17).

A number of Reformational thinkers have written about and developed a Reformational perspective on politics. Kuyper, of course, was a politician and founded the first political party in the Netherlands (The Anti-Revolutionary Party).

Several English Reformational scholars have had work published on Christian politics. These include: Chaplin (1992; 1995; 1997; 1998; 2000; 2006; 2008); Marshall (1984; 1991; 2002), Storkey (2005) and Hebden Taylor (1966), Sherratt (2016); Sherratt and Mahurin

⁹¹ It should be clear that I’m not suggesting that More or Wilberforce were Reformational thinkers. But that the approach suggested is in line with a Reformational perspective.

(1995).⁹² Other, North American, Reformational scholars that have written extensively on politics include Bernard Zylstra, David Koyzis and James Skillen. As James Skillen has written:

‘proper Christian faith concerns all of life. It has no limited meaning that can be isolated from the political, agricultural, economic, and artistic lives of Christians and non-Christians. Likewise, politics is never purely secular from a biblical point of view. Nothing in this creation (in this world or this age) has a life and meaning of its own, independent of the Creator’s will and purpose. Biblical revelation and political life, Christian faith and human government are intimately connected from the start in God’s single creation. It is a mistake to think that we should be trying to connect two experiences which have never been disconnected’ (Skillen, 1980:10).

Unfortunately, this ‘all-of-life’, comprehensive Calvinist approach is largely missing from English Calvinism, as argued in the following two sections.

3.3.6.b An English-Calvinist point of view

Most English Calvinists regard Luke 20:25 (and parallels) as arguing for a separation of politics and religion. ‘Give to worldly authorities the things that belong to them, and to God what belongs to God’.

Listen, for example, to J.C. Ryle, the Evangelical Calvinist bishop, who writes in his commentary on Luke (originally published 1858):

‘they were to "render to GOD the things which were God's." There were many dues which God required at their hands which they might easily pay, if they were inclined. Honor, love, obedience, faith, fear, prayer, spiritual worship, were payments to God which they might daily make, and payments with which the Roman government did not interfere. They could not say that Caesar made such payments impossible. Let them see to it that they gave to God His dues in spiritual things, as well as to Caesar his dues in temporal things. There was no necessity for collision between the demands of their temporal and their heavenly sovereign. In temporal things, let them obey the powers, under whose authority they allowed themselves to be. In spiritual things let them do as their forefathers had done, and obey God’ (Ryle, 1976:333).

⁹² Although born in the UK Sherratt moved to the States where he was introduced to the Reformational perspective when he began teaching at Gordon College.

Here he clearly sets up a dualism of spiritual and temporal. It should be said, however, that in his exposition of this passage in his commentary on Mark (1861) and Matthew (1856) this dualism is absent. This should not be necessarily regarded as a result of development in his thought, as Mark was published after his Luke exposition, but Mathew was published before.

A similar perspective is found in C.H. Spurgeon:

‘to Caesar, Caesar’s politics to politicians. Obedience, cheerful and prompt, to civil rulers. To God, and to God only, things that are God’s! And what are these? Our hearts, our souls, our consciences. Man himself is the coin upon which God has stamped His image and superscription (though, alas, both are sadly marred!), and we must render to God our manhood, our wills, our thoughts, our judgments, our minds, our hearts. Consciences are for God. Any law that touches a conscience is null and void, ipso facto, for the simple reason that kings and parliaments have no right to interfere in the realm of conscience. Conscience is under law to none but God. We do not believe in liberty of conscience towards God. We are bound towards Him—to believe what He tells us and to do what He bids us—but liberty of conscience in respect to all mankind is the natural right of every man of woman born and it ought to be tenderly respected. Our Lord, here, lays the controversy to sleep by telling us to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.

(...)

Suppose you were to die tonight? It would then be a small matter to you what may be done in the next session of Parliament with the question of the separation of Church and State. If you have to stand before the bar of God before this year is out, the Established Churches will be of small account to you if you are banished from Heaven and hope! Therefore, see to it, I pray you, that no business interferes with the business of your soul!’ (Spurgeon, 1873).

The major problem with this sort of exegesis is that it is an individualistic and an anachronistic reading of the passage. Politics and religion were very mixed in first-century Palestine. The Jews were used to pay tributes to a Jewish king, a minister of God. The biblical text that we are considering is not about distinguishing between two or more kingdoms or about their relation. The question is much simpler: is it legitimate to pay tributes to Caesar, who is a heathen ruler? Can this be according to God’s will? Jesus answers that it is legitimate; it is even a duty.

To the question ‘what belongs to God?’ a Reformational response would be: all things. God is sovereign over everything and that includes the state, government and politics and everything that Caesar laid claims to. The state is a servant of God. Jesus is not thinking of

two realms. There is only one realm: God's kingdom; and everything else is subsumed under that. The state belongs to God; the state's authority is a derived authority, therefore giving to the state taxes, obeying its laws and civil obedience does not imply that it does not belong to God or that there are two distinct realms or kingdoms. There is only one King and so there is only one kingdom. Humans bear the likeness and the image of God – we must give all of ourselves to God. There is not one area of life that should not be under the rule and reign of God and that includes politics. To suggest otherwise is to shrink and reduce the scope of the gospel. But apart from exegetical issues concerning society and politics, let us have a look at more concrete developments within English Calvinism.

3.3.6.c English Calvinist 'allergies', conferences and publications

One has the impression that, instead of promoting Christian political options, English Calvinists have been busy with two preoccupations: rejecting a too close association between Christianity and politics and avoiding especially certain political positions. Once again it seems that the English Calvinist attitude seems to be rather 'negative'.

For example, in a *Churchman* article, Tinker (1999) traces the development of the *great reversal* and what he terms the *great betrayal* regarding English Christian involvement in social issues. He notes that in the period 1910-1930, during the rise of the social gospel, Evangelicals had little concern for social issues. But gradually, the discussion of social concerns increased. This was termed the *great reversal* by Timothy L. Smith; Moberg popularised the term in his *Great Reversal* (1972). An important turning point came with the 1974 Lausanne conference with a move towards embracing a more 'holistic mission'. This move towards 'holistic mission' has been discussed by the Calvinist writer E.S. Williams (2016). He notes that in this period 'the Rev John Stott, a highly regarded Evangelical minister, confidently asserted that evangelism and social action are a partnership, "like two blades of a pair of scissors or two wings of a bird"; the result was a paradigm shift in evangelical thinking' (Williams, 2016: loc. 393).

Similar changes could be detected within Evangelical Anglicanism and the National Evangelical Anglican Congress (NEAC).

For example, at NEAC 3 (in 1988), there is what Tinker regards as a flirtation, of John Gladwin and Chris Sugden, with liberation theologies. Tinker makes a distinction between Reforming and Radical Evangelicals. About the latter group, he suggests that 'perhaps liberalism has entered via the back door after all!' (Tinker, 1999:261). He then turns to Barth's analogy of the centre and the circumference as a way of illustrating the relationship between evangelism and social action.

Unfortunately, with the exception of Reformational writers, there seems to be a dearth of publications by English authors – let alone English Calvinists – on Christian politics. This in itself raises the question: do Calvinists not regard politics as a sphere of Christian activity?

The Banner of Truth publisher has published no books on a Christian perspective on politics (and only one on social issues: Broughton Knox⁹³, 1989).

The Churchman, the journal of the Church Society, the Calvinist wing of the Church of England, has published some articles on politics (e.g., Tinker, 1999; 2009) but most of these endorse an avoidance of church involvement in politics. Is this in line with the Calvinist tradition, as some authors seem to suggest? And is there any hope for the future?

3.3.6.d Past and future: sketching a Calvinist view of politics

This neglect of political literature among Calvinists is a recent phenomenon; it has not always been the case. As Meeter states:

‘not only has Calvinism developed political principles of its own; but political theories framed with these principles as a basis and have been applied in various localities in the modern period of history’ (Meeter, 1990:71).

Meeter cites A.M. Fairbairn and Jean Jacques Rousseau as those who pay tribute to Calvin and his political influence. Though he notes that Calvin ‘did not develop a complete Calvinistic theory of the state’ (Meeter, 1990:72), he maintains that texts like *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (unknown author, 1579), Beza’s *De Jure Magistratum* (1574), Hotman’s *Franco-Gallia* (1573) as well as Buchanan’s *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* (1579) were among the first books to develop a Calvinistic theory of the state. He also contends that William Gladstone ‘sought to revive the Christian view of the state largely on a Calvinistic basis’ (Meeter, 1990:73). All these pre-date, of course, the neo-Calvinist developments of Groen van Prinsterer and Kuyper.

What might a future Calvinist approach to politics look like? Several distinctives could contribute to a political theory: the sovereignty of God over all things, and arising from that, sphere sovereignty, common grace and principled pluralism. Government is a part of the created order; it is implicit in the cultural mandate – that means humans are responsible under God for the political process. It is to be unfolded in response to God-given norms. At the moment we live in the overlap of the ages, in the ‘now but not yet’. Politics will not bring in God’s kingdom, but is a response to the call to live according to the ideals of God’s kingdom. The distinction between structure and direction is important here (see the

⁹³ Broughton Knox was Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney, Australia.

discussion in § 3.4.3, especially in relation to Figure 3.1). There is a God-given structure to politics, but it may or may not be outworked obediently to God; the state may overstep its boundaries and become (as in Revelation 13) a beast.

In *Sin and Politics*, Jeong Kii Min (2009) identifies seven aspects of a Reformed view of politics:

- (1) Politics was created before the fall into Sin.
- (2) Human beings as God's image are political agents
- (2) Political agents and political institutions are distorted by sin
- (4) The state has a paradoxical nature as is represented by the biblical symbols of the "magistrates" and the "beasts".
- (5) The principalities and powers are "personal" and "cosmological;" influences on sinful political distortions
- (6) Jesus of Nazareth was a political man rather than a politician
- (7) Christ's second coming will perfectly redeem politics. There will be a reorganisation of politics and a perfect political community after the Last day (Min, 2009:9).

Min (2009) draws on Mouw's *Politics and the Biblical Drama* (1976:32-33). He states that:

'the politics of the Garden therefore implies a positive function of politics within the created order' (Min, 2009:13).

This seems to be a key difference between Reformational and English Calvinist views of the state and government.

Min assesses politics as inter-human activity, but not all human interaction is political, so he refines his definition of politics as being about 'authority-related or power-related inter-human activity' (Min, 2009:16).

What is the role of the church in political engagement? Kuyper's distinction between church as institute and church as organism comes to the help in answering this question. The church as institute, as a community where the sacraments are administered, is not the first vehicle for political activity. Yet the pastor's role is to equip the saints for works of service and this service would include equipping for political activities. Members of the congregation would engage in politics, as in any other culture-creating activity, as members of the organic church, as members of the body of Christ.

To support a Reformational approach, Smith (2015) provides these four key points:

1. Government is part of the good order of creation (151)
2. Both church and government should be limited to their 'sphere' (152)
3. Principled pluralism and Christian influence 'in the meantime' (155)
4. Common grace: the Spirit works outside the church, too (157).

It is now time to provide an examination of the roots of the public—private dichotomy, as well as other characteristics of English Calvinism evidenced above, such as its emphasis on the church as institute and neglect of church as organism. As I shall show, such characteristics are a result of a nature—grace ground-motive, although there might be different versions of this ground-motive at work within English Calvinism.

3.4 The pre-scientific roots of the English Calvinist approach

3.4.1 The ground-motive of nature and grace

In the previous sections I have pointed out the English Calvinists' tendency towards individualism, the downplaying of creation and their emphasis on the primacy of the church in Christian life. All this led to an attenuation of social action and a belittling of, or at least a discomfort over, the need for distinctly Christian-communal culture-shaping, social concern and political action. Throughout my analysis, I have discovered an emphasis on the private over and above the public realm. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (§ 2.5.4), there may well be historical factors behind the 'privatisation' of Calvinist Christianity in England. After the Great Ejection in 1662 non-Conformists were no longer allowed to participate in the public sphere. Concrete circumstance shaped their theology and consequently, in order to survive, their religion had to become a private matter. Conformity dominated the public sphere. All that was left was the private sphere.

Yet Warfield wrote in a review of Bavinck's *De Zekerheid des Geloof* (1901) (*The Certainty of Faith*):

'it is only as we realize that God is saving the world and not merely one individual here and there out of the world, that the profound significance of the earthly life to the Christian can properly be apprehended' (Warfield, 1903:140).

Unfortunately, this realisation – which Warfield recognises in Kuyper and Bavinck – seems not to be present in most English Calvinists. According to my hypothesis, this comes from a nature—grace perspective where the emphasis is on evangelism. The profound significance of earthly life has not been properly apprehended. ‘Grace’ takes priority over ‘nature’. This results in a minimising or even denigration of creation. Likewise, this approach leads to a denigration of social responsibility as observed in the writings of Barclay and Tinker.

What are the roots of this approach? In the following pages, I hope to show that it is the result of what Dooyeweerd termed a nature—grace ground-motive. By using Dooyeweerd’s theory of ground-motives and Vollenhoven’s categories for the study of the history of philosophy (§§ 2.3.7 and 2.4.3) we can try to get to the motivations that lie, often unacknowledged, behind these positions. There are several reasons for utilising Dooyeweerd’s religious ground-motives and in particular his nature—grace ground-motive to examine the Calvinist approaches. Firstly, although Vollenhoven’s work is more nuanced, it is compatible with Dooyeweerd’s work on ground-motives (Bril, 1995) and I shall use both ground-motives and Vollenhoven’s problem-historical method in conjunction with each other. Secondly, ground-motives have been used and applied in a number of other areas with fruitfulness (for example, information systems (Ericson 2003), artificial intelligence (Basden 2008), education (van Niekerk, 2000)). Thirdly, all tools have weaknesses (see § 2.3.7), but by using them we may expose more limitations which could provide the basis for further research; and finally, to build on the work of Coletto (2014a).

As shown, in Chapter 2, Dooyeweerd identified four ground-motives at work in Western culture. These were: form—matter; nature—grace; the nature—freedom-motive and the biblical one: creation—fall—redemption. According to Dooyeweerd, only the last can provide an integral biblical starting point for Christian scholarship. The first three listed are dualistic and exhibit dialectical polarities .

Dooyeweerd describes the nature—grace ground-motive mainly as the Roman Catholic ground-motive (Dooyeweerd, 1979:115). He places the origin of this ground-motive during the Middle Ages:

‘when the church of Rome gradually gained control over all of temporal society, this attempted religious synthesis produced a new dialectical ground motive in the development of western culture: the well-known motive of “nature and grace” (nature and super nature)’ (Dooyeweerd, 1979:115).

For an initial rough introduction, one might say that this ground-motive divides reality into two main areas: a ‘natural’ one (related e.g. to nature, reason, the state, the family, the

body) and a 'supernatural' one (related to the spiritual, faith, the church, the soul). The notion of 'nature' was imported/ derived from the Greeks, but the scholastics thought that when God created human beings they were also endowed with a 'supernatural' gift of grace. This was then lost at the fall, but can now be restored and perfected by the gift of grace. Faith then is not a function; rather it is a substance, some-thing that is lost and then recovered. This is in contrast to Kuyper's perspective; as Dooyeweerd wrote:

'Abraham Kuyper was probably the first to regain for theology the scriptural insight that faith is a unique function of our inner life implanted in human nature at creation' (Dooyeweerd, 1979:91).

Dooyeweerd goes on:

'Scholasticism had forsaken this insight completely under the influence of the unscriptural ground motive of nature and grace' (Dooyeweerd, 1979:91).

What is the relationship between nature and grace? As can be seen later, this relation can be articulated in different ways. In its initial most common formulation, in Roman Catholic circles, as Aquinas has written: 'gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit' (grace does not abolish nature but perfects it):

'since grace does not supplant [destroy, cancel] nature, but perfects it, reason ought to be the servant of faith in the same way as the natural inclination of the will is the servant of charity—"bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," as the apostle says in II Cor.10:5' (Aquinas, 1954: Part 1, Question 1, Article 8: 45).

Although the nature—grace ground-motive originated earlier, its articulation as a paradigm was greatly promoted by Aquinas's synthesis-thinking. It was an attempt to 'bridge the foundations of the Christian religion and Greek thought' (Dooyeweerd, 1979:115). In the Greek form—matter ground-motive there was no place for creation. Aquinas accommodated the dualistic Greek approach into Christian faith, but in doing so he distorted the Christian ground-motive of creation, fall and redemption (Strauss, 2011:1). As Strauss rightly puts it:

'by stowing away this dualism within the Christian creation-motif, the integral (life-comprehending) character of *fall into sin* and *salvation* were lost' (Strauss, 2011:2).

If the presence of this nature—grace ground-motive is visible in scholasticism and Aquinas, what then has it to do with Calvin and English Calvinism? Dualism is very pernicious; it is subtle and difficult to break free from. Even Calvin has been categorised by Vollenhoven as a dualistic, semi-mystical, though anti-synthetic thinker. Van der Walt (2014a) writes as a critical friend of Calvin and praises him for dethroning the idea of autonomous reason and for being an anti-synthetic thinker (see § 2.4.3). However, he sees flaws in what he calls Calvin's dualistic and semi-mystical approach. Even though Calvin's thinking was anti-synthetic he was unable to shed all of the scholastic mind-set. Calvin's dualistic ontology is most clearly seen in his anthropology. Unfortunately, this has been one of the most enduring influences of Calvin on subsequent generations. Calvin was unable to escape this dualism – which is probably not surprising given his cultural milieu (for more positive approaches to Calvin by Reformational scholars see, for example, Dooyeweerd, 1953-58, 1:515-518; Strauss, 2009b). Likewise, English Calvinism, like most Christian traditions, has to different degrees been plagued by this nature—grace dualism.

Dooyeweerd has also identified scholastic dualistic tendencies within Kuyper (see, for example, Dooyeweerd, 2013a:153-178). Reformational philosophy aimed at reforming the remaining traces of dualism in the Reformed tradition, even when such traces were detected in its most valued predecessors. Hommes provides an example:

'Kuyper's view lacks consistency because his general "*Wissenschaftslehre*" was still dominated by the scholastic contradistinction between "*sacra theologia*" which needs the supra-natural light of Revelation, and the "profane" sciences which are thrown on the natural light of reason' (Hommes, 1969:57).

Dualism then is very hard to shake off, even among those who are aware of its detrimental effects. So it is hardly surprising that it rears its head also within English Calvinism.

3.4.2 Intermezzo: a recent proposal by VanDrunen

The claim that a dualistic two-kingdom approach is in line with Reformed thinking has been proposed in recent years by David VanDrunen. VanDrunen's thesis is that 'much of the Reformed world over the past century [by which he mean Kuyperian neo-Calvinism] has lost sight of a much older Reformed paradigm for thinking about Christianity and culture, the so-called 'Two Kingdom doctrine' (VanDrunen, 2012:31-32). This approach appears to be a Lutheran, nature—grace isolation or integration approach (see § 4.9 below).

The approach rests on the distinction between a common kingdom, which comprises culture and government, and a redemptive kingdom which comprises the church. The basis of this distinction, he claims, lies in covenant theology.

The common kingdom is part of the Noahic covenant. A covenant that is distinct from the covenants of grace and works. The latter characterise the redemptive kingdom. The Noahic covenant was a covenant promise to creation; it is not one of salvation. The common kingdom is based on natural law, the redemptive kingdom on revelation from God's word. Thus:

'the church's nature is spiritual and its authority is ministerial, thus it should not take up cultural tasks that scripture has not entrusted to it. Just because Christians should be doing certain things, does not mean that the church itself should do them' (VanDrunen, 2010b:159).

VanDrunen is right, the church shouldn't take up cultural tasks that are not entrusted to it. However, what he fails to see is the distinction between church as institute and the church as organism. It is the role of church as organism but not church as institute to take up cultural tasks (in the Reformational view).

He suggests that:

'the Two Kingdoms doctrine has rich historical precedent in the Reformed tradition, that its basic tenets are built on compelling biblical foundations, and that it is of great practical usefulness for Reformed Christians wishing to think well and act in the church and in their various vocations' (2012:32).

The historical analysis is done by VanDrunen in his *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms* (2010a); the practical out working in *Living in God's Two Kingdoms* (2010b). I will examine the claim of practical usefulness first:

On his two-kingdom approach it means that 'generally speaking believers are not to seek an objectively unique Christian way of pursuing cultural activities' (VanDrunen, 2010b,168). One of the reasons for this, according to VanDrunen, is that 'the normative standards for cultural activities are, in general, not distinctively Christian' (168). Moral obligations are not uniquely Christian - apart from, VanDrunen asserts, our participating in the Lord's supper and turning the other cheek - as these are known only through Scripture and so 'binding only upon citizens of Christ's heavenly kingdom' (2010b:169).

'Being honest, hardworking, and just, are on the other hand simply human moral obligations' (201b:169).

‘Activities such as building bridges and repairing broken pipes are general, human activities, not uniquely Christian ones’ (*ibid.*).

It seems that the practical usefulness means that we do not have to think about how to develop a Christian perspective on culture, politics, business, education, society... as one does not exist. It means that we can concentrate on institutional church activities.

As regards the historical accuracy of his position, several scholars have shown that VanDrunen fails to read history correctly (see for example, Kloosterman 2012; and Ouweneel, 2017). What we have in VanDrunen, generally speaking, is a Calvinist way of reading Luther that distorts both Luther and Calvinism. It is not the case that the Reformers were advocates of a two kingdom position at least in the way VanDrunen interprets it.

VanDrunen's use of Scripture focuses on covenant theology – he makes a strong distinction between the Noahic and the Abrahamic covenant. In these two covenants VanDrunen maintains that we have two kingdoms: the common kingdom, administered by the Noahic covenant, and the redemptive kingdom, administered by the Abrahamic covenant (and now the new covenant). A problem for VanDrunen is the cultural mandate – apparently given to believers but focusing on culture. How does he get round the implications for culture and development inherent in that? He maintains that it is not applicable to today – it was aimed only at Adam and was pre-fall, Adam failed to fulfil it, but Jesus, the second Adam did fulfil it and that means we do not have to embrace it.

‘Christians will attain the original destiny of life in the world-to-come, but we do so not by picking up the task where Adam left off but by resting entirely on the work of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, who accomplished the task perfectly (VanDrunen, 2010b:50).

However, post-fall the mandate is reiterated in Genesis 9. In Genesis 3 the mandate is not rescinded, however; the task of fulfilling the cultural mandate becomes all the more arduous; being fruitful, increasing in number and filling the earth becomes a painful task (Gen 3:16); subduing the earth becomes a painful toil (Gen 3:17-18); and rulership becomes misdirected (Gen 3:16) (Bishop, 1991b). The mandate given by Jesus to his disciples in Matthew 28:20, where he tells them to teach all that he commanded them, would also include the cultural mandate.

As Latimer (2016:80) observes, ‘the cultural mandate is not so tied to Adam’s probation that its purpose is now obsolete’.

As Coletto (2014a:13) notes, in addition, in VanDrunen it is always ‘the’ two-kingdoms approach that is mentioned. But it is clear there are many different types of two kingdoms approaches.

As Ouweneel (2017) suggests, this theology is an American cultural phenomenon. In the US there is a strong separation of church and State. Ouweneel notes that it wouldn’t be taken seriously in the Netherlands – where Christian political engagement and Christian Unions, are familiar to the public opinion.

The strength of VanDrunen’s thesis is that he has placed the two kingdoms and natural law back on the academic table. This has meant they have been reconsidered. However, the great failing is that his view of the Reformers is coloured by his two-kingdom theory. He even sees Kuyper as advocating a form of two-kingdom approach, although he regards Kuyper as being a transitional figure and he detects tensions in what he perceives as Kuyper’s two-kingdom view.

VanDrunen seems to have an ideological antipathy towards neo-Calvinism; he has a dislike of the transformational approach and thus attempts to undermine this approach. His historical survey includes Kuyper, Dooyeweerd and Van Til and in a *Calvin Theological Journal* article he examines Herman Bavinck (VanDrunen, 2010c – see the response by Kloosterman, 2010). This suggests an agenda: he fails to discuss other key Calvinists such as the Puritans and Anglican Calvinists, although his US perspective may excuse him from examining English High Calvinists.

3.4.3 Different versions of the nature and grace motif

There has been a tendency among Reformational thinkers to talk of a Christian worldview (singular). However, it is clear that there is not one single Christian worldview – a number of worldview positions have been held through the centuries by Christians. This is not to say, however, that all these positions have biblical support. Coletto (2012d:8), among others, identifies five different positions: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anabaptist, Liberal and Reformational. He notes that Bavinck was among the first Reformed scholars who identified these positions; this was then developed by Niebuhr in the well-known typology of *Christ and Culture* (1951).

Other Reformational thinkers have utilised, sometimes with modifications, these categories – see, for example, Olthuis (1970), Chaplin (1985), Wolters (1989), van der Walt (1994),⁹⁴ Some of the different approaches are shown in Table 3.2. Some authors do not

⁹⁴ In a more recent work some changes have taken place in van der Walt’s approach (van der Walt, 2014b) to the Bavinck-Niebuhr models of the interaction of nature–grace. He now regards it as unsatisfactory. He sees it as confusing structure (nature) and direction (grace), and he sees

refer to the broader terms *nature and grace* but aim more concretely at illustrating the cultural or political consequences of the nature—grace scheme. They therefore explore the relation between ‘Christ and culture’ (Niebuhr) or between ‘the gospel and politics’ (Chaplin).

TABLE 3.2. A summary of different nature—grace positions.

