

PARALLELS TO THE BYZANTINE-HESYCHAST, DIVINE ESSENCE/ENERGIES DISTINCTION

By

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ABSTRACT:

The Byzantine-Hesychast Essence/energies distinction is paralleled by

1. The traditional Reformed distinction of God as transcendent (and incomprehensible) in His essence and immanent in His power;
2. The *orthodox* Jewish Kabbalistic distinction of God (en-sof, the infinite) and the Sephiroth (Law spheres) or organic Torah and divine language, in which His creative power unfolds;
3. The Reformational Cosmonomic Philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd *as Christian Theosophy*: God's Self-revelation in the Word and the words;
4. Early New Testament Jewish Christian Angelomorphic Christology.

(1)

The traditional reformed distinction of God

as transcendent (and incomprehensible) in his essence and immanent in his power

a) Ronald Nash says:

Calvinists (and Dooyeweerd is a Calvinist) have traditionally asserted that God is both transcendent and immanent. They avoided any contradiction by distinguishing between the transcendence of God's essence and the immanence of His power.¹

¹ Ronald Nash: *Dooyeweerd and the Amsterdam Philosophy*, (Zondervan, 1962), 40.

b) Herman Bavinck says,

After the Reformation Roman Catholic theology returned to the position of scholasticism, and adopted the doctrine of the unknowability of God's being as advanced by Thomas Aquinas.[...] The theology of the Reformation did not bring about any change in this view. Luther in his work *De servo arbitrio* differentiated between "the hidden and the revealed God," between "God Himself and the Word of God." In his later years he preferred to speak to speak of God as revealed in Christ. He did not teach, however, that the fullness of God's being was revealed in Christ. On the contrary, there remains in God a dark, hidden depth, namely, "God as He is in His own nature and majesty, the absolute God." This hidden depth is 'unknowable, incomprehensible, inaccessible'... But the theology of the Reformation soon lost sight of the doctrine of God's incomprehensibility. It was taught, but was made a doctrine by itself without further implications...²

Bavinck is not correctly describing the original teaching of St. Gregory Palamas when he writes:

The Palamites of the fourteenth century, named after Gregory Palamas, an archbishop of Thessalonica, even believed in an emanation and represented the divine activities of creation and providence, etc., as well as the attributes of omnipotence, goodness, wisdom, etc., as eternal radiations from the unknowable divine essence, really distinct from that essence, and to be regarded as a kind of lower deities³

Nor does he correctly describe the Byzantine doctrine of the Uncreated Light when he states,

In the year 1431 the council of Constantinople of the Greek Orthodox Church approved of the doctrine of an uncreated, divine light, distinct from the being of God.⁴

At least, this was never the original teaching, which may in fact be obscured from Bavinck by his scholastic mode of interpretation.

² Herman Bavinck: *The Doctrine of God*, tr. William Hendriksen, (Baker Book House paperback, 1977), pp. 24, 25, 26.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

(2)

Orthodox⁵ Jewish Kabbala/Law-Word and words/Sephiroth/law-spheres

Orthodox Judeo-Christian theosophy must be distinguished from occult, Gnostic, hermetic, Neo-Platonic forms typically characterized by the beliefs in intermediary/ies between Creator and creation.

Essence/energies, En-sof/Sephiroth, and “God-Word-creation” [or “God-law-word-creation”] *are classical theosophical concepts of God in relation to creation* recognised in the History of Science and Ideas. When Law, Word or Law-Word is reduced to “intermediary,” Bavinck’s critique is right to the point:..

In God there can be nothing which is other than or less than God. Between Creator and creature there is no transition or halfway station. Either Father, Son, and Spirit are all equal in essence and very God, or else they are creatures. From the Christian point of view there is no third possibility.⁶

Contra the Vollenhoven-Runner, Toronto-Reformational formulation that:

...the law, which is the boundary between God and the cosmos, is neither divine being nor is it created. It is with God and cosmos, a third mode of being...⁷

We hear the prophetic voice of Bavinck:

The O.T. offers no trace of this dualism. In the O.T. “word” and “wisdom” are not viewed as intermediaries between God and the world, but stand wholly on the side of divinity. They pertain to God and are the originating causes of the created universe. In Philo the mediating entities are self-contradictory. They are neither divine nor human, neither persons nor attributes, neither independent substances nor energies, but they partake of the nature of both. They indicate that the boundary-line, which in the O.T. always separates the creature from the Creator, has been erased, and pave the way for the philosophy of Gnosticism and for the cabala.⁸

Although his argument in some places appears (or may even be) ambiguous, Dooyeweerd’s position actually echoes Bavinck’s. The horizon of created meaning

⁵ ‘*Orthodox*’ here implies recognition of Creator-creature distinction without any “third-category” intermediary.