	Liberal	Roman Catholic	Lutheran	Anabaptist	Reformed/ nal
Niebuhr (1951)	Christ of culture	Christ above culture	Christ and culture	Christ against culture	Christ transforms culture
Chaplin (1985)	The gospel baptises politics	The gospel above politics	The gospel in tension with politics	The gospel against politics	The gospel transforms politics
Wolters (1989)	Grace equals nature	Grace perfects nature	Grace Flanks nature	Grace opposes nature	Grace Restores nature
B.J. van der Walt (1994)	Grace within nature	Grace above nature	Grace alongside nature	Grace against nature	Grace transforms nature

From a Reformational point of view, the positions that can be framed in terms of a nature—grace ground-motive are essentially dualistic. They either emphasise the nature pole or the grace pole. In the Reformational or Reformed view, one could say that grace works integrally with ‘nature’ within the creation-fall-redemption motif. Although in Table 3.2 I have used the nature—grace scheme for the sake of comparison, the Reformational approach doesn’t fit well within this nature—grace scheme.

It is also worth noting that that the different nature—grace motifs are not closed compartments; they do have ‘bridges’ or links between them. Some are closer to each other than others. It is easier, for example, to move from a Lutheran to a Liberal position than to move from an Anabaptist to a Liberal position.

Drawing on Chaplin (1985) it can be illustrated how these different perspectives shape different approaches to Christian politics. In the Anabaptist approach (*gospel against ...*),

the transformation model as being not much different from the Catholic position of grace perfecting nature. He is also wary of describing the creation, fall and redemption motif as a worldview ‘as it does not clearly enough express a Christian worldview based on God’s revelation’ (2014b:55). Indeed he is concerned with the term *worldview* – the world part of it could be too limiting; would it then deny a place to God and are his laws then excluded?

politics is a distraction at best and has no place in God's kingdom. The main focus of Christians is often on the church and on bringing Christians out of the world into the alternative church/ community. The church often becomes identified as the kingdom of God⁹⁵ and redemption is seen as liberation from both the fall and from creation; the latter has been so tainted by the fall so as to be almost un-redeemable. The key idea in this approach is opposition, which can be manifested in two sub-versions: separation and/ or substitution (Coletto, 2014a:11-12). Neither of these two sub-versions provides a basis for Christian involvement in society. As Coletto (2014a:12) points out this approach can result, for example, in attempted revolutions (cf. the events of Münster in 1534) or in Theonomic attempts at establishing a 'Republic of the Saints'.⁹⁶

In the Lutheran approach (gospel *and* ...) the purpose of the state is a restraining one. Love is the norm for the 'spiritual' rule of Christ and justice for the 'worldly' government:

'a Christian is thus a citizen of two kingdoms—the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world. These spheres have different demands and operate in different ways. But God is the King of both' (Veith, 1997:6).

Thus, Christians may legitimately be involved in politics, they may have a 'foot in both camps' and have a 'dual citizenship' (Chaplin, 1985:3). However, in this approach, there is no such thing as *Christian* politics. There are Christian politicians, but they are not supposed to enter politics as Christians, but as good citizens, devoted to the common good. In addition, politics is often regarded as secondary to (institutional) church activity. Generally speaking (although some exceptions are not totally absent) this point of view entails that there is no such thing as a Christian culture. As one Lutheran theologian once put it:

⁹⁵ David Engelsma, on the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, Ballymena, Northern Ireland website simply writes: 'the church is the kingdom of God': <http://www.cprf.co.uk/pamphlets/kingdomofGod.htm#church> (Date of access 15 October, 2016). This indicates an Anabaptist approach in some Calvinist circles. Also on the same website are articles that show an antipathy towards drama, athletics and Trade Unions membership – all three attitudes indicate a separation approach as they maintain that Christians should not participate in these activities.

⁹⁶ It may appear controversial to place Theonomy (aka Reconstructionism) in the Anabaptist position as it has roots within Calvinism. In fact, Rushdoony, the founder of Reconstructionism was greatly indebted to the work of Cornelius Van Til and Herman Dooyeweerd (see, e.g. McVicar, 2015; Ingersoll, 2015). Most of the members of the movement were and are Reformed. However, the outworking of Reconstructionism is in a *substitution* of 'secular' laws with biblical laws. This reflects a typically 'Anabaptist' attitude. Coletto (2014a:11) notes that the same strategy is adopted by Creationists (often members of Baptist/Charismatic communities) when they 'substitute' secular theories of evolution with 'theories' derived from the Bible. It is interesting to note that Rushdoony and most Theonomists are Creationists as well.

‘true Christianity, known here on earth as Lutheranism, has not been a dominant cultural force in any society since at least the Enlightenment. And even then, one does not have “a Christian culture,” because not everything in a culture is a direct outflow of Christianity. There is, for examples, no Christian food culture, even though books like *What Would Jesus Eat* are published. But the reason lies deeper than the lack of dietary laws in Christianity. As Gene Veith states: “There can be no such thing as a Christian culture as such, because Christianity comes from faith in the Gospel, not works of the law” (Ziegler, 2016:290-291).

This approach can lead to two sub-versions: either concordance or isolation (Coletto, 2014a:12). Social involvement and Christianity are either kept in separate ‘compartments’ (isolation) or seen to agree as there is no friction between them (concordance).

The Roman Catholic (gospel *above...*), position also adopts a ‘dual citizenship’ approach. Politics belongs to the natural realm, ‘the state is an order of nature’ (Chaplin, 1985:5). Again in this position, there is no integral Christian politics. The Roman Catholic approach (especially in the past) expected the state to protect the rights of the church, religious liberty, to protect religious education, the sanctity of life and so on. The sub-versions of this type of approach are mysticism and control. The control attitude can easily be seen in the role that the church played in the past; the Roman Catholic approach would like to see a state subservient to the church (or pope – though in some cases the emperor was given primacy). The mystical aspect of the Roman Catholic approach can be seen in monasticism. This is in part an escape from nature into the realm of grace (theology, contemplation, and ecclesiastical activities).

The Liberal approach (gospel *baptises* ...) ‘baptises’ political concerns with the gospel so that the gospel becomes warped. This may be for left-wing politics in terms of liberation theology and its emphasis on the poor (sin is thus associated mainly with capitalism) or for right-wing politics in the protection of individual rights (sin is thus associated with communism). Sub-versions of the Liberal approach include adoption and elaboration. Liberals often *adopt* secular political strategies (this can be seen in the ideology of the nation). As former US President Reagan said in 1982, ‘I believe with all my heart that standing up for America means standing up for the God who has so blessed our land’. It can also be seen in the *elaboration* and development of Marxist ideas into liberation theology (see, for example, the discussion in the Latin American report in Abraham (ed.) 1990:69-72).

All of these four positions would deny the possibility of an integral *Christian* politics. This is in sharp contrast to the Reformed position (grace *transforms...*). In this approach politics is not something to be escaped from, or borrowed from, or accommodated to the ‘gospel’; it is

rather something that needs to be redeemed from the effects of the fall. It looks for and demands an inner reformation. Politics is seen as a part of God's good creation (contra the Anabaptist and Roman Catholic positions), which has become tainted by the fall (contra the Liberal position), it thus requires (contra the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Liberal position) the development of a biblical framework from which to do politics, rather than an accommodation or synthesis with other (i.e. secular) political options. It would thus advocate the establishment of Christian political parties (as Kuyper did) and Christian Trade Unions (as, for example, in the Christian Labour Association of Canada⁹⁷). From this point of view, there is thus no nature—grace dualism.

In the Reformational approach redemption is a restoration of a fallen creation: there are three facets (or pegs) not the two of nature and grace. Olthuis makes a pertinent remark: three pegs (creation, fall and redemption) cannot be forced into two holes (nature and grace) (Olthuis, 1970:119). When this happens, we thus end up with a split, and the unity of the biblical ground-motive is distorted. Hence the difficulty of identifying the Reformational perspective with these two poles of nature and grace. Consequently, Coletto (2014a) has looked at translating the nature—grace language within the creation-fall-redemption paradigm, utilising a 'wedge approach' hinted at by both Dooyeweerd and Olthuis. In Table 3.3 below, this 'translation' is sketched. The lower-case letters indicate the weakening of each term, for example, in the Lutheran and the Anabaptist approach *creation* is weakened. The bold letters indicate 'exaggeration' of the role of certain terms. Finally, the sign > (the wedge) indicates where the 'split' of the biblical motif is collocated. It can be observed that the wedge can re-group differently the three biblical motifs, with different consequences for each worldview. For example, in the Anabaptist model, the (weakened) theme of creation is associated with the fall. This means that creation or nature will especially be regarded as fallen and much more emphasis will be placed on redemption.

TABLE 3.3. Coletto's 'translation' of the nature—grace positions.

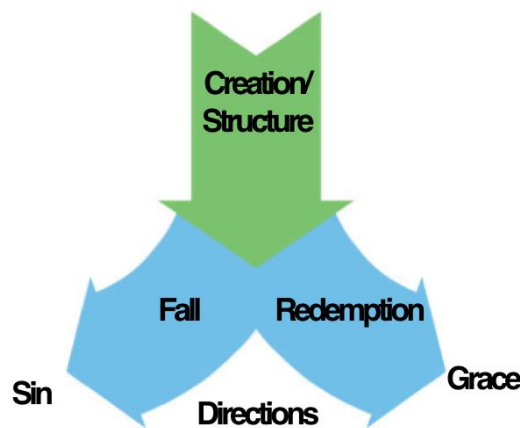
Liberal	Roman Catholic	Lutheran	Anabaptist	Biblical
C > fR	C > fR	cF > R	cF > R	CFR

(Source: Coletto, 2014a:9.)

⁹⁷ The CLAC was formed in 1952 by Dutch immigrants in Canada. Although it was formed by Christians and based on Kuyperian principles it was not limited to Christian members (Schryer, 1998:132-139).

One could also say that the nature—grace distinction is an (unsuccessful) attempt at accounting for the Reformational themes of structure-and-direction. The difference between structure and direction can be illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. The structure of creation is unaffected by the fall – the creation ordinances, norms and laws are still present in reality; what has changed though is the *direction* in which they are taken. The direction can be a positive one, in obedience to God (redemption); or a negative one, in disobedience to God (fall).

FIGURE 3.1. Structure and direction



(Source: adapted from <http://stevebishop.blogspot.co.uk/2009/09/structure-and-direction.html>)

There is then an antithesis between the two directions. But not between structure and the direction that is obedient to God. The fall alters only the direction but not the structure of creation. English Calvinists do not recognise this position and so inevitably distort reality in a dualistic way. The dualistic approach is not a biblical option. It is actually a reduction of the threefold biblical ground motive (creation, fall, redemption) to a two-fold motif (nature and grace). As Olthuis puts it:

‘a two-realm theory of whatever type is unable by its very nature to do justice to this state of affairs. (...) A two-realm theory must squeeze “three pegs” into “two holes”. It just never works!’ (Olthuis, 1970:119).

3.4.4 At the roots of English Calvinism

3.4.4.a Preliminary notes

Where then does English Calvinism fit into these approaches? From the foregoing analysis, it appears that it adopts a two-realm position which is similar to the 'grace takes priority over nature' approach (Roman Catholic worldview). However, compared with the Roman Catholic worldview, in English Calvinism there tends to be more emphasis on the fall. This may seem to suggest less emphasis on creation (as suggested in § 3.3.4). Unlike the Roman Catholic position, the 'wedge' (see Table 3.3 above) seems to be placed between creation (regarded as fallen) and redemption (c F > R). This seems to fit especially with the Anabaptist approach sketched in Table 3.3. Some authors are definitely working within the parameters of the Anabaptist worldview (e.g. Atherton). Others seem to adopt a Roman Catholic position, modified by a slightly more pronounced emphasis on the fall-element.

Could one even risk the hypothesis that we find, in English Calvinism, an amalgamation of the Roman Catholic and the Anabaptist positions? But is this idea of 'amalgamation' plausible?

Alternatively, this situation could be explained by the fact that, within the Roman Catholic sub-versions of this motive, there is a 'mystical' position or option that is quite close to the Anabaptist model. It was and remains the attitude of monasticism. It is an attitude of sheltering in an 'upper room' of grace to find rest from the chores and delusions of 'natural' life. In this attitude, however, the Roman (fundamentally optimistic) view of creation is not abandoned. Even within the paradigm of mysticism, we cannot easily speak of an antithesis or conflict between nature and grace.

The question is: which sub-version (or sub-versions) of the nature—grace paradigm has/have been (predominantly) adopted by English Calvinists? Should we say that the most adopted sub-versions are the Roman and the Anabaptist ones? Or should we conclude that it is an amalgamation of those two paradigms? At the present stage, after explaining and considering the main options, I will suspend my judgement. This will provide the reader some more time to reflect on these issues. In order to proceed to a deeper or broader analysis of the 'roots' of English Calvinism, I will examine other facets of its doctrines, convictions and ideas by exploring other topics. In Chapter 4 the English Calvinist view of scholarship, science, theorising and so forth will be explored. In this way, we will be able to gain more insight into this movement.

For the moment, one might simply observe that the hypothesis of an 'amalgamation' of two different worldviews, apparently emerging from this chapter, is quite puzzling. Further exploration is required to try and understand if the hypothesis is even plausible at all. Is it possible to 'fuse' two basic paradigms? This seems to be excluded by some by some

important authors involved in worldview- (or related) studies.⁹⁸ On the other hand, it may also be observed that there are no closed compartments between the sub-varieties of the nature—grace ground-motive and that there are ‘bridges’ between them. Furthermore, it is typical of the nature—grace ground-motive to ‘incorporate’ (at least in part) in the pole of nature, other ground-motives (for example, the Greek form-matter motive or the humanist motive of nature and freedom). It is precisely this ‘synthesis’ that is the typical approach of this ground-motive (this is observed more closely in Chapter 4, § 4.10). At this junction, a brief reflection on the possibility of amalgamating different (sub-versions of) worldviews is in order. For the moment, the question is not to know if (from a Christian point of view) this synthesis of (Christian) worldviews would be advisable or not. The question is simply to know if it is possible.

3.4.4.b Is it possible to ‘mix’ the (sub-versions of) worldviews?

Although Kuhn would argue that it is not possible to synthesise different paradigms, it should be admitted that ground-motives are not exactly (Kuhnian) paradigms. None of the ground-motives are strict strait-jackets. Some worldviews developed through partial inclusions or transformations of other worldviews. For example, the original development of the nature—grace ground-motive implied an accommodation of the Greek form—matter motive with divine revelation (cf Dooyeweerd, 1979:116).

Similarly, in his discussion of dialectical theology, Dooyeweerd mentions that it ‘incorporated both the Roman Catholic and the modern humanistic ground-motives (the second within the framework of the first)’ (Dooyeweerd, 1979:147).

Furthermore, the humanistic ground-motive of nature—freedom can be interpreted as an attempt to bring previous motives to a religious synthesis (*Ibid.*:5-16).

‘Humanism has humanized the Christian ground-motive of creation, fall, and redemption within its own ground-motive. Hence humanism is not a paganism; it passed through Christianity which it changed into a religion of human personality. Soon it also assimilated the ground-motives of Greek culture and Roman Catholicism’ (Dooyeweerd, 1979:156).

⁹⁸ For example, Thomas Kuhn would not have accepted the idea of an amalgamation or fusion of paradigms (Kuhn, 1962, 2nd edn). In his view each new paradigm is normally incompatible, if not incommensurable with the previous one. This can be seen for example in the fact that each new paradigm can solve problems that could not be solved under the old paradigm.

There is then perhaps scope for development or pliability within worldviews or ground-motives. This again suggests some openness to the possibility of mixing or synthesising these fundamental frameworks.

The previous discussion concerns the possibility that different worldviews may be somehow incorporated into or amalgamated with different worldviews.⁹⁹ Admittedly, this would not yet seem to support the possibility of an ‘amalgamation’ of two Christian sub-versions of the same ground-motive (not the synthesis between different ground-motives). It is however interesting to note what Dooyeweerd says in relation to a sub-type of worldview that he calls ‘Reformed Scholasticism’ (Dooyeweerd, 2012:38-39) and belongs to the family of the nature-and-grace ground-motive. Without entering the intricacies of his argumentation, Dooyeweerd predicts that such a worldview might develop in two directions (Dooyeweerd, 2012:38-39). Yet it would not likely move in the direction of a Lutheran opposition between law and gospel. It might, rather, by appealing to the doctrine of common grace, create a synthesis between Reformed theology and secular science. In a further phase, it would discover that theology has insufficient resources to equip the Reformed scholar in extra-theological fields of research. Finally, the artificial synthesis between Reformed theology and secular science would collapse, leading to a sort of Liberal position.

We can therefore see here, the hypothesis that a sub-version of the nature—grace worldview might move through several ‘metamorphoses’, in which other worldviews are incorporated. One may still argue that *incorporation* is not the correct term. One may view this ‘evolution’ as affecting the same worldview, without implying syntheses, amalgamations or incorporations. It is however difficult to deny that in this ‘evolution’, the Reformed-Scholastic worldview is predicted to become very similar first to a Lutheran and then to a Liberal worldview. I suspend the judgement, as I said above, trusting that this discussion constitutes a clarification of the issues at stake. Such clarification might be important for the further investigation of this problem, in the next chapter.

In the next section, in an attempt to identify some other traits of English Calvinism, I utilise some of Vollenhoven’s categories.¹⁰⁰ I especially examine how Vollenhoven categorises John Calvin’s position, because of his influence on English Calvinism. In this way, I hope to gain a deeper insight into the character of English Calvinism.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Klapwijk (1991; 1986) who has developed a transformational perspective with regard to Christian and non-Christian thought.

¹⁰⁰ One criticism of Vollenhoven’s approach is that it labels and boxes. Is Vollenhoven then outside of the box? Or has he been enclosed by a box of his own creation? These important questions were left aside as they were not germane to the main hypothesis. For the purpose of this thesis, van der Walt’s analysis of Calvin and the use of it for comparison were accepted.

3.5 Utilising Vollenhoven's categories

3.5.1 Intellectual influences on Calvin

One Reformational philosopher who has studied the philosophical roots of John Calvin and the Synod of Dordt using Vollenhoven's approach is B.J. van der Walt.

Van der Walt (2010f) identifies a number of possible influences on Calvin, these include: 'patristic theology, medieval theology, Platonism, Stoicism, Humanism, Anabaptism and the ideas of Calvin's co-reformers' (110). Of the Patristic authors most influential on Calvin was Augustine. Van der Walt notes: 'as far as their theologies revealed faithfulness to the Scriptures, Calvin was willing to listen to the early fathers, especially Chrysostom and Augustine' (van der Walt, 2010f:111). The influence of medieval thinkers on Calvin is more controversial. There is evidence that he read Anselm, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and William of Occam – but there is no consensus as to what extent they influenced him. Calvin did show an antipathy towards medieval scholasticism, yet still sometimes retained scholastic tendencies and at times his writings suggest a nature-supernature dualism.

Van der Walt also suggests that there are clear Platonic influences within Calvin's anthropology (see, for example, van der Walt's earlier work, 1991:233-234). Van der Walt (2010) develops that critique drawing on the work of Babelotzsky (1977). The influence of Plato is also independently confirmed by Irena Backus (2004:350). This influence, however, does not mean that Calvin is a Platonist – thus van der Walt thinks it best to describe Calvin as a Platonising thinker, as someone who combines Platonic themes with biblical ideas.

Drawing on Partee's work (1977), van der Walt regards Calvin as someone who transformed Classical philosophy drawing on these extra-biblical sources to illustrate or give explanations of his own views. Elsewhere van der Walt notes that 'Calvin was not critical enough of pre-Christian philosophy. Although he did not intentionally advocate a synthesis between his Christian faith and ancient philosophies' (van der Walt, 2010c:81).

There are then, according to van der Walt, two different lines in Calvin's thinking:

'a basic biblical (religious) *direction* (or trend) which is intertwined with a *structural analysis* of reality (his type of worldview) often borrowed from extra-biblical sources' (2010f:119).

3.5.2 Vollenhoven and van der Walt on Calvin and the Synod of Dordt

In § 2.4.3 I provided a brief overview of Vollenhoven's approach by which he identifies a number of *time currents* and *types* within the history of philosophy. The main types are

mythologising thought or theogonic-cosmogonic (M), cosmogono-cosmological thinking (Kg) and pure cosmological thought (KI). Each group contains dualistic and monistic types. These were then subdivided into a number of subtypes.

The *theogonic-cosmogonic* type proposes God/ gods/ the divine as the origin of the universe. The *pure cosmological* thinker, on the other hand, sees the universe in terms of a timeless order. The emphasis is on structure rather than development. The universe is timeless and unchanging. Within this position lie the *monarchist* and *semi-mystic* options. The difference between the two options is the boundary between the transcendent and the non-transcendent. In semi-mysticism the boundary is much 'lower'. In terms of humanity, this is located in the soul's having two (higher and lower) parts; the higher part is viewed as an extension of God. Then in *cosmogonic-cosmological* thinking, the emphasis is on the universe as an unfolding structure.

Van der Walt in applying Vollenhoven's problem-historical approach to Calvin (see also van der Walt, 2010c, d), identifies the following:

1. Calvin was a purely cosmological thinker.
2. He accepted a partial-universalist viewpoint combined with a modified macro-microcosmonic theory (where the macro is God and the micro humans).
3. He adopted a dualistic ontology concerning God and creation.¹⁰¹
4. He held to a dichotomist anthropology of body and soul/ spirit as two separate entities.
5. His perspective can be characterized as semi-mystical. A semi-mystical position entails that humans are not completely non-transcendent creatures, but also contain a transcendent element – the soul/ spirit.
6. He adopted a Platonising form of semi-mysticism.
7. He was a creatianist – the human soul is of divine origin, God creates a new soul for every human, which after death returns to its origin.

Van der Walt has also examined some of the philosophical influences at the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619) (van der Walt, 2011c).¹⁰² It is worth looking at these as the Synod of

¹⁰¹ As van der Walt notes: 'neither monism nor dualism are, however, in harmony with the Scriptures. Monism can only be true if we erase the distinction between God and creation. Dualism proposes two separate parts in reality, whereas the Bible teaches God as the Origin of everything that exists' (van der Walt, 2010c:121).

¹⁰² Van der Walt also looks at F. Gomarus (1563-1641) and J. Arminius (1560-1609); his analysis shows that both Gomarus and Arminius adhered to a purely cosmological, dualistic and vertical partial universalistic philosophy, but were proponents of very different anthropologies – Gomarus was an intellectualist and Arminius a (non-consistent) empiricist (van der Walt, 2011d).

Dordt was highly influential in shaping the development of Calvinism and a number of English Calvinists were present (see § 2.5.3). Van der Walt reveals a number of ideas of the ontological nature of God that have influenced the Synod's Calvinist theologies (van der Walt, 2011c). Those relevant to the present study are listed here.

1. A dualistic ontology: reality was divided into a higher part (God who is transcendent) and a lower part (the cosmos, non-transcendent).

2. A static view of creation – the cosmos was regarded as the creation of God, but it was viewed as static and eternally-determined by an all-determining God. This was, in Vollenhoven's terms, a cosmological and not a genetic view. There was no sense of creation needing to be developed.

3. A 'hidden' view of the law – the law was seen as existing before creation, it existed in the mind of God and, through human abstraction, in human reasoning. It is my impression that this again supported a rather deterministic view of creation.¹⁰³

4. A dichotomistic anthropology – Gomarus believed that the human intellect and the soul were derived from the transcendent God – this view is described as (intellectualistic) semi-mysticism (semi- as only part of the human has a divine element). Likewise, Calvin held to a dualistic view of reality. He distinguished a transcendent and a non-transcendent part of reality. In the Reformational perspective there is a distinction between God, his creation and his law/ word; in this sense, it advocates a three-factor view of reality, where the law/ word is the boundary between God and his creation (Spykman, 1992:75).

Calvin's dualistic ontology is also reflected in his view of humanity. It is especially in his anthropology that the influence of Plato becomes more obvious. Humanity is an interim being between God and creation. The body is material and mortal, but the soul/ spirit is immortal and transcendent. This position is in Vollenhoven's terms labelled as semi-mysticism. Van der Walt describes Calvin's anthropology as the least biblical part of his worldview (van der Walt, 2014a:23).

3.5.3 English Calvinism and Calvin

This then raises the question: how far does English Calvinism cohere with the position of Calvin and the Synod of Dordt? And to what extent has the adoption of Calvin's philosophical positions influenced the lack of adoption of Reformational philosophy? Have English Calvinists understood, in the spirit of Calvin, the Christian faith as being *semper*

¹⁰³ Admittedly, this impression has not been examined in this thesis – it is left as an area for further research.

reformanda (always reforming)? Have they acknowledged the dualistic traits within Calvin – such as Reformational scholars have identified – to become more biblical, or have they merely adhered to a Calvin(ism) tainted by pagan philosophies? As I have stated before it is difficult to talk of singular Calvinism as there is a wide range of Calvinisms; the same is true of English Calvinism. Next, in an attempt to answer the above questions, some selected authors who are broadly representative of English Calvinism are reviewed.

3.5.3.a English Calvinism and anthropological dualism

One author writing in the *British Reformed Journal* is Andy Underhile. In a two-part article (2015; 2016) he provides a helpful critique of the trichotomist approach to anthropology (i.e. humans comprise body, soul and spirit).¹⁰⁴ He stresses that ‘most theologians are dichotomists, but nearly all popular Christian literature and teaching is trichotomistic’ (Underhile, 2015:22). Before criticising trichotomy he states his own views – and those of the British Reformed Fellowship and most other English Calvinists – he is emphatic that the Scripture teaches a dichotomous view of humanity. He is clear that humans are:

‘comprised of two parts, one material part and one immaterial part. The material part is, of course, the body. The Bible variously calls the immaterial part the soul or spirit’ (Underhile, 2015:22).