⁶ Herman Bavinck: *The Doctrine of God*, p. 331.

⁷ See Vollenhoven/Runner (1958-59) *Syllabus for Philosophy 220 The History of Ancient Philosophy* pp. 18, 19-20; Evan Runner: *The Relation of the Bible to Learning*, 3rd Ed., (Toronto: Wedge, 1977), p. 53.

⁸ *The Doctrine of God*, p. 261.

...delimits the very nature and mode of existence of everything created. Beyond this horizon there exists nothing except the Divine being which is the Origin of all meaning⁹

Henk Hart's timely critique of N. Wolterstorff¹⁰ is by implication an effective negative critique of Vollenhoven's distinction of God-Law-creation as three categories, a distinction with which Vollenhoven himself became less and less preoccupied. The strongly Vollenhovian, strongly anti-Dooyeweerdian, Afrikaner/Apartheid/Puritan, sociologist-philosopher, J.A.L. Taljaard, acknowledges what he believes to be the great debt of Vollenhovenian third-category ontic Law to Plato.¹¹ Taljaard's appalling congeniality to 19th century holistic/occultist-racist-colonialist metaphysics—sphere-sovereignty and separation of different racial blood groups under ontic Law ordained by God since the Tower of Babel should be a warning here, although I can hardly believe that Vollenhoven would have approved of Taljaard's use of his philosophy. Still, Vollenhovenian ontic Law might be open to this sort of interpretation.

According to Gershom G. Scholem:

Thirteenth century Kabbalism with its theosophic conception of God is essentially an attempt to preserve the substance of naïve popular faith, now challenged by the rational theology of the philosophers. The new God of Kabbalism [...] is simply the old God of creation and revelation and man in his relation to Him.¹²

Furthermore, according to Scholem:

Insofar as God reveals Himself, he does so through the creative power of the *sefiroth*. [...] This Kabbalistic world of the *sefiroth* encompasses what philosophers and theologians called the world of the divine attributes. But to the mystics it was divine life itself, insofar as it moves towards Creation.

The hidden dynamic of this life fascinated the Kabbalists, who found it reflected in every realm of Creation. But this life as such is not separate from, or subordinate to, the Godhead, rather, it is the revelation of the hidden root, concerning which, since it is never manifested, not even in symbols, nothing can be said, and which the Kabbalists called *en-sof*, the Infinite. But this hidden root

⁹ Herman Dooyeweerd: *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969; first published 1953) ['NC'], III, . 69.

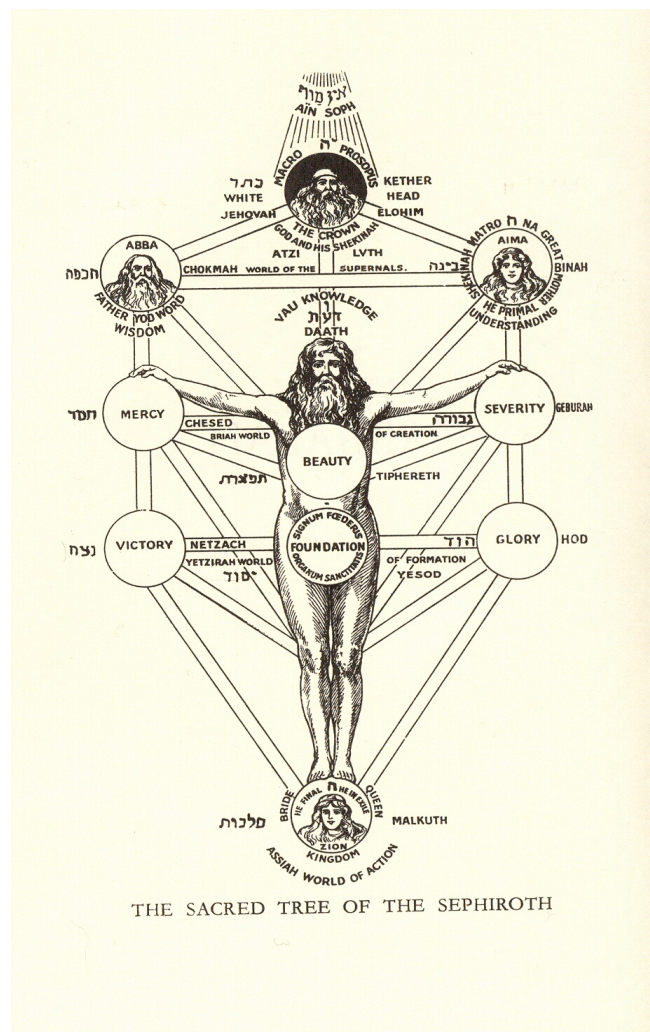
¹⁰ N. Wolterstorff: "On the distinction between Creator and creature," (A.A.C.S Academic Paper; *Philosophia Reformata*).

¹¹ J.A. L. Taljaard: *Polished Lenses* (Potchefstroom: Pro Rege Press, 1976) ['Taljaard'].

¹² Gershom Scholem: *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1961, 1977) ,pp. 205-206 ['MTJM']

and the divine emanations are one.[...] The process which the Kabbalists described as the emanation of divine energy and divine light, was also characterised as the unfolding of the divine *language*.[...] For the Kabbalists [...] “Creation of the Torah” was the process by which the divine Name or the divine *Sephiroth* [...] emanated from God’s hidden essence.

The Torah, as the Kabbalists conceived it, is consequently not separate from the divine essence, not created in the strict sense of the word; rather, it is something that represents the secret life of God.[...] In other words, the secret life of God is projected into the Torah; its order is the order of the Creation.¹³



¹³ Gershom Scholem: *On the Kabbala and its Symbolism*, (New York: Schocken Books, (1969.1977)).

Diagram from A.E. Waite: *The Holy Kabbalah*, (New York: University Books, 1960, reprinted).

Scholem explains,

The Kabbalistic term ‘Sefiroth,’—a term for which the approximate translation would be ‘*spheres*’ or ‘*regions*’ (although the Hebrew word *sefiroth* has nothing to do with the Greek *sphaira*, various hypotheses to the contrary notwithstanding (MTJM 206).

and

The point to keep in mind is that the *Sephiroth* are not secondary or intermediary spheres which interpose between God and the universe... not ...something comparable to, for example, the ‘middle stages’ of the Neo—Platonists [...]

The difficulty lies precisely in the fact that the emanation of the *Sephiroth* is conceived as a process, which takes place *in* God and which at the same time enables man to perceive God. In their emanation, something, which belongs to the Divine is quickened and breaks through the closed shell of His hidden Self. This ‘something’ is God’s creative power, which does not reside only in the finite universe of creation, although of course there, too, it is immanent and even perceptible. (MTJM 208-209).

a) Concerning the use of the term ‘theosophy’

Scholem says:

I should like to indicate in a few words what I am trying to express by using this much abused term *theosophy*. By *theosophy* I mean that which was generally meant before the term became a label for modern pseudo-religion, i.e. *theosophy* signifies a mystical doctrine, or school of thought, which purports to perceive and to describe the mysterious workings of the Divinity, perhaps believing it possible to become absorbed in its contemplation. Theosophy postulates a kind of divine emanation whereby God, abandoning His self-contained repose, awakens to mysterious life; further, it maintains that the mysteries of Creation reflect the pulsation of this divine life... (MTJM 206).

The Theosophical “structuralist” theme of an underlying or mediating cosmonomic order of creation structures which may perhaps only be brought to (and retained in) consciousness with great difficulty—the practice of Psychoanalysis bears eloquent witness to the widespread phenomenon of vigorous repressions of theosophical moments of truth.