This is clearly the same approach as Calvin. What is also interesting about Underhile’s approach is that there is no scope for debate. The Bible, according to Underhile, is perfectly clear on this topic and the dichotomy-view is true. It doesn’t seem to matter that the dichotomous view might be based on eisegesis, i.e. reading Platonic philosophy into the Scripture. He writes:

‘I will now review the scriptural data. The following verse [Matt. 10:28] presents man as a dichotomous being comprised of body and soul’ (Underhile, 2015:24).

As he says:

‘if Scripture has any authority with us, this should be enough to silence the claims of trichotomy. Scripture does not teach a trichotomous nature of man, nor is it silent on the issue. Scripture presents man as a dichotomous

¹⁰⁴ His criticism of trichotomy is that it leads to numerous theological dangers, these include Modalism, Sabellianism and Christological heresies; it promotes anti-intellectualism, carnal Christianity and is derived from Gnosticism.

being composed of an immaterial part (the soul or spirit), and a material part (the body)' (Underhile, 2015:27).

Scripture is data from which an anthropological position is deduced. The theological positions he deduces include:

- Death is the separation of body and soul
- The soul or spirit is the immaterial part of man which survives death
- It is our soul that communes with God in the reception of the gift of salvation
- Our soul, (and mind) has been affected by sin. He defines the mind as 'the cognitive function of the soul, the seat of reason and rationality' (2015:23)
- The body is dead without the spirit

It is clear then that, like Calvin, Underhile adopts a dichotomist anthropology. Although there is only a hint at semi-mysticism, there is a material/ immaterial dualism and there is also a suggestion that the immaterial soul/ spirit is immortal and transcendent as it communes with God and survives death. Erroll Hulse, the Reformed Baptist, in his *Catechism for Boys and Girls* (2015) also stresses the immortality of the soul:

'Q.18. What did God give Adam and Eve besides bodies?

A. He gave them souls that could never die.

Q.19. Have you a soul as well as a body?

A. Yes. I have a soul that can never die' (Hulse, 2015).

What does it mean to be human? This is a key worldview question – it impacts many areas of life such as psychology, counselling techniques, medicine and spirituality. From a Reformational point of view (see, for example, van der Walt, 2002:153-195), the terms *body*, *soul*, *spirit*, *mind*, *strength*, *flesh*, *body* are all used in the New Testament to denote different facets of humanity:

Body – this is humanity in visible embodiment, as seen from the 'outside in'.

Soul – this is humanity as a living, breathing being. It points to the inner person.

Spirit – this is the guiding and motivating power of existence, as seen from the inside out.

Flesh – this is humanity as weak, fragile and mortal.

Heart – humanity in the deepest core of existence, the religious concentration point of our selfhood.

We are not the sum of our *parts*: we are a unity. Each of the varied terms refers to the whole person viewed from a particular perspective. They do not denote separate parts, but each refers to the whole person from a specific viewpoint in relation to God (Bishop, 2008:np; Spykman, 1992:195-267; and van der Walt, in Bishop (ed.) 2011:182-212).

The English Calvinist view of reality is examined next.

3.5.3.b English Calvinism, ontological dualism and a static view of creation

Most English Calvinists would also, with Calvin, endorse a dualistic view of reality. There is a distinction between God and creation – a transcendent God and a non-transcendent creation; this is not dualism though. Dualism occurs when created reality is separated or ‘classified’ into two realms, such as secular and sacred, nature and grace, or body and soul. I trust it is by now sufficiently clear that this is indeed the position adopted by English Calvinists (see the discussions in §§ 3.3.6.b and 3.4.1).

A static view of creation/ reality/ law is also broadly endorsed by English Calvinists. In part this can be seen in the (same) title given to two different books: *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*; one contains articles from the *Bible League Quarterly* (Bible League, 1984), the other is by Lloyd-Jones (1951). J.I. Packer in his dissertation on Richard Baxter writes:

‘To orthodox Calvinism, the law of God is the permanent, unchanging expression of God’s eternal and unchangeable holiness and justice’ (as cited in Toon, 2003:55).

A static view of reality/ law is often a consequence of an emphasis on the unchangeability of God. This cosmological view of creation/ reality stresses the static (constancy) over development. It usually leads to the notion that there is little space for development in creation. This is in contrast to the Reformational position where the creation is seen as something that needs to be developed and opened up. As has often been pointed out: the Bible starts in a garden but ends up in a city. This implies some development, which is an important facet of Reformational thought. It is the basis for a transformational engagement in cultural activities, politics included. This static cosmological view of creation may be another reason for the lack of acceptance of the Reformational position by English Calvinists.

As we turn to some of the moderate Calvinists within the higher echelons of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship in the next chapter, we will see that they adopted a view of the law as something hidden, uncreated and existing in the mind of God. As van der Walt argues, these ideas were already present in the context of the Synod of Dordt.

‘On the one hand, law was confused with God (and God with law), while on the other hand, it was (as thing-laws) confused with creation [i.e. with

entities]. In both cases the law lost its real nature and character as God's guiding rule for the direction of life' (van der Walt, 2011c: 520).

This again makes the case for the Reformational view of the development of creation (and by consequence of culture) a difficult position to adopt.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced some of the tendencies within English Calvinism, notably the inclination towards individualism, the downplaying of creation and the elevation of the role of the church among other social institutions. These tendencies have been shown to result in a lurking distrust of social action and in a tendency to ignore Christian socio-political institutions as well as in the failure to develop a solid Christian perspective on politics. All this, I have argued, stems from a nature—grace ground-motive or worldview.

I have also briefly mentioned a number of reasons for the neglect of, mistrust about, or even denial of the validity of a Reformational perspective in English Calvinist circles. These, so far identified in this chapter, include the following.

1. The effect of a nature—grace ground-motive in English Calvinism emphasised individualism (§§ 3.3.1, 3.3.3) or personalism, an introspective piety and a focus on ecclesiastical issues and activities. Threats to these concepts were viewed as being 'unspiritual' and threatening to the peaceful 'privatisation' of the church. The Reformational view of redemption for all of life would mean that no-go areas for the transforming power of the gospel were excluded. This was regarded by many as constituting 'a step too far'. Hence the lack of concern for Christian politics and for the setting up of Christian political organisations. The private was placed over the public – the Reformational position would mean that this dualism would be dissolved and the status quo the church, enjoyed with the secularists, would be threatened.

2. Most English Calvinists were slow to understand the relevance of Christianity to areas other than the private or the church. The search for a 'social ethics' or a 'social theology' was slow in coming. The main concern was for theological orthodoxy and to defend the Scriptures against Roman Catholicism, theological modernism and liberalism. This can be seen in Affirmation 2010 and the number of different organisations initiated in the nineteenth century (see the list in footnote 65 in § 2.5.5) many of which were responses against perceived theological attacks. This arrangement was the result of the priorities that were set: generally speaking the realm of 'grace' had to be given priority over 'nature'. As is often the

case, what was prioritised gradually absorbed all the time and energies available. This left little time for what was seen as 'extra-curricular' activities such as Christian socio-political activities. Christian communal cultural activity as proposed by Reformational advocates was seen as a threat to the main tasks of doctrinal and personal purity, except where they could provide apologetic support such as in discussions about science. The same attitude was also reflected in the narrow view of creation held by many – creation was seen in terms of the creation-evolution debate, rather than in the broader use made of the term in the Reformational movement.

3. The English Calvinist over-emphasis on the fall meant that creation came to be regarded especially as fallen nature. This is the result of a (particular version of the) nature—grace dualism. This meant that the Scriptures were viewed from this perspective and that the Reformational perspective was regarded as being 'unscriptural'. However, activities dealing with creation (such as art, scholarship, politics etc.) are often regarded as being 'neutral', despite the influence of the fall – this supposed 'neutrality' is explored in more depth in the next chapter.

It is this depreciation of creation that in part is a reason for the neglect of the development of Christian politics and the establishment of Christian political parties. Creation becomes merged with the fall thus becoming 'nature' – as grace takes priority over nature these areas then become neglected at best or demonised at worst.

The blurring of the distinction between church as an organism and as an institution also has its roots in this nature—grace dualism. This is seen in the prioritising of church-focused activities over so-called worldly activities such as setting up political parties. The church (grace) is valued over the world (nature). In a similar way the distinction made between the gospel mandate and the cultural mandate stems from the same nature—grace dualism: the gospel mandate (associated with the grace-pole) is prioritised over the cultural mandate (nature).

4. From a Vollenhovian perspective, it can be said that the acceptance by English Calvinists of a dualistic ontology and anthropology is at odds with an integral Reformational perspective. For cultural and social engagement, this meant that such a commitment could not receive sufficient support.

5. The cosmological static view of creation held by English Calvinists de-emphasises the idea of development or transformation of creation, which means that the Reformational approach with its stress on development and redemption of creation challenged deeply held views.

One factor above all, perhaps, is the perceived impossibility of elaborating a Christian philosophy that was not theology. This is examined in more detail in the next chapter and the

nature—grace ground-motive that also led to an adoption of objectivism as *the* Christian approach is also emphasised. Dooyeweerdianism was regarded as a threat to that approach. Dooyeweerd was seen as a subjectivist and subjectivism was seen as a threat to Calvinist doctrine. In the next chapter, I also look at the English Calvinist emphasis on the importance of theology, which was in marked contrast to the Reformational view. Finally, it is also shown how the acceptance of a nature—grace ground-motive also meant the acceptance of the neutrality of scholarship and the adoption of a complementarity/independence view of science and Christianity, an approach that would be threatened by the Reformational position (see § 4.6).

Chapter 4

English Calvinism and academic relevance

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I hope to examine how tendencies to accommodation in English Calvinist thought have undermined the acceptance of the project concerning an integral Christian philosophy and scholarship. I tried to determine whether/ how the accommodation-approach fits within the religious ground-motives embraced by English Christianity.

In Calvinism in England – particularly in the works of Calvinists such as Hooykaas, MacKay, Barclay, and perhaps to a lesser extent Helm – there has been a tendency towards a positivist, rationalistic and scientific approach to theoretical thought. In this chapter, the focus is on these thinkers (and a few others) as they were key players on the English Christian university scene. In many ways they were the gatekeepers for the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) – and each opposed Dooyeweerdian ideas. They adopted a logical complementarity view of science and religion. They endorsed and promoted objectivity as *the* main ingredient of a Christian view of science.¹⁰⁵ All this led them to a position of neutrality towards science and as a result they rejected – and in some case vehemently opposed – any notion of a distinctly Christian approach to scholarship and thus the Reformational perspective. The English Calvinist approach to scholarship focused on being good scholars and good Christians rather than Christian scholars – ‘Christian’ was an adjective that they rarely, if ever, used in relation to scholarship. Christianity was an addition to science rather than being integral to science.

This English Calvinist approach has philosophical roots. My survey of the work of some relevant authors therefore takes place after an introduction to some relevant philosophical trends that, at least in England, have been rather influential in Christian circles,

¹⁰⁵ Objectivity is an ideal that cannot be fully achieved. This has long been recognised in the twentieth century by philosophers of science.

in particular logical positivism (§ 4.3). The impact of this philosophical school on English Calvinism will then hopefully become clearer.

In addition to the philosophical roots, the pre-scientific roots underpinning the English Calvinist view of scholarship are again explored. In this chapter, I try to achieve a more precise assessment and understanding of those pre-scientific roots. For this purpose, I would like to explore how English Calvinism has understood the relationship of worldview, philosophy, theology and other special sciences, in connection with themes like objectivity, neutrality and complementarity. This should allow us to better understand the subsequent clashes with Reformational ideas. In addition, I would like to see if a tendency to elevate theology over the other sciences has thwarted the acceptance of the possibility of an integral Christian philosophy and scholarship.

In Chapter 3, I discovered that English Calvinists adopted the (Roman Catholic) 'grace above nature' paradigm but I have also found that there might be other sub-versions of this paradigm (e.g. Anabaptist) at work in their approaches. I would like to further explore this situation and to ask whether, in English Calvinism, these sub-versions of the same worldview are not somehow 'amalgamated' into a new 'paradigm'.

As in previous chapters, I utilise extensive quotes from the primary sources to illustrate the positions of English Calvinist authors in their own words. I nevertheless offer again my apologies to the readers who might find such quotations somehow too lengthy.

In the next section, a preliminary exploration of a typical approach to Christian scholarship, as exemplified in the approach of R.L.F. Boyd (1922-2004), is provided.

4.2 English Calvinism and scholarship: a preliminary exploration

One of the key effects of a nature—grace ground-motive is that integral Christian scholarship is regarded as being impossible. Furthermore, as the personal is emphasised above the public, articulating Christian scholarship in the public arena is usually discouraged. In part, this placing of the personal above the public is justified by stating that our personal lives can still be a public witness. This is certainly important, but not sufficient. This priority of the personal over the public can be seen in Boyd (1988)¹⁰⁶ too. In a paper presented to the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship (RSCF), Boyd addresses the question: what

¹⁰⁶ Robert Lewis Fullarton Boyd (19 October 1922– 5 February 2004). He was awarded a CBE in 1972 and knighted in 1983. He was founding director of the Mullard Space Science Laboratory and Chair of the London Bible College 1983-1990, as well as an influential member of the RSCF.

difference does it make to a scientist if s/he is a Christian? The answer is given in 19 points (Boyd, 1988:7-8).¹⁰⁷

All but two of the points are positive and most of them seem to be related to the personal. One negative point is that it provides a temptation to 'misuse time and even equipment not provided for Christian work' (15) – presumably, this means, for example, witnessing during work time or using the work's photocopier for photocopying the church council's minutes. Such a point also seems to suggest that daily work is not Christian work.

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1. It saves in the full New Testament sense of the word.
2. It provides a motive and meaning in life beyond the pursuit of knowledge or ambition,
3. It provides a limitless motive to worship.
4. It provides a sabbatical release from a vocation that might otherwise too readily be all-absorbing to the detriment of health and personality.
5. It engenders a humble attitude to knowledge and a willingness to recognize human finitude and limitations.
6. It provides in Scripture an indispensable daily source of wisdom for the human situations and relationships which the scientist may otherwise be, by his education and outlook, particularly ill-equipped to deal with.
7. It provides at every moment the healing and helping access of prayer.
8. It demonstrates the inadequacy of philosophy and the importance of images and pictures in all explanation, thus giving a sane refuge from contemporary and transient theological storms.
9. It provides membership of an international community, more hospitable, more congenial and more important than the fraternity of scientists.
10. It occasionally provides an opportunity to bring the Christian understanding or even answer to a colleague's human problem.
11. It most happily transcends the 'class' structure of the scientific institution.
12. It sets a standard, and in Christ provides the motives for a standard, of honesty and unselfishness which, although present to a high degree in some non-Christian scientists, many of us need.
13. It makes it possible to forgive.
14. It did not, in my case, prevent me achieving any scientific ambition although I thought that it must and still think it was an act of special kindness on God's part that it did not. It must surely commonly involve sacrifices I have not had to make.
15. It brings a serious temptation to misuse time and even equipment not provided for Christian work.
16. It makes it very easy to over-commit time and energy to the detriment of responsibility to family, local church (possibly), and health (possibly).
17. It has had very little effect on my choice of research topics or places of work, I'm sure I should have taken all this more seriously, but my 'Heavenly Father' has been extraordinarily good to me - I hope I'm not too spoilt!
18. It makes for wisdom and gives guidance on choosing a wife. A scientist needs a good wife for many reasons, not least that of keeping him human.
19. Its influence on my choice of research topic has been largely negative, that is my decision to leave Naval Research (Admiralty) and my attitude to consulting for the cigarette business were affected by a moral sense which for me was related to my faith. (For many, the choices would have been the same though the moral basis would have been humanistic) (Boyd, 1988:7-8).

Boyd continues, 'it makes it very easy to over commit time and energy to the detriment of responsibility to family, local church (possibly) and health (possibly)' (16).

The other negative point is a Christian's possible disputable choice of research topics (19); Boyd declared, for example, that he wouldn't do research on behalf of the cigarette business.

His 19-point list is very English; it is typical of how many Christians in English academia would describe how their faith affects their science. Christianity affects the personal, moral and ethical but not the scientific. None of the reasons given by Boyd to engage in academia as a Christian are about the nature and structure of science or scholarship itself. Two of the reasons (Boyd's 4 and 8) are worth a brief look.

The implication in point 4 is that although research may be a vocation, Christianity is needed to prevent it becoming all in all. Christianity provides a respite from the world of work. In addition to being an 'add-on' (as he argues), is Christianity then also a 'take-off'? Let us briefly look at his 8th point.

No reason for the inadequacy of philosophy is given. However, this argument may signal a denigration of, and distaste or disdain, for philosophy. Philosophy, it seems, is to blame for the 'contemporary and transient theological storms'. Hence, inadvertently perhaps, some support is given to the idea that philosophy contributes shaping theology.

Overall, the impression given by Boyd's responses is that Christianity is a useful *addition*. There is no suggestion that it may permeate all of life and scientific work in particular. Christianity has helped in the area of morals and personal ethics - but even then Boyd suggests: 'for many, the choices would have been the same though the moral basis would have been humanistic' (Boyd, 1988:8).

There is no doubt about Boyd's commitment to science or to Christianity. He is published in both areas (see for example on science (Boyd, 1960, 1975) and on Christianity (Boyd, 1953, 1959, 1965)). Boyd also adopts the complementarity model to explain the relationship between science and faith (Boyd, 1965:112) (on this see § 4.5.2). For Boyd this means he accepts the humanist approach to science, but:

'to our view of man as an animal and a mechanism we *must add* the complementary view of ourselves as thinking, choosing, self-knowing, responsible personalities' (Boyd, 1965:114 — my emphasis).

Christianity is an addition to humanism:

'it is just here that I part company with the Humanists. It is because of their (can I say doctrinaire) exclusion of the possibility of revelation' (Boyd, 1965:121).

Humanism is wrong, it seems, not on what it affirms but on what it neglects. The type of Christianity that could be construed on this basis is constituted by humanism plus revelation. But there is more:

‘Christianity is different. It is not primarily a philosophy or a world view at all. It is a *moral response* to an historical Phenomenon, an historical person’ (Boyd, 1965:122 – my emphasis).

Here we see the elevation of morals; for Boyd, Christianity is not a cognitive (or cultural, emotional or pistic response) but a ‘moral response’. Why would it not be a response on multiple levels (i.e. aspects)? Does the moral aspect include all the others? It is possible that here Boyd may be contrasting Christian life (as a whole) with theoretical thinking (as a part). But why would it be legitimate to call Christianity (as a whole) ‘a moral response’ while it would presumably be illegitimate to call it a pistic or a cognitive response? Is not Christianity (as a whole) often and rightly regarded as living in the truth or by faith? Back to the previous point, Boyd’s approach may still suggest that humanism plus revelation (that demands a moral response) is the essence of Christianity.

Boyd’s approach is a very different perspective from the all-embracing view that we find in the Reformational perspective. From a Reformational point of view, however, humanism and Christianity cannot both be true, they cannot be complementary, both are competing worldviews. Humanism may provide a space for Christianity, but the space would be in the private realm and never in the public realm. Christianity is personal, but it is never merely a private affair.

Such a position as Boyd’s is typical of many English Calvinists and other Christians in this period. It is worth looking at how such a position could have developed. To do so, I shall go back – at least initially – to the 1920s.

4.3 Positivist and logical positivist influences

4.3.1 Positivism and logical positivism

The 1920s were a decade of interest in regard to science and philosophy. Ernest Rutherford described the twenties as the ‘the heroic age of physics’. In 1919 Rutherford split the atom; in 1921 Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for his work on the discovery of the photoelectric effect. De Broglie published ground-breaking work on the wave theory of matter in 1924. James Jeans, in 1926, developed a new stellar theory and Heisenberg

developed his quantum theory. Then in 1929 Hubble's work suggested the universe is expanding and Prince Louis de Broglie discovered the wave nature of electrons. These were heady days. Science, and physics in particular, was proving to be very successful. Physics provided the gold standard for the scientific method. This coincided with the rise of the Vienna Circle and the philosophical school known as logical positivism. One of the main hopes of positivism was to replicate the success of physics within philosophy. To do so, they sought to positivise the scientific method.

The success of science was obvious. What lay behind its success wasn't as obvious. What grants scientific success, it was thought, must be a scientific method, with its focus on observation and experiment, trusting facts and rejecting all else. Hence, the positivists wanted to remove any idea of values, beliefs or faith from theorising. Positivism actually goes back to Auguste Comte (1798-1857). His 'positive science' relied especially on what was perceptible by the senses and rejected all else. What was perceptible by the senses were hard facts, unadulterated by intentions, reasons, values or beliefs. There was, however, also a rationalist river contributing to the positivist lake.

A further development of positivism was known as logical positivism and associated with the Vienna Circle in the early twentieth century. They emphasised the verification principle. What was regarded as truth was what could only be empirically verifiable or based on logic. All else was emotive, speculative, irrelevant. Metaphysics was therefore meaningless (Ayer, 1978:96). If something was not based on experience or experiment it was to be rejected. All that mattered were objective facts. Objectivity was the order of the day, protocol statements were the standard by which other statements were to be tested. But can protocol statements be verified?

The positivists were against metaphysics – the idea that there 'might be a world going beyond the ordinary world of science and common sense' (Ayer, 1978:96). Positivism implied a condemnation of any theology. They had an 'extreme reverence for the natural sciences' (Ayer, 1978:96). As Ayer notes, positivism followed an old empiricist tradition (e.g. Hume) and for them, philosophy was the hand maiden of science. There was no domain for philosophy - all domains had been taken up by science. What was left for philosophy to do, was to analyse and criticise the theories of science. Logic came in by supplying a tool for philosophical analysis (Ayer, 1978:98). In discussion with Magee, Ayer identified 'three chief positive doctrines' of logical positivism (Ayer 1978:98-99). These can be summarised thus:

1. Everything hinged on the principle of verification. Admittedly, 'the verification principle in its strong form really didn't last very long', as Ayer said in 1976 in an interview with Magee (Magee, 1978:100).

The verification principle had two consequences – negatively, it excluded metaphysics and positively it showed ‘a way of analysing statements that were significant’ (Ayer, 1978:99).

2. The propositions of logic and mathematics were regarded as tautologies.

3. Philosophy consisted in the ‘activity of elucidation’ – so, philosophy was not a doctrine or set of theories but an activity, analysing, exposing fallacies and so forth.

Finding out about the world was the task of science – this meant there was no space for philosophy; philosophy was then a second-order discipline, i.e. talking about talking about the world (Ayer, 1978:102-103). This positivist denigration of the role of philosophy is also reflected in the writings of Oliver Barclay (see § 4.4.3 below) and, as we saw, in Boyd (§ 4.2).

Many of the philosophers in the Vienna Circle were either Jewish or left wing (or both) and so with the rise of the Nazis they had to flee (Magee, 1973:67). Many went to the US, others to the UK where they discovered that Ayer was doing similar work there already. Ayer had, at the suggestion of Gilbert Ryle, gone to Vienna and sat in on the ‘circle’. He came back to England and wrote a paper for *Mind* called *Demonstration of the Impossibility of Metaphysics* (Ayer, 1934)¹⁰⁸ and then following the suggestion of Isaiah Berlin wrote *Language, Truth and Logic* (Ayer, 1936).

For Ayer, his approach was part of British empiricism. It was a blend of the empiricism of Hume and the logicism of Bertrand Russell (Ayer, 1973:68). Ayer’s book *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936) was written when he was 25 and was widely read even among non-philosophers. He later began to realise that his approach was inadequate (Magee, 1973:74). For Ayer, the verification principle entailed that ‘a statement is only significant if it’s either tautological or empirically verifiable’ (Ayer, 1973:74). He noted later that the problem was how ‘to give a precise meaning to “empirically verifiable”’ (Ayer, 1973:74). This is logical positivism’s (and the verification principle’s) Achilles’ heel: the verification principle is not verifiable. The later Ayer was also more positive towards what he had described as metaphysics (Ayer, 1973:76).

4.3.2 English Calvinism and positivism

Obviously, the UCCF stalwarts like Barclay and MacKay weren’t logical positivists; not least they had a place for theology and metaphysics. But what they did adopt, though not explicitly, was the ideal that science is unadulterated by beliefs (see below, particularly §

¹⁰⁸ In the foreword to this article he wrote: ‘I hope to convince others by whom the work of Wittgenstein and the Viennese school has so far been ignored or misunderstood’ (Ayer, 1934:335).

4.7.2). They also adopted a high view of natural science and the secondary role of philosophy. Philosophy was then downgraded in their minds. Ayer speaking of the impact of logical positivism sums up also the perspective of Barclay, MacKay *et al.*: ‘I think there was a great emphasis on clarity and an opposition to what might be called wooliness. There was a kind of injunction to look at the facts, to see things as they are (...). All this was very attractive to young people in any field’ (Ayer, 1978:106).¹⁰⁹ For the moment I am going only to mention this ‘sympathy’ of some English Calvinists for positivist views. In later analyses, I trust that this emphasis on neutrality, objectivity and impartiality will emerge with more clarity in the work of specific English Calvinist authors.

I now turn to look at one key organisation and its gatekeepers who were strongly influenced by Calvinism and had a major role in shaping Christian scholarship, the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship. The purpose of the following section is to outline the positions of Oliver Barclay, Donald MacKay and illustrate the impact of Reijer Hooykaas. The background provided in the present section, I trust, should help to understand their views, aims and positions better.

4.4 Reijer Hooykaas, Donald MacKay, Oliver Barclay

The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) was a para-church organisation founded as the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF) in 1919 to support students in English universities. In 1975 its name changed to the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (for a full history see Johnson, 1979). Closely linked to UCCF was the Research Students’ Christian Fellowship (RSCF). Although the UCCF adopted a mediating position between Arminianism and Calvinism for fear of alienating one group or the other, the major players in the early days were largely Calvinists.