Eric Voegelin refers to “*restrictive deformations of consciousness*”:

... in the course of my readings in the history of ideas, I had to raise the question why do important thinkers like Comte or Marx refuse to apperceive what they

apperceive quite well? Why do they expressly prohibit anybody to ask questions concerning sectors of reality they have excluded from their personal horizon? Why do they want to imprison themselves in their restricted horizon and to dogmatize their prison reality as the universal truth? And why do they want to lock up all mankind in the prison of their making?¹⁴

Anti-‘Cosmonomia’ polemicist, Lester De Koster, seems to deny all possibility of theosophical knowledge, while for Reformational AI Wolters, such knowledge is a real possibility. De Koster says:

The correspondent’s explanation occurs in paragraph (4). You should read it again. “By the light of Scripture,” he says, the people of God see “that God has set certain orders for various aspects of life.” Seeing this, “they formulate, enlightened by the light of the Word in church, the original creation rules which pertain to education; for politics; for economy...etc.

The “rules for the game of life” are formulated then, by believers who see the spheres in the light of the Scriptures. So our correspondent says [...] “Ah, but how can we be sure that these formulations are, like the Scriptures, an “infallible guide to faith and life”?” Yes, how can we be sure? When you face that question seriously, my brethren, you will repudiate ideology. For no one can be sure that he sees in the spheres the “rules of the game” as they are!¹⁵

AI Wolters replied

We must look upon society and its structures as being rooted (despite human distortions) in creation. And that created order is in principle discernible if we examine it in the light of Scripture.¹⁶

The Bible says,

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely his eternal power and Deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:19-20). “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face...” (Corinthians 13:12a).

Alan Unterman observes:

The main motif of the mysticism of the *Zohar* was the theosophical pattern of divine structures underlying both the everyday world and the complexity of

¹⁴ Eric Voegelin: *Anamnesis*, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), p. 3

¹⁵ *The Banner*, April 6, 1973, p.5.

¹⁶ *Vanguard*, Jan-Feb, 1979, p.23.

Jewish rituals and practices. Through these structures the mystic was able to unify his own experience and the ideas and values of his tradition into a single whole. [...]

The self-explorations of the Kabbalist in mystical experience were at the same time theosophical explorations of the divinely controlled reality.[...] The overriding emphasis within Judaism on the invisible unity of God underlies the whole Kabbalistic theosophy and indeed it is this which allows the mystic so much freedom for symbolic description.[...]

Kabbala has to be studied in a way suitable to a mystical theosophy, it cannot be presented either as a system of propositional truths, or as a straight theology. The knowledge which theosophy conveys is an inner knowledge, it is bound up with the way it is acquired and with the development of the man himself, as he acquires it. There is a strong experiential dimension to the understanding of a Kabbalistic image, which cannot be conveyed by the bland analysis of the image itself. [...]

Very little data is available about the life of the Jewish mystics; what there is has to be culled from autobiographical fragments or from within their theosophical teachings. One of the reasons for this is presumably that given the doctrine of man the microcosm everything is projected outwards, so that instead of talking about his life or the psychic dimension of his soul, the mystic is always talking about the structure of the cosmos. His own inner experience is already a theosophy.¹⁷

Note: The theosophist has overcome the problem of the rationalistic so-called “subject-object relationship.”

According to Hendrik Berkhof, theosophy should be distinguished from straight theology by its orientation to Creation:

The foregoing has made clear that the significance of Paul’s view of the Powers should not be sought directly in the domain of theology. Theology occupies itself with who God is according to His revelation and how he deals with us. The Powers belong to human experience, within which God works to preserve, reconcile, and fulfil. They belong thus not so much to Paul’s theology as to his view of life and the world...¹⁸

The translator of this work by Berkhof says,

It is [...] fitting to identify specimens of the wider fruitfulness of Power analysis. Most recent and most thorough is a chapter in Richard Mouw’s *Politics and the*

¹⁷ Alan Unterman: *The Wisdom of the Jewish Mystics*, (London: Sheldon Press, 1976), pp. 13, 19, 21-22.

¹⁸ Hendrik Berkhof: *Christ and the Powers*, tr. H. Yoder, (Herald Press, 1977), p.65. Author’s Epilogue.

Biblical Drama (Eerdman's 1976), with a view particularly to the possibility of a biblically warranted modern philosophy of politics...¹⁹

b) On mysticism, Kabbala, the duality of human consciousness and the role of Orthodoxy)

In a note added to the text on December 31, 1979, Morbey quotes from Kuperstock's book *Extended Consciousness and Hasidic Thought*²⁰

Recent work on hemispherectomy [...] has given biological support for the ancient conception of the duality of the consciousness. This duality is found in the right and left hemispheres of the brain, each hemisphere subtending different functions and different modes of information processing.

The *right hemisphere* operates in holistic rather than analytical mentation, processing information diffusely and integrating many aspects at once. It has limited language ability and works largely through intuition, primarily responsible for music, arts, orientation in space, body image, and perhaps mystical experiences.

The *left hemisphere* processes information linearly, sequentially, operating through analysis, discrimination, reason, logical thinking, and language. It conceptualises time as past, present, and future. [...]

Although the two modes complement each other, cultures differ in their relative predominance.[...] What to the Western person is a causal relationship in a sequence of connected events, is to the Trobriander an ingredient in a patterned world.[...]

Both modes of conceptualising reality are equally valid. They consist of different types of consciousness and lead to different models of reality.

The western world has been largely dominated by left hemispheric consciousness. Its extreme veneration as being the only mode to apprehend whatever is "out there" has been an important point of contention in the counter-culture revolution.

Consciousness, therefore, is a personal-cultural construction and, in an 'ordinary state' is bimodal.[...] The esoteric psychologies consist of a system of techniques, which induce a change in ordinary consciousness. The result is a form of extended consciousness, a "truer" reflection of reality. Jewish mysticism, like other Eastern disciplines, consists of a set of actions, both cognitive and behavioural, which facilitate the development of an extended consciousness. The Torah (revealed Law), as viewed by traditional Judaism, is a coherent, comprehensive metaphysical system, a model of reality. As such, one who relates

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.69. Translator's Epilogue.

²⁰ N. Kuperstock: "Extended Consciousness and Hasidic Thought," in *Mystics and Medics: A Comparison of Mystical and Psychotherapeutic Encounters*, ed. R. Bulka, (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1979).

to the universe as if it were run on Torah principles is, in effect, embracing a particular consciousness which differs from Western conventional consciousness simply because the assumptions differ.

The Torah constitutes the law and order of the universe, the blueprint of creation. As the *Zohar* declares, “God looked into the Torah and created the universe” (*Zohar*, II, 161a). The Torah is often referred to as light (e.g. Proverbs, 6:23). Through the Torah one is able to “see” reality. Just as it is the structure of the universe, so it structures one’s consciousness. God, the Infinite (En Sof) is the Ultimate State of Consciousness.[...] As the Ultimate State of Consciousness, there is no state of consciousness apart from or outside of God, who is absolutely all-inclusive, the Ultimate reality. As the Bible states: “Unto you it was shown, that you might know, that the Transcendent God is the Immortal God: there is nothing else but Him (Deuteronomy 4:35).

The school of Chabad emphasises meditation on God as the absolute reality, so that the idea becomes firmly established in one’s consciousness.[...]

Restricting awareness to God’s omnipresence, as in “I have placed God before me constantly” (Psalm 16:18), is an essential feature of Judaism. [...]

In Jewish mysticism, high value is placed on a meditative prescription called ‘*kavanah*’ or intention. *Kavanah* denotes concentration and devotion in whatever one is doing, so that the activity serves as a means of union with God.[...]

“The principle of “in all your ways know Him” (Proverbs 3:6) reflects this same idea, as the Hebrew word form ‘knowledge’ connotes union as in “And Adam knew Eve” (Genesis 4:1).

The development of an expanded consciousness through deconstructing ego-centred consciousness by prayer and Divine service does not mean that one is to forsake the world for selfish spiritual growth.[...] The central purpose is to bring the realization of the unity of God in the world by transforming it into an abode for His dwelling. However, to do this, one must remain separated from the world; to be in the world but not of it. [...]

One major difference between the Jewish mystical tradition and the esoteric psychologies is that the former, although often addressing itself to right hemispheric, receptive modes of consciousness, *is always tied to the left hemispheric consciousness of normative Judaism* (the revealed as opposed to the hidden Torah). As a result Jewish mysticism can be an intellectual study as well as an experiential process. Indeed, the synthesis and harmony between the ‘rational mind’ and ‘non-rational,’ the awareness of the mystical in the rational and the rational in the mystical, unites the workings of the two hemispheres into an integrated consciousness. Straightjacketing Judaism in the rational framework exclusively, or developing an antinomian Jewish mysticism, distorts Judaism and truncates consciousness. Jewish mystical teaching does, however, share with the esoteric psychologies a concern with the extended consciousness, which it links to ultimate reality and which is given immediate expression through the religious context.