The key people in UCCF were Oliver Barclay (1919-2013)¹¹⁰ and Douglas Johnson (1904-1991) both had attended Lloyd-Jones’ Westminster Chapel, a bastion of British Calvinism. Barclay was an ex-president of the Cambridge Inter Collegiate Christian Union, he was the Assistant Secretary of the IVF from 1945-1964 when he succeeded Douglas Johnson as the General Secretary; he was also the Universities Secretary of the IVF from 1953 to 1959. One branch of the IVF was the Graduates Fellowships. In the 1940s these comprised the Schoolteachers Fellowship, the Christian Medical Fellowship and the Tyndale

¹⁰⁹ Vollenhoven places Ayer in Chart #48 – Purely cosmological thinking, dualism, empiricist, consistent, Aristotelian – LIX (Vollenhoven, 2000:254).

¹¹⁰ Barclay, according to one obituary, read Calvin’s *Institutes* annually (Cameron, 2013).

Fellowship (Johnson, 1979:238). The existence of these fellowships indicates the emphasis on the caring professions and on theology. It was later, in 1944, that Oliver Barclay began the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship (RSCF as it became known). The RSCF became Christians in Science in 1988 (Jeeves & Berry, 2015). Encouraging here is the formation of these organisations; unfortunately, the need for such organisations wasn't seen in other areas such as politics.

The key people in RSCF, apart from Barclay, were the Scottish Calvinist Donald M. MacKay, the Australian professor of Psychology at St Andrews, Malcolm Jeeves, and later the English Anglican and geneticist R.J. Berry (1934-). Two, in particular, were to shape the RSCF, these were Donald MacKay and the Dutchman Reijer Hooykaas.

4.4.1 Reijer Hooykaas (1906-1994)

Reijer Hooykaas had considerable sway in the UK largely through his friendship with MacKay and his involvement with the RSCF. MacKay, in the Preface to his *The Clockwork Image* (1974a), writes:

'my greatest single debt is to Professor R. Hooykaas (...) who first taught me to recognize the liberating implication of biblical faith (as distinct from rationalistic Biblicism) for the freedom of science and for properly critical thinking' (MacKay, 1974a:10).

In 1945 Hooykaas was appointed as the first chair in the history of science at the Free University of Amsterdam (Flipse, 2008:384). In his best known and most influential book *Religion and the Rise of Science* (1972) he, among other things, makes the case for rational empiricism.¹¹¹ Hooykaas looks at 'why modern science arose in a particular place, in Europe, and at a particular time, and not elsewhere or in a different age' (Hooykaas, 1972:xi). He then goes on to trace the shift in emphasis from the view of nature as an organism to a mechanism.

'This adaptation thus led to a positive and empiricist conception of science which was accepted by such men as Pascal and Berkeley, and to a large extent Boyle and Newton' (Hooykaas, 1972:25).

It is this de-deification of nature he sees as important for the rise of modern science. It was also this idea that 'formed the basis of that rational empiricism which has become the legitimate method of modern science' (Hooykass, 1972:25-26). This rational empiricism, for

¹¹¹ The term *rational empiricism* had been around in the 1900s in the medical world (see, e.g., Duckworth, 1911 and Rudolf, 1921) – Hooykaas was using it in a different sense (see below).

Hooykaas, 'recognizes that reason is indispensable for the creation of order, but that it has to submit to what has been given in the world' (1972:29). It also means that 'man [sic] can only find out *a posteriori* how far the data of nature are comprehensible to human reason' (1972:30). Hooykaas also stresses the importance of the two-book hypothesis and praises Francis Bacon's philosophical approach. These emphases were instrumental in supporting the autonomy of the natural sciences. The two-book metaphor was utilised by Bacon in his *The Advancement of Learning* and the *New Atlantis* (Book I, 1.3). It was also prominent in the seventeenth century (Manuel, 1974).

'Those who inclined towards developing the idea of neutrality, or separateness, or autonomy, of science took a position that became epitomized in the metaphor of the two books, the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature, both created by God as manifestations of His omnipotence and omniscience, but books different in character that had to be kept apart' (Manuel, 1974:27-8).

This was also the position advocated by many such as MacKay and Barclay – it was also potentially inimical to the Reformational perspective, as it could lead to a two-kingdom approach.

Hooykaas described himself as an 'old-fashioned Calvinist' (Leegwater, 1996:99; Barclay, 1994:131). Despite his appreciation for Kuyper, Hooykaas was not interested in the inner reformation of the sciences.

'Thus there is no necessity to christianize science: this has already happened. We may consider it a product of the human mind which has been enabled to find its right method and its highest purity by being christianized in the 17th century. In spite of the then following dechristianization of much of Western thought, the basis and method have remained the same' (Hooykaas, 1961:65).

As Barclay noted:

'[Hooykaas] never identified with the Christian philosophy of his colleagues Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven at the Free University of Amsterdam. He believed they were raising expectations about Christian scholarship, in the sciences in particular, that they could not fulfil, and devaluing God's Common Grace to unbelievers that enable them to discover truth' (Barclay, 1994:131).

Hooykaas' concern was to allow science to be free from philosophical and theological systems. During an evening with London RSCF members, circa 1979, according to the note-taker, he said:

'a proper Christian approach to science compels us similarly to sit down before God's facts like a little child. This attitude alone will make good scientists and good Science teachers' (Hooykaas, 1988:11).

And:

'those who teach Science at every level must seek to do so, not so as to propound a "Christian Chemistry" or the like (which is nonsense) but so as to teach a proper Christian attitude to God's creation (even if in a secular setting we have to call it 'nature'). This means doing Chemistry Christianly. A really Christian attitude to the truth is also a critical and really scientific attitude. We must not make such a gap between our Science and our Christianity that we retreat into a cultural backwater and fail to affect the thinking of our society as we should and could. Science teaching does mould people's ideas of reality' (Hooykaas, 1988:11).

Despite his desire to free science from philosophy - in itself a philosophical position - he advocated a form of rational empiricism, which is philosophical in nature. As Leegwater says, Hooykaas 'argued for a methodological, but not an ontological separation of religion and science' (Leegwater, 1996:99). Hooykaas advocated the objectivity of science:

'it is often held, however, that science is objective knowledge. Science (scire - to know) is truth; if it is wrong it is no science but pseudo-science, or error' (Hooykaas, 1988:13).

This objectivity of science and seeing facts as facts, although sold as a Christian approach, is heavily indebted to (logical) positivism. The objectivity-of-science approach was further developed by MacKay.

4.4.2 Donald MacCrimmon MacKay (1922-1987)

The Scottish Calvinist Donald MacKay spent most of his academic years at Keele University as professor of Communication (1960-1982). He founded the multi-disciplinary Department of Communication and Neurosciences at Keele in 1960. He was brought up in the Free Church of Scotland where his father was a minister. He obtained his BSc in natural philosophy at St Andrews (1943) and his PhD at Kings College, London (1951) where he

taught physics from 1946-1961, and where his research interest in the relevance of computers to the brain began.

MacKay has been described by R.J. Berry as the person 'who has probably contributed more than anyone this century to the Christian understanding of science' (Berry, 1995:10). He was a prolific author and wrote about 300 articles and books as evidenced by MacDonald's bibliography of MacKay's work (MacDonald, 1994). Oliver Barclay credits MacKay (together with Hooykaas) as someone who 'informed much of my thinking on science and faith'.¹¹² He also adds:

'Hooykaas (...) working with Donald MacKay (...) moulded the thinking of Christians in science and rescued them from a more simplistic and pietistic approach' (Barclay, 1997:90).

As mentioned above (§ 4.4.1) MacKay credited Hooykaas as having 'taught [him] to recognize the liberating implications of biblical faith (...) for the freedom of science' (MacKay, 1974a:10). The ideal of the independence or freedom of science from faith was developed further by MacKay (see for example MacKay, 1980).

MacKay's interest in philosophy began during his daily commute from Windsor to London with Sir Walter Moberly (1881-1974). During this time MacKay also had group discussions with Karl Popper (Barclay, 1988). From the 1950s onward MacKay has sought to integrate his Calvinistic views with a mechanistic view of the brain; he wanted to argue 'that there is room for freedom of action in a mechanistic universe'. He first met Reijer Hooykaas at the RSCF meeting in 1948 (Rios, 2014:79). Hooykaas had been invited by D.M. Lloyd-Jones. The Hooykaas and MacKay families became good friends (Haas, 1992). Haas writes:

'Hooykaas made a great impression with his concern that science be "free", eschewing the notion of (say) a "Christian chemistry" which was associated with Dutch thinkers Abraham Kuyper and Herman Dooyeweerd.

MacKay (...) often referred to Hooykaas' *Christian Faith & the Freedom of Science* (1957) as advancing what he would claim and would later author a paper "Value Free Knowledge" supporting this view' (Haas, 1992:57).

The RSCF also influenced and in turn was greatly influenced by MacKay. Haas (1992) notes that MacKay became the leading thinker of the RSCF. Other influences on MacKay included the Methodist and scientist Charles A. Coulson (1910-1974).

¹¹² Barclay interview on line:

http://cis.org.uk/upload/Resources/Interviews/interview_o_barclay.pdf. Accessed 24 June 2015.

In essence, MacKay wants to show how humans are free. As a good Calvinist MacKay wants to affirm the sovereignty of God and deny the mechanistic view of science and of the person (even though he adopts a mechanistic model of the brain in his own research at Keele University). He attempts to achieve this goal through two ideas that are discussed later in more detail. These two ideas are: logical indeterminacy (§ 4.5.1) and complementarity. The first idea according to MacKay means that for a person A, ‘the outcome of a decision which depends on conscious cognitive reflection will in general be “logically indeterminate” for A until he makes up his mind’ (MacKay, as cited in Tinker (ed.) 1988:59). The complementarity view of Christianity and science (§ 4.5.2) asserts that Christianity and science offer non-interacting, non-competing, complementary approaches to reality.

Also associated with the RSCF and UCCF was Oliver Barclay – it is to him I turn to next.

4.4.3 Oliver Rainsford Barclay (1919-2013)

Oliver Barclay is a name that has cropped up several times in this study. Barclay, like MacKay, was a key gatekeeper among Christians in English universities. He also, like MacKay and Hooykaas, had a strong mistrust of the Dooyeweerdian perspective. He warned the UCCF Travelling Secretaries about Rookmaaker’s Dooyeweerdian views (Bishop, 2016b) and even wrote a riposte against the Dooyeweerdian approach in his *Developing a Christian Mind* (Barclay, 1984:202-207).

Barclay was the general secretary of the UCCF. The son of missionaries, he was born in Kobe, Japan where he lived until he was seven. He originally planned, after his PhD in zoology, to become an overseas missionary; however, in 1945 he took up the newly created post of assistant secretary to the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF). He remained active within IVF, which later became UCCF, for the rest of his life. He became the IVF General Secretary in 1964. In 1975, the IVF under his leadership became the UCCF. Barclay also served on the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) executive committee, from 1959-1983. Although not theologically trained, he developed the ability to ‘think theologically’ (Obituary on UCCF webpage, 2013). In an interview for Christians in Science (CiS), he cites as important role models Frank Houghton, Hooykaas, MacKay, D.M. Lloyd-Jones and John Stott. To the question ‘what science-faith books have you most enjoyed/ found most helpful?’ He responded:

‘initially I was much helped by a long forgotten book “Christ and the world of thought” by Daniel Lamont who was an evangelical Professor of Apologetics in Edinburgh. Donald MacKay’s writing has been the most helpful, particularly “The Clockwork Image – a Christian perspective on

science” (IVP, 1974, reprinted 1997). He was the leading academic thinker in CiS for a long time. Until he became involved, thinking had often revolved around questions over events such as Joshua’s long day. He brought a strong reformed theological background, and allowed us to get to the fundamental issues’ (Barclay, 2012:np).

As we have seen in Chapter 3, Barclay wrote several books during his time with the IVF and UCCF. Writing under the pseudonym A.N.Triton,¹¹³ he shows he is aware of Kuyper as in the ‘further reading’ section (under ‘General’), of his book *Whose World?* (1978) he includes Kuyper’s *Lectures on Calvinism* (1931) (Triton, 1978:190). He also wrote a ‘personal sketch’ of the history of *Evangelicalism in Britain* (Barclay, 1997). Using the latter book we can discern Barclay’s responses to several of the worldview questions.

Where are we? We are in a world of revelation - God reveals himself through the Scriptures.

What’s wrong? The problem is that we do not take seriously the Scriptures; we apply hermeneutics to avoid the plain reading of the Scripture. The Bible is not given the place it deserves.

He posits a sharp distinction within Evangelicalism between the classical Evangelicals (which he designates CEs) and the liberal Evangelicals (LEs). The former are true to the Bible, according to Barclay, the liberals are more concerned to assimilate to the spirit of the age. He laments the lack of theologians, as ‘the leaders who gave their names to the infant IVF as vice-presidents were nearly all scientists, medicals, soldiers and missionaries, with few working ministers’ (Barclay, 1997:18-19). He identifies several weaknesses in the inter-war years, these being: the neglect of theological education; the leaders’ lack of biblical knowledge; the disdain of theology, an anti-intellectual stance and a negative definition of their position. He notes that a serious weakness was their failure at this stage to grapple with the modern mind in a biblical way. The chief reason was that their theological tools were inadequate (Barclay, 1997:29). These indicate the high view that Barclay has of theology – but it must be sound biblical theology:

‘university theology in the twentieth century has been both highly reductionistic and very rationalistic. Its reductionism means that there is very little scope for an overall biblical theology’ (Barclay, 1997:128).

¹¹³ Barclay used the pseudonym as he was a senior staff member at IVF. See his ‘confession’ in Barclay (1997:150; fn 26).

What's the remedy? The solution is for theology to be based on the Scriptures and for us to live our lives according to the Scriptures. Hence, for Barclay, the importance of right theology and the right understanding of the Scriptures. The remedy comes in part through good academic scholarship that takes the Bible seriously. This can be seen in several projects undertaken by the IVF: the publication of *The New Bible Handbook* (1947), the *Bible Commentary* (1953) and the *New Bible Dictionary* (1962). The setting up of university Christian Unions, to support Christians in the university, the establishment of the Tyndale Fellowship and the acquisition of Tyndale House in 1944; finally the setting up of the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship.

'To "maintain and to revitalize the characteristic evangelical emphases" we need "to have strong diet of biblical teaching and preaching based on a robust doctrine of the reliability of the Bible"' (Barclay, 1997:14).

On the Evangelical recovery within the UK, he notes: 'I believe that it is possible to identify four key factors in this recovery' (Barclay, 1997:135).

1. They loved biblical doctrine
2. They wanted a whole biblical outlook
3. The recovery of belief in the almighty power, wisdom, sovereignty and awesome holiness of God helped them to be more confident
4. The recovery of biblical themes gave them tools to grapple with the world of culture, society and current theological thought.

These were all seen as the solutions for the theological malaise.

Barclay, like MacKay, Boyd and Hooykaas, adopted a complementarity view of Christianity and science. In the next section, the trends among these English Calvinists regarding their approach to science and Christianity are analysed. This should prepare the ground for looking at which ground-motive(s) these approaches arise from (see § 4.6).

4.5 English Calvinist views of science and Christianity

There are a number of factors that shaped the ideas of English Calvinists associated with the RSCF and UCCF. These include logical indeterminacy – an approach largely associated with MacKay – complementarity, and the notion of the objectivity of science to the exclusion of any subjective factors. These are examined next. It should be noted that these

Evangelical Calvinists took the natural sciences seriously.¹¹⁴ They were convinced that it was possible to practice science and to be a Christian. However, their approach is very different to that taken by Reformational scholars, and in fact their approach made it difficult for them to appreciate the Reformational perspective.

4.5.1 Logical indeterminacy

There are aspects of what Dooyeweerd called the ‘science ideal’ within MacKay’s work. In the freedom—nature ground-motive (see § 2.3.7) the emphasis on the nature-pole leads to a science ideal, where science provides the means to master nature and there is a down-playing of human freedom. MacKay’s approach is a way then of appreciating the mechanistic view of humanity but also of attempting to retain, at least in part, a sense of human freedom. In his popular paperback, *The Clockwork Image*, MacKay starts by discussing the ‘machine-mindedness’ view of science. He sees it manifesting itself in the attempt to understand anything by analogy with a machine; mechanistic science becomes the standard of explanation (MacKay, 1974a:11-12). We thus become ‘cogs in a machine’: ‘the implication is (...) that the machine is in command and that we have no access to the controls’ (MacKay, 1974a:12). He opposes this approach as being deterministic, depersonalising and demoralizing; it is basically a threat to ‘human freedom and dignity’.

He identifies two distinct meanings of the word determinism: one is a presupposition of science, ‘all physical events have physical causes’ together with the philosophical idea that the future is inevitable. The second meaning is that we have no real choices. This second idea he calls ‘moral determinism’ and it is a main plank in the machine-mindedness approach. He then identifies two erroneous ways in which this type of determinism has been argued against: the use of the uncertainty principle and the appeal to an outdated vitalism – both approaches fail. His main argument against determinism he calls logical indeterminacy.

The argument goes something like this. Suppose we have two people A and B. A has a set of brain cells in state X that means he will do C. B predicts what A will do. But A knowing that B has predicted what he will do means that there is now a subtle change in the state of his brain cells to another state X’. X’ is no longer X and therefore it is not inevitable that he will choose to do C. Hence, his path is not determined.

This notion of logical indeterminacy is the consequence of MacKay’s belief in the autonomy of natural science and its concomitant complementarity approach. These themes are discussed in the following section.

¹¹⁴ None of them adopted a six-day creation view, which appears to be the consensus among many traditional Calvinists (see, for example, The Bible League Trust’s Affirmation 2010, Affirmation #4).

4.5.2 Complementarity and the autonomy of natural science

MacKay (1968 reprinted in 1988)¹¹⁵ contends that ‘only by returning to the full strength of the biblical claims about the sovereignty of God can we find a really coherent basis for the freedom of man [sic] and the autonomy of natural science’ (MacKay 1988:196).

What is noticeable here is his endorsement of the ‘autonomy of natural science’. This notion of the neutrality of science is also present in MacKay’s approach to Watson and Skinner’s behaviourism:

‘behaviourism in the *positive* sense, as a scientific method or habit of approach, is theologically quite neutral’ (MacKay, 1979:46 – italics in the original).

This was a characteristic view of many of the English Calvinists, particularly those associated with the UCCF. It is a consequence of a complementarity approach to science and religion.

The term *complementarity* to describe the relationship between science and religion is usually associated with MacKay. One of the first uses of the term *complementarity* in this context was in a symposium on ‘Mentality in machines’, sponsored by the Mind Association and the Aristotelian Society.

‘As in the parallel case of “science and religion” the activity is not one of exhaustive *explanation*, but of complementary *description*. Each description one should expect to be exhaustive in terms of its own categories; but to apprehend the whole requires a discipline in the perception of complementarity which we have scarcely begun to acquire’ (MacKay, 1952:86).

MacKay later offered a more detailed description of complementarity:

‘I call two or more statements complementary when (a) they purport to have a common reference, (b) they make different allegations, yet (c) all are justifiable in the sense that each expresses something about the common references which could not (for one reason or another) be expressed in the terms of the others - the commonest reason being (...) that the terms belong to different logical categories’ (MacKay, 1957:390).

¹¹⁵ Pages numbers for this article are taken from its reprint in MacKay (1988).

Though perhaps the most common position held by British Evangelical Christians, it is not a uniquely *British* Evangelical position (see e.g. Howard Van Till, 1996a, b; Bube, 1995) or even a *Christian* position. Brian Josephson (1987), Plutarch (c. AD 45-120 – as cited in Ratzsch, 1986:158), a member of the Baha'i community (i.e. Khursheed, 1987), also adopt this approach.¹¹⁶ (An empirical study by Helmut Reich (1988-1989) identified complementarity as the main approach to the interplay between science and faith by adolescents).

Ratzsch (2000:144-152) helpfully identifies two versions of complementarity: strict and limited.

'Strict complementarity claims that since religious and scientific explanations are on different levels and are independent of one another, both can be *complete* on their respective levels' (Ratzsch, 2000:145).

Whereas the limited complementarity approach is inclined:

'to accept the basic complementarist idea that at least some of the same phenomena can be approached from both a scientific and a religious perspective, but to reject the strict complementarist idea that each perspective is in any important sense complete, since it was that claim of completeness that generated problems for the strict complementarity position' (Ratzsch, 2000:150).

MacKay is difficult to place in either category – he seems to switch between the two. Ratzsch notes that the case for MacKay 'being a *strict* complementarist is equivocal' (Ratzsch, 2000:183).

In one sense the limited complementarity position might have parallels with Dooyeweerd's notion of irreducible aspects. Dooyeweerd's approach though is more nuanced and subtle than that of limited complementarity. It is then surprising that Mackay ignores Dooyeweerd's approach.

Most of those involved with the RSCF and CiS do adopt a complementarity position. This may be because of the influence of Hooykaas and MacKay. Complementarity comports well with a belief in the autonomy of science and the notion of the objectivity of science. It also provides a way to reconcile the Christian faith with naturalistic science. However, it does rest or fall on the notion of the neutrality of science.

¹¹⁶ Khursheed's work is characterised by a poor grasp of the philosophy of science; he advocates inductivism as the scientific method (1987:42-3). Others that hold to complementarity are discussed in Bishop (1993; 2000).

For MacKay, the objective nature of science is important, as it is a basis for the religious autonomy of theoretical thought. This is one of the main reasons for his dislike of a Christian philosophy and of Dooyeweerd's approach in particular. Yet MacKay's divorce of fact from value is reminiscent of a positivist approach.

This mind set is also present in Barclay and his development of a 'Christian mind'. It is never really clear what Barclay means by a Christian mind; he rejects the notion of a Christian philosophy, but seems to espouse the idea that the mind is more practical than theoretical and provides more of a Christian outlook. It means taking a practical position towards issues. Also included would be 'inward attitudes and priorities in life, as well as a framework of thoughts' (1984:23). Objective truth is crucial, Barclay asserts, for a Christian mind:

'first, we must say that, as Christians, we are claiming that there is such a thing as objective revealed truth. Indeed, this is a key aspect of having a Christian mind at all' (Barclay, 1984:47).

What does he mean by objective truth? This is an important issue. Barclay endorses and espouses objectivism as being the Christian position. This commitment to objectivism is one key reason why Barclay and others rejected Dooyeweerd's approach. They perceived Dooyeweerd as being a subjectivist and so his views would be incompatible with their objectivism. This is examined next.

4.5.3 Objectivity and objectivism

MacKay was strongly anti-relativist. He was very much pro-objectivism. He endorses methodological reductionism (MacKay, 1974a:88-89) but not ontological reductionism (MacKay, 1987b:54). This was again the consensus within the RSCF and UCCF. In his contribution to the *Objective Knowledge* symposium (Helm (ed.), 1987), MacKay poses the question: how and why does science work? (MacKay, 1987b:41). His response: 'the main spring behind its success is the ideal of objective, value-invariant knowledge' (*Ibid.*).

In another chapter in Helm (ed.) (1987), MacKay asserts that objectivity is a Christian value:

'it is Christian theism, which more powerfully and coherently than any other intellectual mind-frame, sets objectivity before us as an ultimate value to be cherished and aspired to as part of our loving duty to our Creator' (MacKay, 1987a:17).

For MacKay objectivity means that there is value-free knowledge, or rather knowledge that is value-invariant (MacKay, 1987a:19). He recognises that there are 'no value-free applications' that some 'soft' sciences such as sociology are not value-free, and 'any idea that the *practice* of science can be value-neutral is nonsense' (MacKay, 1987a:19). However, he sees objectivity in the physical sciences as an ideal to be striven for and presumably achieved. To reject the notion of objective knowledge is for MacKay illogical and 'inherently incompatible with the theistic Christian position' (1987a:19; and also in 1988:139). To reject objectivism is to be irreligious:

'the idea that God is on the side of the anti-objectivists, and that would-be objective science is in principle an irreligious alternative to Christian obedience, is false both to Christian theology and to the history of the rise of modern science itself' (MacKay, 1987a:18).

Similarly, in his 1977 London lectures in Contemporary Christianity he links the acceptance of objectivity to the God-given nature of data:

'above all, those who claim to serve the God of Truth must remember that our duty is to be obedient to all data not merely because he is monitoring our honesty, but because he is the Giver of those data' (MacKay, 1979:56).

The question to be asked, however, is whether this inclination to objectivity really stems from a Christian position or is rather due to the influence of positivism. It is also necessary to ask whether this love for objectivity does not become objectivism in MacKay's position.

In the ensuing section, some of the pre-scientific roots of these tendencies and ideas, supported by the English Calvinist authors and examined above, are examined.

4.6 The pre-scientific presuppositions at work – Scholastic and complementary tendencies

4.6.1 Scholastic tendencies

Before we can assess if Scholastic tendencies are at work in English Calvinism, we need to define what we mean by *Scholasticism*. The term is used here not only in the historical sense (e.g. to indicate a method of discussion) but also as a means of accommodating Greek or humanist thought to a Christian worldview. Scholasticism maintains that there is a

‘natural’ domain where reason is to a large extent autonomous and value-free (Clouser, 2005:98-104). Concerning English Calvinism, this accommodation-attitude emerges, on the one hand, in the adoption of the nature—grace Scholastic motif; but humanist philosophy was accommodated as well. Scholastic and rationalistic tendencies, which may have roots in Thomism, then have undermined a comprehensive and integral Christian approach and have resulted in a reduced view of the gospel. The prioritising of the realm of grace (theology, particular grace, the institutional church) over the realm of nature (philosophy, common grace, non-church institutions) is indicative of a scholastic nature—grace ground-motive. Then, in the ‘nature’ pole, humanist philosophies are accommodated.

I have identified a number of these tendencies as I have proceeded, which suffices here to summarise these points (see § 3.4).

As Dooyeweerd has it:

‘for Thomas [Aquinas] “nature was the independent “stepping-stone to grace,” the substructure for a Christian superstructure’ (Dooyeweerd, 1979:117).

The nature—grace motive was a harmonisation of the Greek form—matter motive with Christianity. Aquinas ‘christened’ the ideas of Aristotle. This meant that he, to a considerable extent, accepted the autonomy of natural thought (Dooyeweerd, 1979:134). These tendencies are present in many of the authors surveyed in this chapter. In particular, the autonomy of theoretical thought has been a major tenet of MacKay and Barclay for instance. This is perhaps one of the key reasons for their rejection of a Christian philosophy, whereas they would very much want to accept a Christian theology – provided that it is a ‘sound’ theology, not a liberal theology. This shows not only an inconsistency but also a prioritising of theology above philosophy, of grace above nature. This approach is reminiscent of that of the neo-scholastics. According to Etienne Gilson in his 1930-31 Gifford Lectures:

‘while the pure rationalist puts philosophy in the highest place and identifies it with wisdom, the neo-scholastic subordinates it to theology which alone, he holds, fully deserves that name’ (Gilson, 1940:4).

The approach is also in line with another Roman Catholic philosopher, Fredrick C. Copleston SJ.

‘The most that the phrase “Christian philosophy” can legitimately mean is a philosophy compatible with Christianity; if it means more than that, one is

speaking of a philosophy which is not simply philosophy, but which is, partly at least, theology' (Copleston, 1993:557).

If the Christian 'paradigm' cannot 'grow' proper philosophy on its own soil, the only option left is to borrow it from some other paradigm; and then accommodation has to take place.

4.6.2 The complementarity approach

The English Calvinist downplaying of philosophy shows the influence of (logical) positivism. The divorcing of facts from beliefs and values also points in the same direction. Positivists and logical positivists opposed metaphysics in general and sometimes Christianity in particular. Apparently, such an approach was anathema to Hooykaas, Barclay and MacKay; all three were staunch Christians. Nevertheless, they inadvertently absorbed and accommodated their Christian faith to the philosophical ideas, such as positivism, that were in the zeitgeist.

The nature—grace ground-motive is expressed in the complementarity approach devised by MacKay and followed by the vast majority of Evangelical and Calvinist Christians associated with Christians in Science. It is a position that arises from a Lutheran nature—grace perspective (Christ *and* culture), although here it takes the form of Christianity *and* science (see § 3.4.2).

But describing two apparently contradictory events as complementary does not help in ascertaining the truth or validity of either of those events. In such a case complementarity is unhelpful. Can two incompatible events be described as complementary? For example, the Big Bang theory of origins and Genesis 1 may be viewed as complementary; but they could also be incompatible. Complementarity does not help in determining whether they are contradictory or not.

Complementarity also serves to divorce science from religion. Complementarists tend to deny independence in theory but act as if religion and science were largely independent in practice. It may be a temptation then for complementarists to be independentists when it comes to practice.

Adherents of complementarity tend to use the Baconian metaphor of the two books: the book of Scripture and the book of nature (see e.g. MacKay, 1988:150-154 – see also above § 4.4.1). In this there are clear clues of a Lutheran two-realm approach. Complementarity largely accepts that science is neutral in regard to religious belief. This is certainly the position of MacKay. On the one hand:

'the discipline of science is autonomous in the sense that we need not have any explicit theological convictions in order to practise it. It has developed

and been moulded under pressure of the data themselves - data to whose implications Christian and non-Christian alike find they must be obedient if their scientific enterprise is to succeed' (MacKay, 1974a:88-89).

MacKay is correct that we do not need explicit theological convictions to practice science; atheists, agnostics and adherents to any religion can still form hypotheses and conduct experiments. However, data are never raw data – they are interpreted from a particular standpoint.

And then on the other hand he writes:

'if the scientist is also a Christian, there is no implication that he should necessarily do better in science, still less that his scientific findings should differ from those of his non-Christian colleagues' (MacKay, 1974a:65).

Here is a not quite open denial that Christianity has any influence on theorising but it comes close to it and could be interpreted as an endorsement of methodological naturalism.

For MacKay science is divorced from any religious or cultural presuppositions. This is dangerously close to a positivist view of science; a science that must bow down to bare value-free facts. Theorising, for MacKay, is neutral with respect to religion and faith commitments.

'The scientist's reasons for keeping his private emotions [and presumably religious commitments] out of the official picture is that, despite his enthusiasm for the subject, he would like to be able to describe the world as *it is* - as it would be *without* him' (MacKay, 1974a:34 – italics in the original).

This begs the question: can we describe the world as it is without our religious commitments colouring and shaping the way we see things? MacKay seems to suggest we can, whereas, according to the Reformational view we cannot.

MacKay also writes of 'the neutral character of scientific chance' (MacKay, 1974a:53) and of a 'theologically neutral, scientific notion' (MacKay, 1974a:49). It appears that faith is the 'icing on the cake'; an additional extra, rather than an important essential to science.

'As a scientist, I have the job of helping to build scientific language - at the scientific level - as complete a description of the pattern of physical events as I can, regarding no accessible events as exempt from examination. As a Christian, I find that the very same pattern of events can bear an additional and vital significance as part of the activity of God himself' (MacKay, 1974a:38).

From a Reformational perspective this approach is flawed, no matter how attractive the complementarity position might be. Complementarity implies that religion has little or nothing to do with science. It suggests that Christian commitments count for little when we practice science. Complementarists thus endorse methodological naturalism and adopt a two-realm approach.¹¹⁷

To be fair to MacKay, one needs to admit that he does recognise that complementarity

‘is not a universal panacea (...) A good deal of consecrated hard work is needed on the part of Christians to develop a more coherent and more biblical picture between the two’ (MacKay, 1953b:163).

Complementarity, however, could become a convenient label under which one can avoid compromising some doctrinal beliefs while accepting the secularisation of science. The term *complementarity* may be best reserved to describe wave-particle duality or even mind-matter and free will-determinism, but not the relation between science and religion. Religious beliefs are much more integral to science than complementarity suggests.

The problem with MacKay’s and Hooykaas’ approach is that it largely accepts that science is neutral with regard to religious beliefs. This is a view that reflects more the Reidian Common-Sense philosophy and logical positivism than Christianity.

Recent philosophers of science have, with few exceptions, rejected positivism: the full epistemological objectivity of science is a myth.¹¹⁸ Science is a human cultural activity. Consequently, it is tainted, as is all human activity, by the cultural-religious presuppositions of the scientists (i.e. their worldview). Hanson has suggested that observation, a foundation of science, is theory-dependent (Hanson, 1958). Theories are also worldview-dependent. Scientists cannot escape their culture; science is not done in a vacuum. We cannot divorce science from worldview. Worldviews, in turn, are inherently religious; they are based on ultimate commitments which cannot be empirically or even rationally verified (or for that matter falsified); they are religious. Science and religious beliefs are then intimately related (Bishop, 2000; for a full discussion on this see Clouser, 2005).

¹¹⁷ While the whole issue of methodological naturalism is in many ways central to this discussion, the issue will have to be addressed at another time. Suffice to say that I regard methodological naturalism as untenable. See, for example Alvin Plantinga (1996); Moreland (1994) and the conference organised by Robert C. Koons, on ‘Naturalism, Theism, and the Scientific Enterprise’ (University of Texas at Austin, Feb 1997).

¹¹⁸ See for example: Kuhn (1962); Feyerabend (1975); Polanyi (1958); Laudan (1984); Newton-Smith (1981); Hacking (1983); Popper (1963); Chalmers (1982); Stephenson (1989); and from a Christian perspective: Moreland (1989); Ratzsch (1986); from a Reformational perspective: Coletto (2008); Botha (1988; 1995); Loubser (2013). See also my summary overview of the philosophy of science (Bishop, 1993).

We can summarise this argument thus (Bishop, 1999):

1. We all have a worldview
2. A worldview is shaped by religious commitments
3. All human activity is shaped by worldviews
4. Science is a human activity

Therefore,

5. Science and religious commitments are related; and
6. Science is not neutral

This conclusion, if valid, undermines the complementarity approach to science and religion. An approach that is typical of the Lutheran nature and grace scheme (science and faith are concordant, there is no conflict).

The nature—grace ground-motive accommodates in its nature-pole notions from Scholasticism, but also humanist themes. There has been a tendency for English Calvinists towards an implicit, sometimes unacknowledged acceptance of positivist ideas as seen in the adoption of rationalism, scientism and Biblicism with an almost vehement rejection of a Christian philosophy. We have a three-tier approach:

<u>Grace</u>	
(Nature	<u>Nature)</u>
Freedom	

Grace triumphs over nature, with theology taking precedence, but nature triumphs over freedom in a rationalistic scientific approach, with objectivity (nature pole) denying a role for subjectivity (freedom pole). Theology may still be viewed as the queen of the sciences, but all in all this approach undermines the development of a Christian approach to scholarship. What is left is a reduced view of Christian scholarship where theology is the only possible Christian science while the autonomy of all the other sciences is basically accepted.

This is particularly supported by the acceptance of objectivism and the rejection of subjectivism. Both subjectivism and objectivism, however, are discussed within the framework of the nature and freedom ground-motive. Subjectivism emphasises the freedom pole (the freedom of the human subject) and objectivism the nature pole (the importance of natural or cultural objects). Both these positions are inadequate from a Reformational perspective, as they misplace the law order that we experience in creation/ reality in entities (either in subjects or in objects). In Reformational philosophy, God is the source of laws, laws are not entities, but all entities are subjected to all God's laws (Clouser, 2005:247 – see also § 2.3.5). I return to this topic in § 4.7.4 below.

I have thus provided a preliminary assessment of the pre-scientific presuppositions at work in the English Calvinist literature concerning the relationship between religion and scholarship. In the following sections, in order to reach a deeper and more complete assessment, other traits of the English Calvinist understanding of this relation are explored. In particular, how worldview, theology and philosophy are understood and related to each other is explored. The exploration of objectivity and subjectivity is also deepened. The researcher attempts to show that these explorations confirm the preliminary findings but at the same time lead us to a more precise identification of the pre-scientific motives at work in English Calvinism.

4.7 Further explorations: worldview, philosophy, theology, objectivity...

4.7.1 English Calvinist use of the term *worldview*

Worldview is an in-vogue concept that is sometimes abused or misused. No wonder Smith suggests that ‘we consider a (temporary) moratorium on the notion of “worldview”’ (Smith, 2009:65).¹¹⁹ However, as has oft been said: the best solution to abuse or misuse is not disuse, but proper use.

Kuyper was one of the first to introduce the concept of worldview to the Christian public. But it wasn’t until 1968 that Francis Schaeffer made the term popular.¹²⁰ Two books that popularised the term *worldview* certainly among Reformational thinkers are *Creation Regained* (Wolters, 1985) and *The Transforming Vision* (Walsh & Middleton, 1984). In

¹¹⁹ The irony is that Smith uses it in the subtitle to his book.

¹²⁰ Early usages of the term in Schaeffer were: *The God Who Is There* p. 28; 33; 1972 *He is There and He is Not Silent* p. 87. In 1973 *Art and the Bible* he has these passages.

‘The third basic notion of the nature of art — the one I think is right, the one that really produces great art and the possibility of great art — is that the artist makes a work of art, and that then the body of his work shows his world-view. No one, for example, who understands Michelangelo or Leonardo can look at their work without understanding something of their respective world-views’.

And:

‘art forms add strength to the world-view which shows through, no matter what the world-view is or whether the world-view is true or false’.

‘What kind of judgment does one apply, then, to a work of art? I believe that there are four basic standards: (1) technical excellence; (2) validity; (3) intellectual content, the world-view which comes through; and (4) the integration of content and vehicle’.

Another Christian early-adopter of the term was John Warwick Montgomery (1973, 1976).

Creation Regained, Wolters (1985:2) defines a worldview as ‘the comprehensive framework of one’s basic beliefs about things’. The typical basic questions that worldviews deal with are: ‘who am I? Where am I? What is wrong in the present world? What is the remedy?’ Both the above-mentioned works were influential in bringing the term into common Christian usage. Both are focused on the individual. Tom Wright – whose work has been influenced by Walsh (see, e.g., Wright, 1992:xix) – adapted the first two worldview questions to make them more communal:

Who are we?

Where are we?

More recently Goheen and Bartholomew (2008) define a worldview as:

‘an articulation of the basic beliefs embedded in a shared grand story that are rooted in a faith commitment and that give shape and direction to the whole of our individual and corporate lives’ (2008:23).

Here the emphasis is on the communal, story and faith commitments. It is this nature of faith commitments that make the Reformational perspective different to other Christian approaches.

In 1975 Kearney could write:

‘World view is not a well established field of study (...). And yet, rather paradoxically, literature about world view and world-view related subjects permeates *anthropology*’ (Kearney, 1975:247 — my emphasis).

Worldview was very much an anthropological term. What use did English Calvinists make of this term?

Before I started this investigation I thought that the term *worldview* would be widely used by English Calvinists. However, Oliver Barclay, for example, is suspicious of the term *worldview*. This, I discovered, is typical of most English Calvinists. Barclay seems to think that it could become synonymous with a Christian philosophy. His distrust of a Christian philosophy leads him to avoid mentioning the notion of a Christian worldview (Barclay, 1984:75). Likewise, Boyd (1965:122 – see § 4.2) denies that Christianity entails a worldview. It seems that Barclay is not alone in his avoidance of the term. A search through several English Calvinist journals, works and websites soon showed me that the use of *worldview* was not prevalent. Here I examine several Calvinist groupings and magazines. They all seem to have one thing in common: the comparatively rare use of the term *worldview*.

The *New Focus* group are based in Cumbria in the north of England. They have been described as Hyper-Calvinists because they reject common grace and the free offer of the Gospel.¹²¹ On the *New Focus* website ‘worldview’ provided no hits and ‘world-view’ and ‘world view’ gave two identical hits but the term was absent in the links provided. It may be an understatement to remark that the term is little used. There is no mention of Kuyper or of the term *worldview* in the 2007-2016 editions of the *New Focus* magazine.

The *British Reformed Fellowship* (BRF) is a recent grouping of Calvinists. It was formed in 1990. These too reject common grace and are affiliated with the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. In October 2010 at a BRF family conference, David Engelsma spoke on ‘The Reformed World and Life View’. Two articles from the *British Reformed Journal* have the term *worldview* in their titles such as Spanner (1993), and the series of articles by Angus Stewart on Calvin versus Darwin (Stewart, 2009; 2011). Despite the title of Stewart’s paper he only uses the term *worldview* once in his first article and this in a quote from John Blanchard (2009:48). In the second paper, he describes evolutionism as a worldview (Stewart, 2009:43). In these instances the term *worldview* is associated to a naturalistic worldview, in contrast to with a biblical worldview. In other words, the term is given a negative connotation. However, the term is never defined and the notion of a biblical worldview is never spelled out. Spanner (1993), despite having the term *worldview* in the title of his article, doesn’t use it in the text.

Both the *New Focus* group and the *British Reformed Fellowship* have an almost ideological abhorrence of common grace – and common grace is associated with Kuyper. Ella does in passing seem to appreciate some of Kuyper’s ideas and the *British Reformed Fellowship* does sell Kuyper’s book *Particular Grace*. Their sister organisation in the States, the Protestant Reformed Church, also published some of Kuyper’s articles in their *Standard Bearer* publication.¹²² These have included some of his meditations¹²³ and a translation by

¹²¹ I left aside discussions as to the accuracy of this description. Associated with them is George M. Ella. Ella has spoken favourably of Kuyper. In a review of Engelsma’s *Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel* he has this to say:

‘Turretin is followed in Chapter 8 by Abraham Kuyper who was much more down to earth and whom I personally find understandable. Kuyper is still to be discovered by the British. On the Continent, he is a household word [sic]. There are a number of excellent inexpensive biographies on the second-hand market’ (Ella, nd).

¹²² As of 13 August 2016 there were 106 articles of Kuyper listed on their website http://sb.rfpa.org/search/results/field_article_author%3A491 date of access 13 August 2016. This was a translation of *Tractaat van de Reformatie der Kerken* first published in 1883. A new translation appeared in October 2016 in the volume *On the Church* as part of the Abraham Kuyper translation project (Kuyper 2016b) (see my review in Bishop, 2017).

Herman Hanko of Kuyper's *A Pamphlet concerning the Reformation of the Church* from November 1977 to December 1986.¹²⁴ The ideas of Kuyper that they appreciate are his devotional and ecclesiastical writings. The strong antipathy towards common grace, which is important, for Kuyper, for a Christian cultural and scholarly perspective, means that these cultural and scholarly aspects are rejected. Kuyper the devotionalist and ecclesiast is appreciated but Kuyper the transformer of culture is rejected. This again suggests a nature—grace dualism, whereby the aspects of grace (meditations and church) are valued over nature (the transformation of culture).

The only time I could find mention of the term *worldview* in recent issues of the *Gospel Magazine* was in Du Barry (2000). Here he looks at reasons why the resurrection has 'disappeared from the literature and the teaching of the Church'. Here the term *worldview* is modified by the terms *dualist* and *semi-Platonist*. In another Calvinist magazine, *Gospel Standard*, the term *worldview* appears only twice in issues published from 2005-2015. Both times, the term is placed in inverted commas. Both occurrences are in a review (T.J.R., 2005:259) of a book written by John Byl (*The Divine Challenge – on Matter, Mind, Math & Meaning*).¹²⁵

In the *Bible League Quarterly* the meagre times the term is used is to describe worldviews that oppose the Christian faith; atheism in Slane (2008) and the orality movement in Williams (2015). The editor J.P. Thackery (2003) mentions the term twice using the adjectives biblical and evolutionary. Again in the *Bible League Trust* worldview is used to describe perspectives other than the biblical one. It tends to be associated with relativism or with naturalistic positions.

The question then is: why have Calvinists in England been so reticent to use the term *worldview*? This question is addressed below in § 4.8.1. But first, the relationship between theology and philosophy is examined.

4.7.2 Theology, philosophy and the Bible

Dooyeweerd didn't have a very high opinion of theology. Typical is this remark:

¹²³ From 2002 to 2013 they published extracts from *When Thou Sittest in Thine House* (Kuyper, 1929); they have also published pieces from *The Practice of Godliness* and *In the Shadow of Death*.

¹²⁴ It was clear that Hanko did not agree with everything Kuyper wrote and drew attention to those aspects with critical footnotes.

¹²⁵ The reviewer of Byl's book is indicated only by the initials supplied above. It may be interesting to note that Kuyper is only mentioned once in this magazine from 2005 onwards – and this in a quote taken from a review of another book.

‘if our salvation be dependent on theological dogmatics and exegesis, we are lost. For both of them are a human work, liable to all kinds of error, disagreement in opinion and heresy’ (Dooyeweerd, 1960:135).

By contrast, theology is viewed as the queen of the sciences by many English Christians. One particular school of British theologians, the Radical Orthodoxy group, regards the reinstatement of theology as the queen of the sciences as one of their key objectives (Milbank, 2006:382).¹²⁶

Oliver Barclay had a high view of the Bible and of theology but a low view of philosophy. The latter position is possibly due to the influence of logical positivism:

‘Theology in the rationalistic tradition is really philosophy (...) and not theology because it depends on what the human mind can find acceptable’ (Barclay, 1997:131).

Likewise, MacKay has a high regard for the role of theology.

¹²⁶ Those who go by the label of Radical Orthodoxy include: John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward (Milbank, *et al.* (ed.) 1999). For what Milbank describes as ‘an accessible synthesis’ see Smith (2004); for critiques from a Reformational perspective see Strauss (2015b, 2016b).

Although the Radical Orthodoxy group are not Calvinists it is worth taking a brief excursus to look at their work, not least because there are some similarities between Radical Orthodoxy and Reformational Philosophy. These include: the need for a fully Christianised ontology, the rejection of the autonomy of theoretical thought (Milbank, *et al.*, 1999:21) the radical nature of the fall, the desirability of Christian scholarship and the relationship of creation and redemption. However, as similar as these characteristics may look, the similarity is only surface deep. This can be realised by simply assessing the role of theology in Radical Orthodoxy. The remedy to secularisation in academia is to reinstate theology as the queen of the sciences; hence their ideal of Christian scholarship is that it should be shaped by theology. Here they - despite their protestations to the contrary - embrace a nature and grace dualism. In terms of the worldview questions what’s wrong and what’s the remedy, the Radical Orthodox would say that we have been infected by secular Western thinking that nevertheless has come to a dead end. To overcome this, theology must be reinstated to its rightful place as the queen of the sciences. The focus for Radical Orthodoxy remains: ‘first and foremost an *ecclesiology*’ (Milbank, 2006:380). Therefore we need a participation in the life of God, a focus on the Eucharist, and to recognise that secularisation is parasitic on theology. Theology, in their view, has been tarnished – largely by the influence of Duns Scotus ‘who for the first time established a radical separation of philosophy from theology’ (Milbank, *et al.*, 1999:23). This legitimised a secular space that led to a form of postmodern nihilism as it brought in an ontology that was distinct from theology. Theology provides a ‘critical stance against the basic assumptions and ruling ideologies of this world’ (Milbank *et al.*, 2010:3). Milbank also illustrates his concern for Christian scholarship but, curiously, proposes a Christian approach that doesn’t seem to stretch to mathematics (Milbank, 2006:382). According to Milbank, ‘talk of a “Christian sociology” or of “theology as a social science” is not, therefore as silly as talk of a Christian mathematics’ (Milbank, 2006:382).

‘Theology, at least in its Christian theistic form, is all-embracing. Our world is declared to be God’s world—the whole of it. All our knowledge—physical, biological, historical, philosophical—is knowledge of God’s creation. If this is not an empty claim, then the theologian is bound to seek relations between the statements made in different academic disciplines and those he makes in specifically theological terms’ (MacKay, 1974:225).

If the term theology had been replaced by terms like Christianity, then MacKay could have sounded Kuyperian. But as it stands it seems that theology is the most important of the sciences. It seems as if he is including physical, biological, historical and philosophical thinking under the umbrella of theology as they are exploring God’s world. For MacKay theology is doing the work of philosophy (i.e. providing an inter-modal perspective). Why do Reformational scholars have such a problem with such a high view of theology? What is the problem, according to them, with theology as the queen of the sciences?

They would argue that theology – as any special science — can study created reality. Theology does it through the pistical/ certitudinal modal aspect. As it studies reality through one aspect it cannot give a total view of reality - as there are other modal aspects to consider (see § 2.3.4). It is in the nature—grace ground motive that theology is typically regarded more highly than the other special sciences, while all the other sciences are traditionally regarded as handmaids to theology. The term ‘queen of the sciences’ was applied to theology during the High Middle Ages (1000-1300) when the trivium and the quadrivium approach to learning was developed. This was a time in which education was almost exclusively for the church. It was used to show the superiority of theology over all other subjects - all other subjects had their place in serving theological thought. As Mourant observes:

‘In the great synthesis achieved by Aquinas, theology is declared to be not only a science but the queen of all the sciences. As a science it is uncritically assumed to achieve the perfection of science.’ (Mourant, 1956: 202).

The notion that theology is the queen of the sciences assumes that theology is a foundational basis for a worldview and for philosophy. In the case of theology and worldview this cannot be the case as a worldview is pre-theoretical (not pre-theological, to use Coletto's term (Coletto, 2012b:285)) and theology is theoretical. In the case of theology and philosophy this also cannot be the case as theology cannot escape philosophical influences (Strauss, 2002); also theology, in the Reformational approach, studies reality according to

the pistic aspect, while philosophy provides an 'overview' of the inter-connection of modal aspects.

Barclay's position on philosophy and theology is examined in more detail next.

4.7.3 Barclay's view of theology and philosophy

Barclay's view of theology is that it should naturally arise from the Bible. This view can be seen in his critique of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. He believes Reformational thinkers dethrone theology from being the queen of the sciences and replace it with philosophy (see further § 4.8.2). He writes:

'The Reformed Christian philosophy of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhofen [sic] was introduced at this time [the late sixties and early seventies] from Holland, but it was not able to arouse more than a passing interest in most people because of its difficulty, and because of the lack of interest in philosophy both in Christian circles and in the country as a whole. It also seemed to some, myself included, to put philosophy above theology and thereby to avoid the necessity of going to the Bible first of all and last of all' (Barclay, 1997:88).

This shows a misreading/ understanding of both Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, as well as exposing Barclay's Biblicism, and perhaps a faint whiff of Common-Sense philosophy.

In *Whose World?* (1970) he makes an interesting observation:

'There is a very important difference between "speculative reason" which hopes to arrive at truth by philosophising, and "practical reason" which sits under the data and seeks to understand and apply them. The rationalist tradition relies on the first. Biblical Christianity, and science, use the second; they are not anti-rational but anti-rationalists. We must honour reason in its proper place' (Triton, 1970:81; fn 1).

Barclay is emphatic that a 'complete Christian philosophy or "world-and-life-view"' (1984:69) cannot be constructed. He prefers the term a *Christian outlook* - or better *onlook* or *inlook* rather than *philosophy* (1984:74-75). He also articulates some of his concerns with a Christian philosophy:

'in fact this very passage [1 Corinthians 1] emphasises that we must not reduce the gospel to such small things as a philosophical system would be' (1984:75).

Here he makes a denigrating comment about philosophical systems ('small things') and makes a contrast between a philosophical system which answers questions that philosophers ask and Christian revelation which 'is set out in terms of the questions God asks — questions regarding such matters as sin and grace that are far more fundamental, but are avoided by philosophy'.

He goes on:

'when people try to make Christianity into a philosophy they force it into a mould which it cannot fit, because in essence it is not a philosophical [system] but a theological one' (Barclay, 1984:75).

Thus, Barclay comes close to the position that philosophy, to be Christian, must be theological. For Christian philosophy to be useful it must become theology. This stems from a misunderstanding of both theology and philosophy. Philosophy for Barclay is a human construction, whereas theology is God-given. God's communication is seen solely in terms of theology. Hence the priority of theology (God-given) over philosophy (a human construction).

He further elucidates:

'a Christian philosophy, if one were constructed, would on this view not be recognisable as a philosophy, because it would start with God and his revelation. It would be not unfairly dismissed in the philosophical schools as "theology"' (Barclay, 1984:75).

If a Christian philosophy did exist it would be, for Barclay, a Trojan horse for theology and a mere smuggling in of theology into philosophy. This priority of a Bible-based theology above philosophy might suggest that Barclay is adopting a 'grace (theology) above nature (philosophy)' position. Barclay wants to see theology shape philosophy but as it does, then philosophy ceases to be philosophy and becomes theology.

Barclay though is concerned that we do have 'Christians whose job it is to grapple with philosophical thinking, and there could be philosophical systems that are *not inconsistent* with Christian revelation' (Barclay, 1984:74-75). He leaves unanswered the question as to what such a philosophy might look like if it doesn't look like Reformational philosophy.

However, he is in general sceptical of intellectual systems. Unless we are not clear which 'watertight intellectual systems' he is thinking of, he leaves us in no doubt: 'take one example, (...) the "Amsterdam Philosophy" of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven' (Barclay, 1984:77).

Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven are also dealt with in an appendix in Barclay (1984). Interestingly, the appendix and the paragraphs mentioning Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven do not appear in the revised edition edited by Geoffrey Stonier (Barclay, 2006). Barclay sees Francis Schaeffer as being a good example of avoiding 'complete intellectual system' building (Barclay, 1984:80).¹²⁷ He accuses the 'Amsterdam Philosophy' of wanting to produce a full-blown philosophy of education before we can do Christian education.

'They have produced some helpful and constructive criticism of what other educators do; but they still cannot produce a worked-out philosophy of education that they hope for' (Barclay, 1984:77).

There is some truth in this statement – however, it is only a half-truth. There have been significant developments in Reformational philosophy in the area of philosophy of education and certainly in North America.¹²⁸

He is wary of the term *world-and-life-view* as it may be used as a synonym for Christian philosophy and a way of smuggling in Christian philosophy. He thinks philosophy may be useful in the areas of apologetics, but the important correctives to faulty views of God and of human nature are biblical, not philosophical. Again this could be indicative of a nature—grace dualism.

In a response to Thiessen (1992), Barclay (1992) makes the following points:

'I do not find a "theoretical Christian understanding" in the Bible. Man's mind is too limited and the Bible gives us no philosophical system' (1992:55).

¹²⁷ This even though Schaeffer's ideas can be traced back to Dooyeweerd via Hans Rookmaaker (Bishop, 2016b – see especially § 6 on Rookmaaker and his influence on Schaeffer and the Christian arts scene in the UK).

¹²⁸ Work written prior to Barclay's accusation, which presumably he was unaware of, include: Beversluis (1971); De Graaf (1968); Fackerell (1973); Fowler (1980); Jaarsma (1935); Mechielsen (1980); Steensma and van Brummelen (1977); Vriend (1972). Nicholls (1973; 1975) had published two papers dealing with Kuyper's approach to education.

More recently is the work of Greene (1998); Van Dyk (2000); Blomberg (2007); Van Brummelen (1992); Fowler (1987); Fowler et al. (1990). British contributions include: Roques (1989); Shortt (1991); Smith and Shortt (2002).

Institutions such as Dordt College, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, ICS, VU, Redeemer, Calvin College all to varying extents have their roots in the Reformational tradition. None of these though is in the UK.

British initiatives included: Oak Hill School in Bristol; the Christian Schools' Trust Science Curriculum Working Group (one product of this group is Jones (ed.) 1998); and Bridgehead for Education (Bishop, 1991a). All these UK initiatives took place after the first edition of Barclay's book.

To some extent, I would agree with this point. Humanity is limited and there is no prescribed philosophical approach in the Bible. However, this does not mean that a Christian philosophy cannot be elaborated. I don't find a rail road in the Bible - does that mean it doesn't or shouldn't exist? The human mind is limited and the philosophical approaches we develop will not be perfect, but that does not mean we shouldn't, in the spirit of the cultural mandate, develop one.

What Barclay doesn't seem to realise is that the approach of denying the possibility of a Christian philosophical system is itself a philosophical position. He wants to maintain that his (non)philosophical approach is the Christian approach, but the denial of the possibility of Christian scholarship is a philosophical position in itself. So, his position is self-refuting.

As well as being wary of philosophy he also distrusts the search for a distinctly Christian approach to social institutions. This can be seen in his brief discussions of institutions like schools, colleges and political parties.

'Whenever [a "Christian political party"] has been attempted the results have proved disappointing because, however much people try to disown all non-Christian elements, they end up with a political ideology that is first, not agreed by many other true Christians (is it the Tory party, the Labour Party, or the SDP-Liberal Alliance at prayer?). Secondly it is quickly out of date in its priorities. Thirdly it contains elements that are hard to justify as specifically Christian. In its 'guesswork' it is never altogether convincing and it is sometimes a real embarrassment to other Christians. Finally, a Christian philosophy and a Christian political party raise expectations that they fail to fulfil and so bring disillusionment both to the Christians and to those camp-followers who are impressed by their promises' (Barclay, 1984:83-84).

Two terms reoccur for Barclay: *disappointing* and *guesswork*. Unfortunately, these two could be applied to Barclay's approach as well. His unfamiliarity with the nuances of the Reformational position has led him to make guesswork about how it works, which means his critique is ultimately flawed and thus disappointing. Despite being open to a Kuyperian perspective, he was vehemently opposed to a Dooyeweerdian approach.

There are a number of aspects of Barclay's, MacKay's and other English Calvinist approach to science and scholarship that go towards explaining some of this vehemence against Reformational philosophy; these are worth examining in the next section.

4.7.4 Objectivity and subjectivity

MacKay is one of the major shapers of the RSCF and UCCF approach to science and Christianity. He, along with a number of UCCF members, adopts a sharp polarisation between subjectivism and objectivism: one is either an objectivist or a subjectivist. MacKay offers no reasons for his acceptance of objectivism, only a rebuttal of subjectivism. At times his argument is of the form: if not subjectivism, then objectivism.

One of the reasons he sees for the acceptance of a subjectivist position is the desire for sociologists to be 'real' scientists:

'Almost all of the pressure to decry the ideal of value-free knowledge comes from students of human nature and human society. They too would like to be called "scientists"' (MacKay, 1987a:20).

If sociology cannot be objective, then, he asserts, the sociologists maintain that no science is objective, therefore subjective sociology can be rightly called a science.

Here MacKay sets up a hierarchy of scientific disciplines. Sociology, for example, is subjective, therefore it cannot be as scientific as, say physics, which is objective; the implication is that physics is more of a science than sociology. In this we have echoes of the logical positivist position – physics is the exemplar subject, all else is secondary (at best). This position of prioritising the physical sciences above the human sciences is suggestive of the science-ideal stemming from the pole of the nature of the nature—freedom ground-motive.

What MacKay misses is that it is possible to have a God-given objective reality but that our understanding and perception of it may be worldview-laden. The role of worldviews is not discussed by MacKay and it is not difficult to imagine why. If knowledge is to an extent worldview-dependent then the chase for fully objective science is impossible. Yet, in MacKay's use of the terms we could be ontological objectivists but also epistemological subjectivists. By which I mean that there is a God-given reality but our knowledge of it is fallible. Faraday's development of magnetism is an example of worldviews affecting theory choice:

'Michael Faraday's idea that magnetism is a force rather than particles came about because, while the materialists refused to consider anything other than material causes, he was freed to consider forces by his strong Biblical beliefs' (Basden, 2018:44).

For many who tackle this issue, there is a sharp polarisation – accepting a role for the subject seems to imply that there is no more room for the object and vice versa. This attitude

seems (at least in part) to be the one taken by some of the authors of *Objective Knowledge* (Helm (ed.), 1987). These authors are interesting, as it was two in particular, Oliver Barclay and Donald MacKay, who were vehement opponents of Dooyeweerd's philosophy. Their strong belief in an objective reality led them to oppose any suggestion that the subject may play a role in the construction of knowledge. Dooyeweerd's position does suggest - at the very least - that the subject is involved in the scientific activity. Many of the Dooyeweerdians at the time were highlighting this subjective side of knowledge and so were tarred with the subjectivist brush and were regarded as relativists. And so their views should be rejected, as an adoption of subjectivism would imply that objectivism is false (see further § 5.4.1 below).

MacKay writes: 'the Christian case for objectivity as an ideal in science is (and always has been) so obvious as hardly to need stating' (MacKay, 1984:235). Whether MacKay actually believes this or is making a rhetorical point is difficult to tell, but whatever the case, it does illustrate his commitment to objectivity.

'Any idea that it [the inability to find a complete objectivity] could justify a dismissal of the ideal of value-free knowledge as a "myth" would be as irrational-and as irreligious-as to dismiss the ideal of righteousness as a "myth" on the grounds that we can never perfectly attain that. This is why I have elsewhere [in MacKay, 1980] described the currently fashionable dismissal of objectivity (as distinct from recognition of its limits) as symptomatic of "practical atheism." Christians who give way to the fashion are, I suggest, radically inconsistent. They forget that, whatever their difficulties in gaining objective knowledge, they are supposed to be in the loving service of the One to whom Truth is sacred, and carelessness or deliberate bias in stating it is an affront' (MacKay, 1984:235).

This gives something of the strength of MacKay's commitment to objectivity. But when he advocates 'the ideal of value-free knowledge', is he not in fact endorsing objectivism? MacKay's 1984 paper was a response to a Kuyperian psychologist, Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen's paper in an earlier issue of the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (JASA). There she writes:

'finally, with regard to differing views of science, there seems to be a tendency on the part of Christian social scientists to judge the received view of science (trans-temporal, objective, value-free) as being somehow more compatible with a high view of the sovereignty, omniscience, and unchanging character of God than one that relativizes the scientific enterprise by an appeal to the sociology of knowledge and to the post-empiricist debate which has followed in the wake of Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Indeed, such a position has recently been expressed

by Donald MacKay, who seems to see any questioning of the ideal of objective, value-free knowledge (a questioning that I have tried to show is the inevitable result of a recovered respect for human reflexivity) as "symptomatic of the practical atheism of our day" (Van Leeuwen, 1983:166).

This accusation of 'practical atheism' is a strong one. Why is MacKay so vehement? He regards any attack on objectivity as an attack on the scientific enterprise and as an attack on God, an 'abolishment of the Author' (MacKay, 1980 — in Tinker, 1988:138). If science is to be:

'conducted under the eye of the Author, then for him at least there could be no dubiety about the correctness or otherwise of any resulting claims to knowledge on our part' (MacKay, 1980 — in Tinker, 1988:138).

In Reformational philosophy, subjectivism and objectivism differ in the answer to the question: 'what is the source of the laws that give orderliness to creation?' (Clouser, 2005:247). For the subjectivist, the source is based on the knowing subject, in the mind (or language) of the knower; for the objectivist, the source is to be found in the objects of knowledge. Accordingly, the universals are usually placed in the (language or concepts of) the subject by subjectivists and in the objects by objectivists. According to Cronje and Coletto (2015), objectivism emphasises objects and objectivists maintain there is a firm foundation for truth and knowledge. There is something in reality that can be appealed to as a foundation. Subjectivists, however, maintain that foundations are only cultural and are relative, everything is related to culture and persons. It could thus be said that subjectivists and objectivists emphasise different modal aspects (Cronjé & Coletto, 2015:3). The objectivists regard the numerical, spatial, physical, biotic aspects as primary. The subjectivist focuses on the aspects above the biotic. For the subjectivist we cannot know reality, only our interpretation of it. For the objectivist the world has an independent existence and can be known.

We should distinguish between objectivism and objectivity and between subjectivism and subjectivity. While objectivism and subjectivism are exaggerations and distortions concerning the role of objects and subjects, objectivity and subjectivity are ingredients of science that cannot be eliminated. Objectivity is a good ideal – although it is not fully attainable – and subjectivity is something that cannot be eliminated from science, because the subject (individual or community) is simply part of the picture. Unfortunately, modern philosophy is mostly objectivist or subjectivist, as it is unable of 'locating' the sources of order that we experience in reality, in the law-order or modal order explored by

Reformational philosophy. The suspicion that this inability has religious roots (recognising a law-order comes close to recognising a law-Giver) has been expressed for example by van Riessen (1992:25).

This debate, in the modern era, can be regarded as based on the (humanist) antithesis between 'nature and freedom' (or 'nature and culture') which posits a conflict between the human subject (looking for autonomy and creative freedom) and an 'outside world' imposing its laws, constraints and 'objective facts'. The ultimate liberation from objectivism and subjectivism might be possible only through the rejection of such a polarised 'paradigm' and its substitution with a radically new one.

In *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* Dooyeweerd writes: 'there is no truth in itself' and 'our insight is fallible' (Dooyeweerd, 1953-58, 2:577). This could be construed as advocating a form of subjectivism. Dooyeweerd did view our experience of truth as fallible and as relative; however, this does not mean he rejected an absolute truth. If asked if he was a subjectivist or an objectivist he would most probably reply: neither. Truth is in a sense relative (Dooyeweerd, 1953-58, 2:572). But truth is relative to the one who is Truth. God is the source of truth; truth is not self-existent. Acknowledging the role of subjectivity does not necessarily imply a denial of an objective reality. Barclay and MacKay conflate epistemology and ontology. There can be an epistemological subjectivity accompanied by an ontological objectivity.

MacKay and Barclay seem to suggest that facts are not value-laden. Indeed MacKay even writes of value-invariant facts. This approach shows similarity with that of logical positivism. Logical positivism was at its peak during the decades of the 30s and 40s – it separated knowledge into two groups: sense (empirical and logical statements) and non-sense (all the rest). It was in the latter category that anything metaphysical, such as beliefs and values, were assigned. In a post-positivist society it has become now necessary to readdress these issues.

What is the relationship between beliefs, values and facts? The vast majority of the people, including Barclay and MacKay, possibly unwittingly suffering the after effects of positivism, would make a rather sharp distinction between facts and beliefs. Facts are objective, out there, whilst values are subjective and personal. So, for example, the existence of God may or may not be a fact, it is a belief. (Though MacKay and Barclay would assert the existence of God is a fact – which is where they differ from a full-bodied positivist position).

The relationship between beliefs (or values) and facts is complex. In the Reformational view, facts cannot be separated from values or beliefs. According to Kooistra:

‘Facts cannot be studied without accepting values which are normative in character’ (Kooistra, 1963:17).

It is beliefs or values that form a framework for discerning facts. Indeed most times the beliefs themselves are religious. Religious beliefs, it seems, shape science. It is this that MacKay and Barclay seem to deny; and it is this that makes them resistant to a Dooyeweerdian perspective. An adoption of such a perspective would challenge many of their presuppositions.

In the next section, my aim is to interpret the result of my further explorations into the English Calvinist understanding of objectivity, subjectivity and the relations among several sciences.

4.8 Interpreting the results

4.8.1 The rejection of worldviews – or at least Christianity as a worldview

I trust it is now rather clear that many English Calvinists have a mistrust of *worldviews*. Although the term is used by some to describe Christianity, it is mostly used to describe alternative perspectives. There are two possible reasons for this neglect of worldview terminology and for the negative connotations that it received.

The first may be that Christianity is not regarded as an integrated worldview. Barclay dislikes the idea, as it may be a means of making a Christian philosophy admissible. MacKay ignores it as it would challenge the objectivity of science. These may be reasons why the Reformational approach has failed to become popular in Britain.

Secondly, although it is difficult to argue from silence, the neglect of the term *worldview* within English Calvinism may suggest a rejection of the transformational power of Christianity. Kuyper’s view of the Christian faith as a world-and-life-view tended to open up the Christian faith. English Calvinism seems to close the Christian faith down. The private is then prioritised over the public and the objective over the subjective. This is in sharp contrast to the Reformational approach which, largely through Kuyper’s adoption of the term, promoted the idea of cultural transformation within Christianity.

4.8.2 The primacy of theology

One of the typical marks of a nature—grace ground-motive is that theology is seen as the most important science.

Prioritising theology over the other sciences stems from a nature—grace ground-motive. Theology, being related to the realm of grace, is understood to be more important than the other sciences (which are related to ‘nature’). This raises important questions for the present chapter. What is the relationship between the Bible and theology, and what is the role of the Bible and theology in Christian scholarship? Should theology take precedence over philosophy?

A very common definition says that theology is the study of God; however, as Runner once said: ‘how dare we attempt to put God under a microscope; it is God who places us under scrutiny’ (as cited in Andreas, 2015:1). In this regard, Ouweneel (2014b:43-44) makes an important point: theology has no empirical access to God. Theology then is not the study of God (also contra Kuyper and Bavinck). It cannot also be the science that studies ‘the Word of God’ (another very common definition). In fact, such a definition would possibly suit Christian theology (or a few others), but would not be able to capture the nature of all types of theologies, irrespective of their religious orientation.

Drawing on Dooyeweerd’s theory of modal aspects Ouweneel provides a helpful definition of theology:

‘Theology is the special science that investigates the whole of cosmic reality from a pistical point of view’ (2014b:61).

As a special science, in the Reformational movement, it has no more priority over any other of the special sciences. Theology then is not the queen of the sciences. It is as important as the other special sciences, but no more important than any other. This should not mean that theology should be denigrated, as some Reformational thinkers may have tended to do. But this difference in the status and role of philosophy is one of the areas of conflict between the Reformational approach and that of English Calvinists. The latter see theology arising naturally out of reading the Bible – a view shared by Common-Sense realism. Christian scholarship is also seen as arising out of the Bible and is then hardly distinguishable from ‘theology’. For further discussion on these points see § 5.4.2.

4.8.3 Objectivity and subjectivity in English Calvinism

Many Calvinists in England, and Donald MacKay, in particular, maintain that the Christian position requires a clear commitment to the objectivity of science. This strong belief in, and commitment to, the objectivity of science leads to an outright dismissal of subjectivism (actually: of subjectivity) and of the notion that science can be anything other than value-free. Denying the idea that the world has an independent existence is considered a threat to the Christian faith. The idea of rival worldviews is regarded as a subjectivist imposition,

opening the door to relativism. Dooyeweerd's outright rejection of the autonomy of theoretical thought is thus perceived as an attack on objectivism and hence something to be avoided at all costs.

What MacKay, Barclay *et al.* do not realise is that their lack of a development of a Christian philosophy has prevented them from gaining a deeper insight into this issue. They view the issue in terms of either subjectivism *or* objectivism. They fail to see that Dooyeweerd was developing a Christian alternative to this false dichotomy.

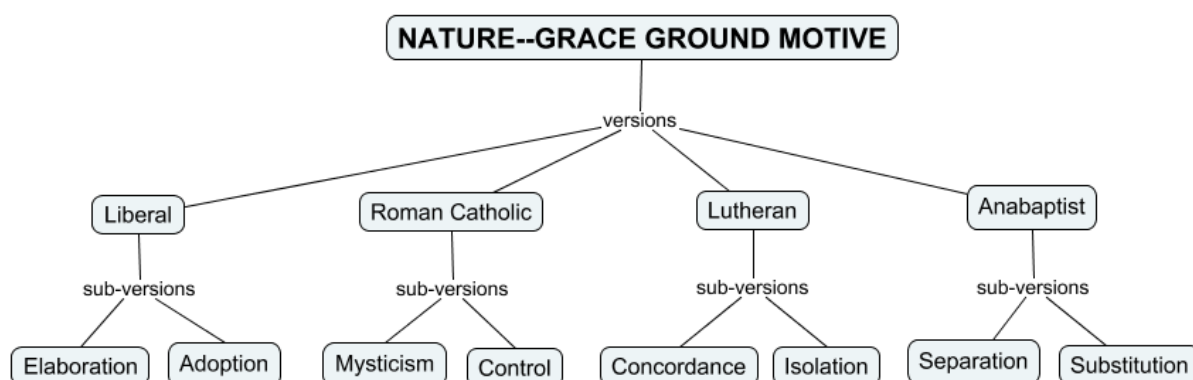
In the next section I return to the different variations of the nature—grace ground-motive that underlie the English Calvinist approaches so far examined. I also re-examine the question of a possible amalgam (or simple plurality) of ground-motives adopted by English Calvinists.

4.9 Sub-versions of the nature—grace motif influencing English Calvinism

4.9.1 A unique worldview or a variety of approaches?

There are different variations on the nature—grace ground-motive – see the discussion in § 3.4. These are provisionally summarised in the concept map in Figure 4.1 below.

FIGURE 4.1 A concept map of the variations of the nature—grace ground-motive



(Source: § 3.4 and references therein)

Throughout the previous discussions, I have identified a number of different nature—grace positions (sub-versions) seemingly shaping English Calvinist opinions, views and so forth.

In Chapter 3 (§ 3.4.4.b), I also asked the question whether it was possible to define the worldview adopted by English Calvinism as a unique worldview that would entail a sort of 'amalgamation' between two well-known sub-versions of the nature-and-grace worldview

(i.e. the so-called ‘Roman Catholic’ and the ‘Anabaptist’ sub-versions). In alternative, I mentioned the possibility that the English Calvinist authors simply adopt a ‘patchwork’ approach. In other words, the different authors may adopt slightly different sub-versions of the same ground-motive or worldview.

In this chapter, I examined several Evangelical English Calvinists. These have an emphasis on the neutrality of science and an acceptance of a complementarity view of science and Christianity. The complementarity view espoused by Mackay and Barclay in particular moves towards a Lutheran concordance-view within the nature—grace paradigm. The adherence to the neutrality of science seems to stem from an integration (incorporation) of the nature—freedom ground-motive in the ‘nature’-pole of the previous paradigm (i.e. nature-and-grace).

The emphasis for these authors is on the nature pole in the nature—freedom ground-motive, which leads to the emphasis on the objectivity of science, to then attempt a Christian version of this picture by adding a layer of ‘grace’ on top. This is still compatible with a ‘Lutheran’ type of approach, perhaps less inclined to ‘concordance’ and slightly more inclined to ‘isolation’ (see Figure 4.1 above).

Detecting a third sub-version of the nature-and-grace paradigm makes the possibility of ‘amalgamation’ less likely. If the idea of an amalgamation of two sub-versions is already questionable, imagining the ‘fusion’ of three or more sub-versions is quite unlikely. We should therefore come to the (more likely) conclusion that we find, in English Calvinism, a variety of approaches that are independently adopted by different authors. Some are more inclined to the Anabaptist version (e.g. Atherton) and others to the Lutheran isolation position (e.g. MacKay).

I have used the term *patchwork* to describe the variety of sub-versions of the worldview adopted by English Calvinist authors. It should be noted, however, that the sub-versions adopted show some coherence. For example, the Liberal sub-version is consistently avoided. English Calvinist authors seem to prefer worldviews where the fall-component characterises ‘nature’. In fact, the Lutheran and Anabaptist sub-versions show this similarity, as the Table 4.1 below illustrates.

TABLE 4.1 Coletto’s ‘translation’ of the nature—grace positions (cf Table 3.3).

Liberal	Roman Catholic	Lutheran	Anabaptist
C > fR	C > fR	cF > R	cF > R

(Source: Coletto, 2014a:9.)

The fall is closely associated with creation and appears as the dominant component. The fall qualifies creation in a synthesis in which creation and fall become 'nature'. Nature is essentially fallen.¹²⁹ This is not exactly the case with the original Roman Catholic paradigm, but as I have noticed in Chapter 3 (§ 3.4.4) the English Calvinist version of this 'paradigm' introduces an unusual emphasis on the fall. We can perhaps speak of an altered version of this paradigm, appearing in English Calvinism. The alteration, however, does not seem to emerge just by chance. On the contrary, it follows an inclination that is present in the other worldviews that are most often adopted in these circles. In this sense, English Calvinism shows a certain degree of consistency in the choice of worldviews.

A final note might be made concerning the absence of the Liberal option. This seems at the moment a clear choice and we have seen that English Calvinist authors often openly oppose the Liberal approach. Is there no possibility then, that in future some authors might choose this option? On this point some prudence is advisable. Starting from a Lutheran position of 'parallelism', it is not difficult to endorse a point of view in which nature and grace become two (more or less closed) compartments. 'Isolation' is, in fact, one of the main options available in this paradigm. Though at the moment this might not be a popular choice, for English Calvinists, we have already observed several authors openly endorsing secular theories and positions to the point where they become virtually indisputable (e.g. the perceived neutrality of science). These theories are included in the 'nature' part of the worldview. From there, it is in my opinion possible, even plausible to imagine that some authors may in future place a new emphasis on 'creation' as the main or predominant component of the worldview. Secular theories may then be identified as "Christian", in opposition to other secular theories and according to patterns that we could call 'adoption' and 'elaboration' (see Figure 4.1 above). The same position could be reached via the 'Roman Catholic' sub-version, in which the creation-component is already well-emphasised. For the moment we have noticed that English Calvinism is inclined to tone-down precisely that emphasis. But in my opinion, once the nature—grace worldview is accepted, no sub-versions are really off-limits.

4.9.2 A final comment

The above discussion aimed at establishing whether in English Calvinism we find slightly different sub-versions of the nature—grace motif, operating 'side by side' (i.e. independently

¹²⁹ This may go some way to explain the denigration of creation within some British Calvinist circles (§§ 3.3.4).

to some extent), or if they constitute a new and unique worldview, resulting from the combination of several sub-versions of the same ground-motive.

However, there is something that can be safely (though sadly) said about the pre-scientific roots of English Calvinism. Firstly, we can be quite confident to say that we deal here with the adoption of a dualist type of model or approach, the nature—grace motif.

The adoption of a two-realms, dualistic position is reflected in the numerous forms of dualism that English Calvinism seems to support:

<u>Grace</u>	<u>Church</u>	<u>Church ministry</u>	<u>Theology</u>	<u>Evangelism</u>
Nature	World	Non-church ministry	Philosophy	Social action

This stands in stark contrast to the integral non-dualistic approach of the Reformational approach. The misunderstandings and lack of dialogue between English Calvinism and Reformational philosophy then, can be said to come from the fact that each movement adopted a different perspective or paradigm. A dualistic framework is unable to comprehend an integral framework in the same way that an imaginary two-dimensional creature would not appreciate a three-dimensional shape. For that creature, a sphere would not be able to exist – it would be perceived as a series of concentric circles growing and then decreasing. Describing a sphere in a two-dimensional universe, would be impossible unless a third dimension could be experienced (Abbott, 1990 [1884]).

Secondly, we can say that English Calvinism is Calvinist in theology (soteriology) but not in worldview. It adopts the five (TULIP) points (or at least four of them (TUIP) in the case of moderate Calvinists), but it rejects the Calvinist/ Reformed all-encompassing worldview as captured in the formula ‘grace transforms nature’. When the Reformational worldview claims that Christianity is to be lived out in ‘all spheres of life’ the English Calvinist dualist approach cannot help seeing some of those spheres as secondary, or neutral, or not really relevant for Christians.

The blurring of the distinction between church as an organism and as an institution has its roots in this nature—grace dualism. In fact, from this point of view, ‘the church’ belongs to the sphere of grace and does not function properly in the ‘natural’ sphere of culture, politics or social transformation. The same pattern emerges in the prioritising of church-focused activities over so-called worldly activities such as setting up political parties. The church (grace) is valued over the world (nature) and theology (grace) is prioritised over philosophy (nature). In a similar way the distinction made between the gospel mandate and the cultural mandate stems from the same nature—grace dualism: the gospel mandate (associated with the grace-pole) is prioritised over the cultural mandate (nature).

Evangelism and the propagation of the gospel take priority, as seen in Chapter 3 (see § 3.3). This then results in, for example, the side lining of social action and of political involvement – both approaches have been discussed in the previous chapter. Social issues can then be largely alleviated by individual conversion.

As I have shown, there is a lack of English Calvinist engagement with the development of any distinctly Christian institutions, such as trade unions or political parties. Likewise, there has been no development of, or little engagement with, Christian philosophy or scholarship. The implicit message this gives is that institutional church activities and theology are more important than engaging with the world.

4.10 Conclusion: reasons for the neglect and rejection of Reformational thought

In this chapter, I have explored the English Calvinist attitude towards science and scholarship. First I have sketched the main philosophical influence that was present in the time and context of the English Calvinists examined in this chapter, namely logical positivism (§ 4.3). I have examined the general attitude of authors like Hooykaas, MacKay and Barclay (§ 4.4). I have then explored some of the pre-scientific presuppositions involved in their acceptance of the complementarity view of science and religious beliefs, of the neutrality of science, and their approval of objectivism. I have highlighted the elevated role that theology played in their approaches and examined their rejection of the notion of a worldview. Many of their presuppositions I have shown result from non-biblical ground motives.

In my analysis, I have identified a number of reasons for the rejection of Reformational thinking by the English Calvinist movement. These include the adoption of a complementarity position for science and Christianity, an embracing of objectivism to the detriment of the role of the subject in theorising, the acceptance of the neutrality of science, the denigration of philosophy and a distaste towards notions like worldviews and ground-motives.

In examining the approaches of MacKay and Barclay I have shown that the English Calvinist approach to science and Christianity – at least for those associated with the RSCF and UCCF – has, unwittingly, some affinity with logical positivism. The possible influence of Common-Sense philosophy has also been pointed out in several instances. The notion of logical indeterminacy developed by MacKay comports well with his complementarity approach but is a consequence of his adoption of the ideal of autonomy of natural science.

Both MacKay and Barclay endorse objectivism as *the* Christian option. This quasi-idolisation of objectivity means that they are suspicious of any form of subjectivity. This is perhaps one key reason for the dislike of the notion of a worldview as it may suggest a form of subjectivism and they also suspect that it may be a Trojan horse for introducing philosophy and relativism.

The English Calvinist approach reveals the adoption of a nature—grace ground-motive and *also* the influence of the science-ideal, generated by the nature-pole of the nature—freedom ground-motive. This ideal led to an adoption of objectivism as *the* Christian approach. Dooyeweerdianism was then regarded as being a threat to that approach. Dooyeweerd was regarded as a subjectivist and in some cases subjectivism was even considered a threat to the Calvinist doctrine of the nature of God. Science was regarded as being neutral as regards religion – an approach that conflicts with the Reformational perspective.

Within English Calvinism there is a distrust of philosophy in general and of a Christian philosophy in particular. This positivistic approach meant that a Christian philosophy was regarded as an oxymoron. Again, this is in direct conflict with the Reformational approach.

Not only is the development of a Christian philosophy seen as an impossibility, but its development is considered suspicious and regarded as an undermining of theology. In fact, Christian philosophy was regarded as boiling down to theology. The Reformational approach was considered a dethroning of theology as the queen of the sciences. This is the result of a nature—grace approach where theology (grace) was seen as being superior to philosophy (nature). Theology is considered the only way to integrate Christianity with scholarship. Hence the number of books and articles with the title (or sub-title) ‘a theology of X’ or ‘an X theology’.¹³⁰

The lack of use of the worldview concept in English Calvinism is remarkable. This may suggest that Christianity isn’t considered an integrated and transformative worldview. The development of a Christian worldview is regarded as a flawed enterprise. Yet this attitude, as

¹³⁰ Examples include (authors’ names have not been added to protect the guilty. Not all of the books listed are by Calvinists): *A Theology of Reading*, *Political Theology*, *Toward a Theology of Beauty*, *Theology of Arithmetic*, *A Theology of Atheism (!)*, *Theology and Public Philosophy*, *A Theology of Culture*, *Theology and Social Theory*, *A Brief Theology of Sport*, *Sports Theology*, *Theology and the Arts*, *Towards a Theology of the Arts*, *A Theological Aesthetic*, *Political Theology*, *Political Theologies*, *A Political Theology of Climate Change*, *Theology of Money*, *Anglican Social Theology*, *Toward a Theology of Social Migration*, *Theology and Contemporary Legal Issues*, *Public Theology for the 21st century*, *Public Theology in Cultural Engagement*, *Public Theology for Changing Times*, *Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age*. Even the publishers of Kuyper’s works have given the project the sub-title: *Collected Works for Public Theology*.

we have seen, has not prevented the adoption of a wide variety of worldviews in English Calvinism. Perhaps, precisely the lack of proper investigation of worldview-issues is the reason why a homogeneous (but especially a properly Calvinist) approach could not be reached.

In Chapter 3 I have shown that English Calvinism adopts a 'grace takes priority over nature' approach which has hints of a Roman Catholic and an Anabaptist approach. Furthermore, in this chapter it became clearer that there has been a mixture of nature—grace and nature—freedom approaches. I have explored the possibility that we might have, in English Calvinism, a kind of amalgamation of worldviews, constituting a specific worldview that might be adopted by all or most English Calvinists. This, however, seems to be unlikely. The diversity of approaches seems too wide to point towards that direction. We can rather detect, in English Calvinism, a variety of slightly different sub-versions of the nature—grace worldview or ground-motive. This, in itself, shows a lack of consensus, a constellation of uneven approaches. Even though these sub-versions can be grouped under the same umbrella-paradigm, they might explain some internal disagreements between authors in the English Calvinist tradition. What seems to be clear is that none of the approaches taken is particularly Reformed. And this is a conclusion that should generate at least some concern within Calvinist circles.

In the next chapter, I look at some lessons that can be learned from this analysis by the Reformational movement and some of the misconceptions and misunderstanding that have been associated with it are examined. I also investigate some of the problems of attitude and presentation that have marred the Reformational movement. The purpose is to acknowledge faults, mistakes and errors and to provide some sort of agenda that can help in making the Reformational position more attractive to other Calvinists.

Chapter 5

Lessons and hopes for the Reformational movement

5.1 Introduction

The Reformational movement has many strengths and yet despite these it has failed to a large extent to be adopted or even discussed by most of the Calvinists in England. Some of the reasons for this have been examined in the previous chapters and they point out especially the shortcomings of English Calvinism. Here I would like to look at some of the shortcomings on the side of the Reformational movement adherents. In what ways have they made the acceptance of Reformational ideas more difficult (see section § 5.2-3) and what weaknesses have they displayed that make such ideas less attractive and so open to misunderstanding (§ 5.3)? Finally what lessons can be learned from the English experience by Reformational adherents to be able to make their approach more biblical and more attractive in the future (§ 5.4)?

5.2 Issues of attitude

5.2.1 A confrontational approach

There has been a perceived lack of humility, self-certainty and triumphalism within the Reformational movement. Bolt (1984) writes:

‘while Kuyper himself warned against Calvinistic utopianism, his followers have not always heeded his warnings. When the doctrine of common grace is combined with an aggressive transformational zeal in which "we" the regenerate have the truth and the "other side" the lie, worldly utopianism or even tyranny could be the result. Kuyper's followers have not always been sensitive to this. On occasions, a triumphalism which assumes that the "Christianization" or "Calvinization" of numerous cultural areas will bring about, or even be, the millennium’ (Bolt, 1984:147).

J.C. Franken, a former professor of philosophy at Utrecht accuses Dooyeweerd of a 'naïve and dogmatic self-certainty' (as cited in Choi, 2000:51). Sometimes this attitude has been justified by maintaining that truth is important. There has been a tendency for truth to be stressed at the expense of love and grace. The assumption is 'we are right' and this makes dialogue irrelevant; it becomes an exercise in conversion rather than discussion.

It is hard to have a conversation or a dialogue when one partner in the debate refuses to back down and acknowledge flaws and possible errors. No-one is infallible and that includes Kuyper and Dooyeweerd and Reformational adherents. Often, when Dooyeweerd has been criticised, there has been a tendency to jump to his defence without hearing any of the potentially valid criticisms of his position.

The default position of many Dooyeweerdians has often been debate rather than dialogue. The difference between debate and dialogue is clearly outlined in Flavin-McDonald and McCoy (1997:46). Debate entails the winning of an argument - sometimes even at the expense of truth. Dialogue is about finding common ground, working together for understanding, it exposes assumptions for re-evaluation. Unfortunately, with the majority of the early Reformational thinkers trained in philosophy, the default position has been debate and critique rather than dialogue and collaboration. For example, Franken, maintained that Dooyeweerd's approach is too analytical and leaves 'no place for dialogue' (as cited in Choi, 2000:52). This is not to say that there is no place for debate or critique – but the importance and place of dialogue needs to be acknowledged. In a similar way, Strauss (2008) identifies the need for 'critical solidarity', as he puts it:

'in order to be able really to benefit from the exercise of a critical spirit, one has to observe something more fundamental than critique, namely *showing solidarity*. (...) a much larger effort is required if one really wants to understand a thinker good enough to be able to appreciate positively what is worthwhile in the thought of such a person. In other words, critique is only meaningful when it is embedded in solidarity. Therefore the popular motto of *critical thinking* ought to be altered into the requirement of *critical solidarity*' (Strauss, 2008:115).

This need for dialogue and critical solidarity is also exemplified in the attitude taken by the British Reformational scholar, Andrew Basden, in his 'enrichment approach' (see below § 5.4.5).

5.2.2 A tendency towards arrogance?

The debate mode and a tendency towards arrogance can be seen in the title of Hebden Taylor's *The Christian Philosophy of Law, Politics and the State* (1966). Some took umbrage to the *The* rather than *A* in the title with its implication that this approach is the only Christian approach (Bishop, 2016a:5). It's a small point but it does indicate the attitude of some Reformational scholars.

For many, Dooyeweerd's approach provided the tools for the critique of other positions. These tools were able to expose the lack of consistency and coherence within others' positions – and may at times give the appearance of arrogance.

5.2.3 A tendency towards dotting the i's and crossing the t's

A lot of discussion among Reformational scholars has been over the minutiae.¹³¹ This often gives the impression that this approach is only for academics. Although academic discourse is crucial, the tendency has often been to concentrate on that area and leave under-developed other areas (examples of this have included the debate over the nature of time in Dooyeweerd's philosophy and his idea of supratemporality). Several authors have tried to make Dooyeweerd's work accessible and provide a relevant introduction: Mark Roques, for example, has applied a Reformational perspective to football (soccer) in an engaging way (Roques & Tickner, 2003) and Richard Russell has developed a number of diagrams through which he explains Dooyeweerd's philosophy.¹³² John Peck's book *Uncommon Sense*, written with Charles Strohmer, is another example of an attempt to make more accessible Dooyeweerdian ideas (Peck & Strohmer, 2001). Outside of the UK, Bennie van der Walt's work has done much to popularise the Reformational perspective (see particularly, van der Walt, 2001; 2008). However, there is more work to be done to avoid the impression that Reformational philosophy is not simply a highly academic exercise but has concrete implications for the average Christian. This topic links directly to the next section.

5.2.4 The lack of piety or a perceived un-spirituality

In many ways the case against Reformational philosophy is not so much an academic one. What was not liked was a perceived lack of personal piety and the low priority given to evangelism. Have the supporters and sympathisers of Reformational ideas, failed to recommend their cause by neglecting personal prayer, evangelism, and church going? This

¹³¹ For example, a recent (in house) debate has taken place on the Reformational email list over the number of analogies there might be.

¹³² See the 'Richard Russell pages': www.allofliferedeemed.co.uk/russell.htm (date of access; 27 February 2018).

response may be a (over)reaction against Evangelical Calvinism and as a result may have alienated some sections of the Christian community. Was it perhaps not so much the message but the messenger that was rejected?

Typical is the response of the British Calvinist D.M. Lloyd-Jones when he attended the 1953 IARFA conference, in Montpellier:

'I remember attending a conference in the South of France in 1953. And, to be honest and to be helpful, I have got to say this: I had to keep on reminding myself that I was in a Christian conference! I had to remind myself of it, because all the papers were entirely philosophical, and the arguments and disputations were almost entirely on that level. There was virtually no prayer at all. It was all a question of papers and of discussions, but it was a Calvinistic conference' (Lloyd-Jones, 1981, np).

He was perhaps reacting to the anti-pietistic attitudes of the neo-Calvinists and displaying his traditional Calvinistic viewpoint.

5.2.5 Triumphalism?

David Engelsma makes some pertinent critiques of the Kuyperian approach. He writes as one who has an almost ideological dislike of common grace. Nevertheless, he does make some interesting observations. Although Engelsma is North American, the Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland promotes his work and makes available his writings on their website.

Engelsma accuses the Kuyperian approach of wanting to 'Christianise the world'; he writes:

"'Christianizing" the world was the theme of Kuyper's six "Stone Lectures" at Princeton in 1898. These lectures have been published as the book, *Lectures on Calvinism*' (Engelsma, nd:1).

'Basic to this gigantic project for the Dutch theologians of the past century was God's "common grace." According to Kuyper and Bavinck, in addition to His special, saving grace, which God gives only to the elect, God has another, entirely different grace, which He gives to all humans. This grace, in reprobate, ungodly, anti-Christian men and women, does three things: It restrains sin in them, so that they are no longer totally depraved; it enables them to do good works in civil society, including especially their impressive cultural works—Aristotle's philosophy, Beethoven's symphonies, and Shakespeare's plays; and it develops a good, even godly, culture, or way of life, in a society and nation' (Engelsma, nd:2).

Engelsma finally notes:

‘we do not expect the carnal triumph of the kingdom of Christ in history. We do not expect the Christianizing of the world’ (nd:27).

It may be an unfair accusation (I will return to it below), but there may be some element of truth in it. He sees a triumphalist attitude in the Reformational approach, a triumphalism that, according to Engelsma, has been less than triumphant. For example, he points to the Free University and Christian politics in the Netherlands, both falling far short of what Kuyper had envisioned in his writings. In this sense their success was less than triumphant. He describes this approach as ‘cultural Calvinism’ as opposed to his own form of ‘genuine’ or ‘spiritual’ Calvinism (Engelsma, nd:6-8).

The British sociologist Warner’s (2007:86) description of Evangelicals as having a ‘vision’s inflation’ (they all seem to promise much more than they can actually deliver) also seems to apply to the Kuyperian approach at least according to Engelsma. At this junction one may start a discussion about the achievements of Christian politicians in the Netherlands to show that they were not so irrelevant. Yet this is not the point. Engelsma’s feelings, though often based on disputable presuppositions, pose the question whether a triumphalist attitude may have hampered the promotion of Reformational ideas. It is on this question that Reformational circles need to reflect.

Engelsma also points out that there seems to be a tendency to stigmatise ‘opponents’ as world-flight Anabaptists.

‘From this lofty conception of the common grace, cultural project, it follows that the cultural-Calvinists are severe in their condemnation of us who do not share their thinking and decline to take part in their effort to Christianize the world. We sin, and our sin is nothing less than a deficient understanding of the kingdom of God and a failure to live the kingdom life. Beginning with Kuyper and Bavinck, the shaming charge against us Calvinists who reject the culture-Calvinism of common grace is that we are pietists and Anabaptists. That is, we are charged with the grievous, plainly unbiblical error of world flight. We are consigned to the ranks of the Anabaptists of the time of the Reformation. We are put in the camp of Munzer, John of Leyden, and Menno Simons. We are no genuine Calvinists at all! We are no red-blooded children and heirs of Luther, Calvin, and, evidently, the Reformed confessions, although the cultural-Calvinists offer precious little proof for their theory from the creeds’ (Engelsma, nd:10).

Again, my previous analysis of Christian worldviews in relation to English Calvinism may serve as a proof that in Reformational circles ‘labels’ are not applied too quickly or

superficially on individuals or groups. I have shown that not all 'genuine Calvinists' can be labelled as 'Anabaptists'. Engelsma should also consider that a classification according to worldviews is not the same as a classification according to the acceptance of confessional documents. I have also made clear that English Calvinism is Calvinist in its soteriology, ecclesiology and so forth. Nevertheless, Reformational thinkers should admit that mere name calling does no one any favour, labelling is not an argument.

Engelsma also notes something else that is related to the role of the church.

'Where the notion of Christianizing the world reigns, "kingdom" is on everyone's lips: "seeking the kingdom"; "promoting the kingdom"; the "coming of the kingdom." One hears little or nothing about the church or the covenant. Kingdom is all' (Engelsma, nd:9).

Again, the lack of consideration for the role of the church is mentioned. Engelsma's new allegation is certainly linked to the previous ones concerning the 'Christianization' of the world, triumphalism and so forth. The key-issue remains Engelsma's rejection of the idea of common grace. Engelsma's view of the kingdom does indeed differ from the Kuyperian perspective. Engelsma's Calvinism is more about the 'institutional church' than about the church-as-organism transforming culture. His accusation of triumphalism is to an extent misplaced, as Kuyper never intended a Christianising of the world – he didn't hold to an optimistic post-millennial eschatological position. Engelsma's critique stems from an almost ideological dislike of common grace. He denies common grace and emphasises the antithesis. Kuyper embraced both.

However, Engelsma's critique about the importance of the 'church' does provide some helpful lessons for Reformational scholars: not least the need to ensure that the antithesis is not down-played. The relationship between the antithesis and common grace is one that needs to be held in tension. It is not a case of one or the other but both. But also, we need to recall that the church as institution is as important as the church as organism. One should not take precedence over the other.

Often misunderstanding can arise from poor communication and presentation. According to the complaints of several authors, some major problems of the Reformational approach are its opacity, and the issue of relevance. In the next section I will look at these allegations.

5.3 Issues with presentation: opacity and relevance

5.3.1 Opacity

Time and again Reformational writers, and Dooyeweerd in particular, have been accused of being less than clear in their writings (to put it mildly). It is a recurring theme among followers and critics. One English reviewer, the philosopher Paul Hirst, wrote that Dooyeweerd's *Transcendental Problems of Philosophic Thought* is 'marred by a large number of vague and obscure statements in a formidable and inadequately defined terminology' (Hirst, 1949:407).

This accusation of a lack of clarity is made even by Dutch speaking authors such as van Brakel, Simons, van Deursen and Idenburg. In 1928 the journal *Themis* published a review by G.J. van Brakel on Dooyeweerd's work. Van Brakel wrote:

'this writing teems with germanisms and other strange words in such great measure that one cannot help but wonder if it can possibly represent an enrichment of Dutch scholarly literature' (as cited in Verburg, 2015:123).

Simons, also in 1928, bemoans:

'could he [Dooyeweerd] perhaps not try sometime to express himself in somewhat more widely comprehensible terminology? I confess openly I was stumped by many of the writer's expressions, incomprehensible as they were despite my best efforts' (as cited in Verburg, 2015: 126).

Dooyeweerd's response in the *Antirevolutionaire Staatkuunde* (2, 1928:419) was:

'I am happy to accept this criticism and will try to benefit from it. Indeed it does not satisfy me either that I must always avail myself of a foreign language in order to find a precise form for my thoughts. My only excuse is that I cannot use many a pure Dutch term because it has gradually acquired an ambiguous meaning that can be fatal to precise expression' (as cited in Verburg, 2015: 127).

It seems that Dooyeweerd's desire to be more precise, and so not to be misunderstood, actually meant that he couldn't at times be clearly understood.

Van Deursen in his history of the VU has this to say:

'a reputation for obscurity glued itself to the new philosophy from the start' (van Deursen, 2005:171).

Idenburg, in 1926, wrote to Dooyeweerd regarding his articles in the journal *Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde*:

'I am genuinely pleased that your articles are appreciated in the circles of Fraternities. Yet it remains my conviction that only a very small minority of those who subscribe to *Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde* are able to follow you completely' (as cited in Verburg, 2015:77-78).

Dooyeweerd's sympathetic biographer Marcel Verburg notes:

'striking in all this is that when Dooyeweerd introduces a new term, he does not inform the reader what is new about it nor does he immediately make clear what it is supposed to mean' (*Ibid.*:132).

Verburg suggests that this may be because Dooyeweerd overlooked developments in his own philosophy. Dooyeweerd was writing in a different century and in a different style – some English readers have joked that they are still waiting for an English translation of Dooyeweerd's writings.¹³³ He also uses common terms such as *subject* and *object* in new and unfamiliar ways. And often he fails to define clearly his terms. It is hardly surprising that his work is often seen as almost inaccessible and impenetrable. To be fair, this accusation could be made against most of the philosophers writing at the time; Sartre, Heidegger or Polanyi were hardly models of clarity.

London Bible College¹³⁴ philosophy lecturer Peter Hicks makes this observation:

'Dooyeweerd developed such a system, with complexity of detail (and of style) that challenges the comprehension of most readers' (Hicks, 1998:104).¹³⁵

The issue of the perceived difficulty in Reformational work is also epitomised in Ross Evans and Geoffrey Thomas' (1976) Christian education bibliography in *The Banner of Truth*. In it they included some Reformational books. They are scathing in their review of *To Prod the Slumbering Giant* (Vriend et al., 1972). They describe the book as:

¹³³ According to David Hanson, Hendrik van Riessen said that Dooyeweerd's works were not yet translated into Dutch! (Hanson, personal communication 10 September 2017).

¹³⁴ LBC is now known as London School of Theology.

¹³⁵ Hicks mistakenly perceives Dooyeweerd's approach as a form of presuppositionalism (Hicks, 1998:105).

‘a statement from the Dooyeweerdian philosophy of the Cosmonomic idea on structuring the entire school curriculum on the basis of their insights’ (Evans & Thomas, 1976:30).

But then add:

‘most Calvinist teachers in Britain will not understand this book, and will probably disagree with the parts they do understand! The work is disappointing in its lack of scriptural and exegetical insight’ (*Ibid.*, 30).

Here we have the accusations of difficulty and that of minimising Scripture. The latter accusation, being a matter of ‘content’, is discussed in § 5.4.3 below. For the moment, the Reformational community should reflect on the need to present Reformational ideas in a less complex jargon. I have mentioned mainly reactions to Dooyeweerd’s work, but it would not be difficult to provide examples of (sometime un-necessary) complexities in the work of more recent Reformational authors.

Another complaint that often emerges against Reformational scholarship is about what I have called ‘relevance and applicability’.

5.3.2 Relevance and applicability

In another book review, this time of Kalsbeek’s introduction to Dooyeweerd (Kalsbeek, 1975), Paul Helm concludes:

‘Dooyeweerd’s philosophy, and this book, seems to be light-years away from current philosophical pre-occupations in Britain’ (Helm, 1977a:76).

Likewise, Howard Davis writes on fellow Ilkley Group sociologist Alan Storkey’s *A Christian Social Perspective*:

‘the feeling I refer to is a sense of its remoteness from the kind of social thinking which I personally engage in and am committed to in a number of ways. (...) The distance which this opens up between the reader and the familiar terrain of contemporary social thought might be enough to render it strange and puzzling to him [sic]’ (Davis, nd:1).

Helm’s comment that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is light years away from current philosophical pre-occupations in Britain is perhaps an indictment not on Dooyeweerd but on English philosophy. Helm seems to disregard the fact that a Christian philosophy might develop its own problems, discussions and so forth, without depending totally on non-

Christian philosophy that is always supposed to dictate the agenda. However, these comments do serve as a reminder that for an academic conversation to take place the topics must be in common. Only in this way a new philosophical movement can become relevant. Whether Helm's comment was fair to the specific book is not important. One might also reply to Helm that fortunately, Reformational philosophy has been usually 'in touch' and in dialogue with both humanist and Christian philosophies of different orientations. The fact remains, however, that Helm's remark should be kept in mind by the next generations of Reformational scholars.

Helm also criticises the Reformational approach on grounds of the lack of possible applicability. In a response to an article by Russell (1977):¹³⁶

'Mr Russell seriously thinks that all disciplines – from cookery to cybernetics – can have a distinctively Christian content (be "internally related" to the Christian faith). Can he show, without obfuscation, what Christian cookery or cybernetics would look like? Where are these strange animals to be found?' (Helm, 1977b:17).

Likewise in a personal letter to Russell, Donald Mackay asked him what was the Christian way to boil an egg? (Russell – personal communication; see Bishop, 2016b:59).

The implication from both Helm and Mackay is that Reformational thought may be promising in theory but lacking in practical applicability. Probably this accusation largely stems from an unawareness of the richness and diversity of Reformational thought. Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven's idea of the cosmonomic principle has provided many important insights in accounting, aesthetics, anthropology, art, dogmatics, economics, education, information systems, feminism, football¹³⁷, mathematics, philosophy, politics, technology, the social sciences, as well as the physical sciences. Although I'm not aware of any Reformational monographs on cooking, Cramp, the Dooyeweerdian Cambridge economist, provided a riposte to Helm.

'I'm not too hot on cybernetics. Nor am I qualified to say too much about the positive content of a Christian Mrs Beeton. But I'll hazard the negative observation that it was not Christian cookery which produced the meal that inspired Bishop Gore's famous grace "God forgive us for feasting while others starve". And it's not Christian cookery when today's housewives rush in from work to warm up, for their latch-key kids, plastic food processed on factory assembly lines by other mothers who work partly because they have

¹³⁶ Russell's article was a response to Helm (1977a).

¹³⁷ See, for example, Roques and Tickner (2003).

been convinced that money produces happiness, partly because equal pay makes two incomes necessary to support accepted living standards, and so on' (Cramp, 1977:16).

The lack of awareness afflicting Helm and Mackay may illustrate the closed-ness of the Reformational community and its poor ability to publish and promote its ideas beyond its own boundaries. It may also come from an underestimation of the richness and diversity of the Reformational perspective. However, when Helm was writing the review in 1977, this was probably a fair comment for the English situation, but no so in the Netherlands, South Africa or the United States. The potential relevance had not yet been realised in the UK, but in subsequent years this has not been the case, for example, British Reformational scholars have produced important works on surveillance (Lyon, 2001), information systems (Basden, 2008a, 2018), sociology (Storkey, 1979) and politics (Chaplin, 2012).

I now turn to issues concerning the very content of Reformational ideas.

5.4 Issues of content (with some misunderstandings)

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from the English situation; lessons that can often be learned even from the misunderstandings of the Reformational position. As mentioned before despite the fruitfulness, the comprehensiveness and the consistency of the Reformational approach, it is not without its detractors, even within the Christian ranks. This opposition cannot be always attributed to misunderstandings; in some cases the critics do understand yet do disagree with the Reformational approach. In some cases critiques can be quite superficial. One such criticism is about the lack of wide international acceptance of Reformational philosophy. This is hardly a valid objection: popularity is hardly an arbiter of truth. Philosopher Paul Helm (personal communication, 17 April 2015) proposes a much more serious critique: he identifies relativism as one of the main problems of the Reformational approach. These and other allegations are examined here.

5.4.1 Perceived as promoting subjectivism and idealism

One of the accusations made against the Reformational approach is that it advocates subjectivism (see § 4.7.4) and relativism (Helm, 2015 - personal communication). This, as I have shown (see § 4.8.3) is an incorrect view – and yet there must be some ground given for the opponents to think this. This means that Reformational scholars must be careful when expounding their philosophy to consider what misconceptions may occur and address them.

Regarding Helm's allegation of 'relativism', a note about subjectivism and relativism may be important. Subjectivism, as Van Niekerk (2017) clarifies, does not necessarily entail or lead to relativism:

'Some clarifications are however needed about the connection between subjectivism and relativism. Kant's "Copernican revolution" (the human mind does not derive its laws from nature but imposes its laws upon nature) was an important step in a process in which the human subject started replacing the object of study as the primary locus (foundation) of human knowledge and rationality. Kant managed to escape the possible relativist implications of subjectivism by making the categories (in the mind of the subject) universal and equal for all. However, the subject can be (and later on indeed was) regarded as constituted by a more specific/limited community or even by an individual. The more the subject is linked to individuality, the more relativism creeps in' (Van Niekerk, 2017:21).

A similar accusation that has been made, particularly in Van Tilian circles, is that the Reformational approach is flirting with idealism. This can be seen in the critique of Dooyeweerd by Lydia Jaeger (2012a) – as Coletto notes:

'Jaeger (...) from her position, regards Dooyeweerd's philosophy as compromising with Humanist philosophy, in particular with the idealism of Kant and Husserl' (Coletto, 2015:7).

However, as Coletto (2015) ably shows this accusation is unfounded. Jaeger provides no evidence of Dooyeweerd's 'compromise' with idealism (she doesn't even define what she means by idealism). Jaeger asserts:

'the debt which Dooyeweerd owes to Kantian-type idealism has often been emphasized' (Jaeger, 2018:240).

But she offers no supporting references to back up this point. Elsewhere she writes:

'I have certain reservations about the precise list of modal aspects that he proposes and the linear order he gives them, as well as, more fundamentally, the idealistic inclination of his work' (Jaeger, 2012b:80, footnote 60).

Again this aside remark in a footnote is left without any justification. If Jaeger thinks modal aspects are mental constructs (which would amount to idealism) then that is certainly not

what Dooyeweerd maintained; for Dooyeweerd they are aspects of our experience and of reality and certainly do not exist just in our minds (Coletto, 2015:7).

5.4.2 The elevation of philosophy to the queen of the sciences

A number of scholars that we have examined accuse the Reformational perspective of elevating philosophy over theology, for example, Barclay:

‘its advocates speak as if philosophy was prior to theology and should control our understanding of revelation’ (Barclay, 1984:203).

There is some truth in this accusation as Reformational scholars see theology as one of the special sciences but not as a ‘special’ special science. The position of philosophy is as a general or ‘encyclopaedic science’. This may give the impression that philosophy is playing the role of theology, as the majority of Christians view theology. It seems to prioritise philosophy over theology.

Hepp, in April 1938, made a similar accusation. As Verburg writes:

‘in concluding his explanatory notes Hepp appealed to the Curators “to bind it on the hearts of the professors who venture into the field of philosophy that they not allow philosophy to dominate theology, since this has always led to a decline of the church”’ (Verburg, 2015:258).

Recall how Lloyd-Jones, after attending a Calvinistic conference in 1948, remarked: ‘it was a warning to me of an intellectual Calvinism’ (as cited in Murray, 1990:155). Lloyd-Jones also regarded philosophy as ‘the greatest enemy of Christian truth’ (as cited in Murray, 1990:239).

This accusation is not without some foundation (see, for example, the discussion in Coletto, 2014:97-98). As Coletto observes:

‘one might still argue that while Dooyeweerd rightly criticised the mediating role of theology, he was not equally ready to admit the dangers of placing philosophy in a mediating role’ (Coletto, 2014:100).

This is a danger Reformational scholars need to be aware of. It also means Reformational scholars need to be wary of minimising the role of Scripture in scholarship.

5.4.3 Minimising Scripture

Thomas shows his dislike of the role (or lack of it), that Scripture plays in Reformational writings. In a review in *The Banner of Truth* (concerning Morey's (1974) *The Dooyeweerdian Concept of the Word of God*) he writes:

'it examines the strange views of the Scripture held by some of Dooyeweerd's followers, points out the dangers, and calls the Toronto-based men to repentance' (Thomas, 1975:26).

There was a vociferous debate regarding Scripture and the word of God that took place in the early seventies in North America (see, for example, Downs, 1974). Morey's book arose out of that debate. This debate was, however, much less of an issue in Britain than in North America. The Welsh Calvinist Thomas, who studied at Westminster Seminary, was the only one in the UK that seemed to have any knowledge of this debate – and his comments in this review may well reflect his Van Tilian tendencies. These concerns have been kept in mind while discussing the next topic.

5.4.4 Denigration of the church

One accusation often heard is that adherents of Reformational philosophy denigrate the role and place of the church. One such objection comes from Lloyd Jones:

'at its extreme the effect of the movement was anti-church and anti-preaching. Its priority was the need to change society and culture' (as cited in Murray, 1990:619).

This stems from a misunderstanding of the distinction between the church as organism and the church as institute. Several of the above allegations stem from a change in perspective promoted by the Reformational movement. Perhaps in attempts to avoid a nature—grace dualism Reformational scholars have been wary of placing too much emphasis on theology, the Scripture and on the institutional church. It is ironic that Kuyper who began as a church historian and a church pastor neglected church attendance on Sundays to write his devotionals. It is noticeable that few Reformational scholars have written biblical commentaries or systematic theologies. There are, of course, some notable exceptions: Kuyper's commentary on Revelation (Kuyper, 1935), Spykman's *Reformational Theology* (Spykman, 1992) or Bartholomew's commentary on Ecclesiastes (Bartholomew, 2009), and Goheen's work on Newbigin (Goheen, 2000) and missiology (Goheen, 2011; 2014). Perhaps this could be an area for budding Reformational scholars to embark on.

How can Reformational scholars help avoid misunderstandings? Or be more accessible and clearer in presentation? Andrew Basden's approach may help to facilitate this.

5.4.5 From criticism to enrichment

The British Reformational scholar Andrew Basden (2008b) advocates an enrichment approach rather than an antithetical one when engaging with non-Christian interlocutors. Basden is a role model for aspiring Reformational scholars.¹³⁸ He argues:

'Christian thinking is used to account for and enrich the world's thinking by transplanting it from its current ground-motive (usually that of nature-freedom) into the arguably more fertile soil of the creation-fall-redemption ground-motive' (Basden, 2008b:132).

'Dooyeweerdian thought can underpin and accept, reinterpret and enrich the world's thinking' (Basden, 2008b:147).

'I have found that, while most Christians seem doubtful about Dooyeweerd's philosophy, many non-Christians value and are attracted to his thought. Why is this? Perhaps nobody else provides such a sound basis for interdisciplinary and rich complexity that is able to address the real problems we face today. Some find the centrality of Meaning attractive, while others find the ground-motives useful' (Basden, 2008b:152).

Basden utilises a three-stage model of affirm, criticise/ reinterpret and enrich. He looks at another Christian scholar, the former Ilkley Group founder member, David Lyon and indicates his work as a model of good Christian scholarship (Basden, 2015).

'His [Lyon's] approach may be described as **neither antagonism, nor acquiescence, but treating the world's thought as impaired insight**. As a result, his Christian faith and viewpoint make a genuine contribution to the field, which scholars of other faiths and 'none' can value, and the whole field benefits' (Basden, 2015:np – bold in the original).

Basden concludes:

¹³⁸ Basden is Professor of Human Factors and Philosophy in Information Systems at the University of Salford, Manchester and was given a visiting Chair by the University of Tampere in 1998, partly because of his Dooyeweerdian approach. He was awarded a Templeton/ Metanexus grant to examine the religious roots of information systems.

‘what David Lyon does is to adopt a **Biblical presupposition** about the nature of reality and the nature of scholarship. (...) He does this from an understanding of reality (of the world of surveillance) that is deeply formed and informed by Biblical presuppositions. He does mention his Christian faith once or twice, and he does allude to God once or twice, but only where it would be appropriate in the eyes of others, and not to ‘evangelise’. He adopts a three-point strategy:

- He **affirms** each thinker’s view where it seems to him valid.
- He **critiques** each thinker’s views, from his wider view.
- He **enriches** the views of those thinkers, so they can be taken further.

As a result, his work is valued throughout the field as of high quality and useful, and his work has become a reference point for his field. But it takes a lot of effort to achieve that’ (Basden, 2015:np – bold in the original).

This has also been the approach that Basden has taken in his work. It is a strategy that may mitigate misunderstandings and may help clear communication with those who hold other worldviews.

5.5 Conclusions

In the foregoing, I have identified a number of the shortcomings within the Reformational movement. There has been a tendency towards debate rather than dialogue. I also identified a number of problems with the attitude of some Reformational advocates. These included arrogance, a tendency towards triumphalism and a sometimes-pedantic style that concentrates on secondary rather than primary issues. With one or two exceptions, in addition, little has been done to popularise the Reformational approach – and though this may reflect the sophisticated and at times overly technical nature of Reformational philosophy it does not make it amenable to a sound bite approach.

Some have accused some Reformational adherents of lacking personal piety. Another criticism has been about lack of relevance to contemporary philosophical debates. This may reflect the closed confines within Reformational philosophy, but it also may reflect the non-biblical presuppositions with contemporary philosophy.

As well as problems with attitude I have highlighted some issues with the content of Reformational philosophy. Some have seen it as promoting a subjectivist or relativist position and some take issue with its elevation of philosophy and the consequent, minimising of the role of theology within a Christian perspective. Another common criticism of this approach is that it devalues the church. There may be some elements of truth in these criticisms and

Reformational scholars will do well to take them into account if they want to show the fruitfulness and relevance of Dooyeweerd's philosophy.

One way forward may be to adapt Basden's enrichment approach: one that takes seriously the need for dialogue. And one that Basden has used to great effect in showing the effectiveness of Reformational philosophy and Dooyeweerd's modal aspects in particular to the field of information systems.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

Andrew Basden writes:

‘my experience has been that Hindus, Muslims and Humanists like Dooyeweerd's ideas more than Christians do. Maybe too many Christians are still trapped in the Scholastic [nature—grace] ground-motive, which gave rise to the sacred-secular divide, locating mainstream scholarship at the pole opposite their religious beliefs’ (Basden, 2018:44).

This dissertation has shown that, in English Calvinist circles, the adoption of a nature—grace ground-motive has indeed thwarted the acceptance of a Reformational perspective. Lloyd-Jones's observation that began this thesis, ‘all of us who have ever read Kuyper, and others, have been teaching this for many long years’ (Lloyd-Jones, 1976:101), as I have shown is far wide of the mark. A much more realistic observation was Newbigin's: ‘unfortunately this Kuyperian tradition is almost unknown in Britain’ (as cited in Goheen, 1999) (see § 1.1). It is indeed true that the Kuyperian/ Reformational tradition is almost unknown among English Calvinists. I have identified a number of reasons why this is the case.

6.2 Summary points from previous chapters

In Chapter 2, after a brief overview of the Reformational approaches of Abraham Kuyper, Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven, I looked at the historical background to English Calvinism. This provided a number of key points. In England, the Reformation, and hence the introduction of Calvinism, was largely from the top down. This resulted in an Establish Church, which began as broadly Calvinist, based on the 39 Articles and the Prayer Book, although some of its liturgical practices were still close to the Roman Catholic tradition. Later disputes over the speed and extent of reform meant that many separated from the Established Church. The Great Ejection of 1662 meant that many Calvinist – but certainly not all – left the Established Church. There followed a fragmentation of English Calvinism, which was in part fuelled by the Evangelical Revival.

The role of the Established Church within English culture and the fact that it is established, contradicts Kuyper's concept of sphere sovereignty. The English Reformation was very much linked to the state; it was the state – or the monarch – that dictated whether the country was Roman Catholic or Protestant. In this way, however unconsciously, the state linked to the church and church linked to the state – this symbiotic relationship formed part of the English 'psyche'. This may in part explain some of the reluctance to adopt Reformational views which seemed to advocate sphere sovereignty and a church—state independence which went against 'English-ness'. The notion that Reformational philosophy was a foreign (Dutch) import was also a point against it. Interestingly, it was its importation from North America, via the Dutch immigration, that seemed to make it that little more palatable.¹³⁹

The Great Ejection led to a privatisation of the gospel among many of the non-Conformists and this, with the incipient tendency to individualisation of the Puritans, led to a reduced view of the scope of the gospel and to the seeming attractiveness of a sub-Christian version of the nature and grace paradigm.

This can be regarded as the main obstacle to the acceptance of Reformational ideas. Perhaps all the other reasons can be regarded as 'rooted' in this reduced view of the scope of the gospel, which is in turn rooted in a nature—grace paradigm. This position is first of all a spiritual attitude: subscribing to a 'reduced' form of Christianity is certainly less demanding. If one is not prepared to surrender everything to Christ (including one's political views, academic theorising and so forth), adopting a reduced view of the redemptive power of the gospel is certainly 'convenient'. This half-hearted attitude can then be camouflaged by all sorts of 'spiritual' arguments.

In Chapter 3 I identified a number of reasons for the neglect, mistrust or even denial of the validity of a Reformational approach. These include the following.

1. The effect of a nature—grace ground-motive on English Calvinism (and other Christian trends) resulted in individualism/ personalism, an introspective piety and a focus on ecclesiastical issues. Threats to these concepts were viewed as being 'unspiritual' and threatening to the peaceful privatisation of the church. The Reformational view of redemption for all of life would mean that there were no no-go areas for the transforming power of the gospel; this was seen by many as being a step too far. Hence, the lack of concern for Christian politics and for the setting up of Christian political organisations. The private was placed over the public – the Reformational position would mean that this dualism would be

¹³⁹ This can be seen in the fact that Hebden Taylor, Richard Russell, Elaine Storkey, Jonathan Chaplin and Mark Roques had to make the journey over the Atlantic to take part in Reformational scholarship before returning to Britain as advocates of the movement (see further Bishop, 2016b).

dissolved and the status quo that the church enjoyed with the secularists would be threatened.

2. Most English Calvinists were slow to see the relevance of Christianity to areas other than the private or the church. The search for a 'social ethics' or a 'social theology' was slow in coming. The main concern was for theological orthodoxy and to defend the Scriptures against modernism and liberalism. This left little time for what was seen as 'extra-curricular' activities such as Christian political parties. Christian cultural activity as proposed by Reformational advocates was considered a threat to the main tasks of doctrinal and personal purity, except where they could provide apologetic support, such as in the area of science. This inclination was also expressed in the narrow view of creation held by many – creation was seen in terms of the creation-evolution debate, rather than in the broader use made of the term in the Reformational movement. The latter regards creation, together with fall and redemption, as one of the main 'components' of the biblical worldview.

3. The over-emphasis on the fall-component meant that creation became seen as fallen nature. This arises from a nature—grace dualism, which meant that the Scriptures were viewed from this standpoint and that the Reformational perspective, which largely avoided such a position, was regarded as being 'unscriptural' from that standpoint.

4. The cosmological static view of creation held by many English Calvinists de-emphasises the idea of development or transformation of creation, which means that the Reformational approach with its stress on development and redemption of creation challenged deeply held views.

In Chapter 4 I examined logical positivism, which had to some degree an impact on English Calvinism. I also identified the following points.

5. The emphasis on theology was in marked contrast to the Reformational view. Theology, in English Calvinist circles, was supposed to be obtained straight from the Bible. It was thought that the Reformational approach dethroned theology and the church, with the desire to replace them with philosophy and 'the world' or creation. This was then regarded as being 'unspiritual'.

6. The adherence to a nature—grace ground-motive also meant the acceptance of the neutrality of science and scholarship, a standpoint that would be threatened by the Reformational position. Most English Calvinists accepted the autonomy of theoretical thought.

7. The antipathy of some English Calvinists towards the doctrine of common grace but an acceptance of Kuyper's devotionals and ecclesiastical writings illustrate a nature—grace position.

8. The lack of use of the worldview concept or notion in English Calvinism is remarkable. This may suggest that Christianity isn't seen as an integrated transformative worldview.

9. The distrust of philosophy in general and a Christian philosophy in particular reveal a para-positivistic approach meaning that a Christian philosophy was regarded as an oxymoron.

10. The perceived impossibility of a Christian philosophy that was not theology was again the result of a nature—grace scheme where theology (grace) was considered superior to philosophy (nature).

11. The nature—freedom ground-motive ('grafted' into the nature-pole of the nature—grace motif) also led to an adoption of objectivism as *the* Christian position. Dooyeweerdianism was regarded as a threat to that position. Dooyeweerd was seen as a subjectivist and subjectivism was seen as a threat to the Calvinist doctrine of the nature of God.

12. The adoption of a complementarity position for science and Christianity, resulting from this embrace of objectivism, also served to support the autonomy of theoretical thought, which prompted an antagonism towards Reformational philosophy, which challenged this assumption.

13. English Calvinism was shaped by a number of contrasting ground-motives; a variety of slightly different sub-versions of the nature—grace worldview or ground-motive was adopted. Unfortunately, it can be said that none of these positions is a typically Reformed position.

14. There are (at least) four possible responses to Reformational approach that we have seen these are: ignorance, ambivalence, disagreement and agreement. For the most part, the English Calvinists have been largely unaware of the Reformational perspective and for those who were aware, sadly, it has sometimes been misunderstood.

In Chapter 5 I have shown that the fault of ignoring or rejecting the Reformational position is not entirely on the side of those who misunderstand or oppose the Reformational viewpoint. In order to facilitate the promotion of Reformational ideas, there are a number of possible strategies that could be adopted:

1. Listen to opposing approaches with a view to dialogue rather than debate.
2. Reinforce the importance of theology and the institutional church.
3. Write accessible introductions to Reformational philosophy.
4. Critique opposing views, and show how a Reformational view can enrich them.

5. Show the poverty of immanent perspectives and demonstrate how a Reformational approach can provide a richer framework for (academic) development.

Fortunately, some of these strategies have begun to be implemented. Only time will tell how successful they will be.

6.3 Answers to the sub-questions

In the introduction I identified a number of sub-questions. In what follows I will draw out the points developed in this thesis to show to what extent the questions have been answered.

Sub-question 1: Why was the integral/ public model of religion and its implications for reformation 'in all spheres' of culture, not widely accepted by Calvinists in England?

The answer to this question lies in points 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8 outlined above.

Sub-question 2: Why was the integral project concerning the establishment of Christian socio-political theories and institutions (e.g. unions, political parties) not widely accepted by Calvinists in England?

The main reason is again the unwitting adoption of a nature—grace ground-motive. This meant that theology and ecclesiastical issues took precedence over socio-cultural issues. Often Christian ministers and pastors are not trained to equip their congregation to engage with the culture through politics and social action. Or when social action is embarked on it is often viewed with disdain or accusations of being in league with a liberal social gospel approach. For many, such as the signatories to Affirmation 2010, it appears not even to be on the agenda.

Sub-question 3: Why was the project of an integral Christian philosophy and scholarship not widely accepted by Calvinists in England?

Again, in short, the deep reason for ignoring or rejecting the project was the unwitting adoption of a nature—grace ground motive. This has undermined attempts to develop a Christian philosophy and scholarship. More concrete reasons can be indicated.

- A misunderstanding of the role of philosophy
- The view that Christian theology is Christian philosophy
- A denial that Christian philosophy and scholarship are possible
- An over emphasis on institutional church issues
- An over emphasis on the need for good theology to the detriment of the other sciences
- When a Christian approach (as an example the natural sciences) has been developed the approach has been largely an apologetic one, for example, showing that the sciences and Christianity are not in conflict. The result of this is that there has been a tendency to adopt a complementarity or an independence position of Christianity and the natural sciences, which alleviates the need to integrate Christianity with the sciences and the need to reform the sciences.

Sub-question 4: What is the worldview or ground-motive at work in English Calvinism? What are the philosophical influences?

I have shown that some of their thought is driven by a nature—grace ground-motive, with grace taking a priority over nature (§ 3.3.4) and also have partly established that English Calvinists are dualistic (in that they adopt a spiritual – temporal dualism) (§ 3.3.6b).

Sub-question 5: What attitudes, approaches and ideas have been culpable in making a Reformational perspective less acceptable? What lessons can be learned from the English experience?

With regards to the Reformational movement, I have shown that

- There is a tendency towards arrogance (§ 5.2.2)
- It exhibits some lack of piety, spirituality (§ 5.2.4)
- It exhibits some triumphalism (§ 5.2.5)
- Its literature is too often opaque (§ 5.3.1)

All these factors have served to make the Reformational approach less acceptable. One of the first steps in communicating is to identify the reasons why the Reformational perspective is not attractive to English Calvinism. This thesis has been a first step towards that. I hope that we can build on this by listening to the objections and show how a Reformational perspective can enrich Calvinism.

6.4 Limitations of the study

In any study there will be a number of restrictions – without these the study would be too long or would exceed the scope of a dissertation. Keeping in mind that any study must be selective, the following are a few of the limitations in this study.

- It has a limited focus on a branch of Calvinism
- The study did not fully address any shifts in Calvinist thought from Calvin through to today.
- It had perhaps too wide a focus chronologically, and too narrow a focus geographically (focus on England to the neglect of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).
- It didn't take into account sociological considerations.

6.5 Areas for further study

In the writing of this thesis a number of issues have arisen, which could provide the basis for further study. These include the following:

- Exploring the difference between English and Scottish Calvinism in the reception of Reformational thought
- Examining the (lack of) reception of Reformational ideas by English Calvinists during the period from 1950
- Examining the reception of Kuyperian ideas in Wales; two key Welsh figures, R. Tudur Jones (1921-1998) and R.M. (Bobi) Jones (1929-2017), were influenced by Kuyper
- Examining the reception among non-Calvinist Evangelicals
- Drawing upon the approach taken here for other countries e.g. Korea, Brazil, US, Canada
- Utilising Basden's 'LACE approach' for assessing English Calvinism as a means of dialogue rather than interrogation
- Developing and applying a non-reductionist approach to reception studies
- Examine how crucial is common grace or the institute/ organism view of church to a neo-Calvinist position
- Explore what are the non-negotiables for a Reformational philosophy
- Developing a fuller history of the Reformational movement in the UK – developing further the research in Bishop (2015, 2016b)

- Determining to what extent it is plausible to argue that the law of God is, for British Calvinists, in the mind of God
- Examining the British Calvinist approach to (a) Christian education (b) Christian Trades Unions (c) art and aesthetics (d) sport (e) drama (f) economics, and other examples to the one used here for politics.

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