In harmony with the key points above on the duality of consciousness Herbert Weiner²¹ makes the following observations:

It was this tolerance and even encouragement of the individual's need for a "*trip*" out of this world that made it possible for Rabbi Nachman to say, "with us, the problem is not the *r'tzo*, the going out, but the *shuv*, the return." And in saying this he puts his finger on that characteristic which indeed distinguishes Judaism from other mystical systems. Judaism believed in the need for '*turning on*', but it specialised in *the return*. How to transmute the lofty illumination into prosaic this-worldly terms was the problem, which concerned Judaism.[...]

One Hasidic analyst of the psyche, himself a mystic, phrased the ideal of Jewish mysticism in a simple effective image:—"Not the transient upshot of a straw flame but the well-cooked heart." Not the sudden and searing flame but the transmutation of that flame into slow warmth which 'tenderised' a human being and made him sensitive to the need of other human beings for bread, pity, and justice—this was the ideal.

The vessel which was used to accomplish this result was the Law, the "yoke of commandments" derived from the bible, and interpretations of the sages.[...] And even as this Law could transmute the flame into effective heat, so could it serve to warm up and frequently evoke a 'spark' out of reality's dry tinder, for the same Law which insisted that the high of an inner experience be involved with the problems of the kitchen table, the bathroom, and the workshop, by that very fact forced a person to pause in awe before the heavenly mysteries involved in every so-called low.

c) A Dooyeweerdian rejoinder on the "duality" of consciousness'

According to Dooyeweerd ,

Intuition cannot be isolated from analysis. Conversely, analysis can never function without intuitive insight.[...] The attempt to relate only *theoretical* intuition (with the various directions of its theoretical attention) to the analytical function, is another source of a great deal of confusion.[...] In this case pre-theoretical intuition is supposed to be entirely detached from our logical function.[...] But even pre-theoretical intuition can only inform us of pre-theoretical states of affairs with the help of analytical distinction. However, it lacks the inter-modal synthesis of meaning in which analysis is deepened to *scientific* analysis.²²:-

As in the case of Eastern Orthodoxy, Bavinck's critique of theosophy and Kabbala is limited by his apparent recognition of only the murky neo-Platonised, hermeticized forms. His critique of

²¹ W. Weiner: *9 1/2 Mystics: The Kabbala Today*, (New York: Collier Books, 1971), pp. 335-336.

²² NC II: 483,484-485; also pp 434-435, 479-480.

these deviant forms (which were major challenges to the Christian Gospel in the 19th century Occult Revival in which Bavinck lived and contended for Christ, and which were forerunners of the modernistic, liberal, higher-critical, dialectical, phenomenological, existentialist, structuralist, process systems of secularism), however, is excellent given the problems he encountered in attempting to make use of a woefully inadequate Protestant scholastic critical apparatus.

Indeed, I would suspect that his incipient Reformational theology owed not a little to this need to invoke more fully-Scriptural resources in the warfare against challenging occult-Romantic/Gnostic systems of “positive” theology. In this same vein, it might be said that the work of Abraham Kuyper put the theosophical European Antirevolutionary movement onto a Biblically reformed basis in terms of “sphere-sovereignty.” Berkouwer reports that Kuyper, aware of his theosophical propensities, confessed how he once had been tempted “to slide off into Baader’s theosophical stream, entranced by its hypnotic spell and tempted by its ethical force.”²³

Dooyeweerd traces the lines of this reformation in his *Roots of Western Culture, Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options*. According to Dooyeweerd,

Abraham Kuyper was the one who first understood sphere sovereignty again as a creational principle and thus fundamentally detached it from the historicist outlook on human society.²⁴

²³ G.C. Berkouwer: *A Half Century of Theology*, (Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 186-197.

²⁴ Herman Dooyeweerd: *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options*, tr. John Kraay, (Toronto: Wedge, 1979) [‘Roots’]. See also pages 49-55, 68, 78, 86, 187-188. Michael Morbey adds the following note dated January 19, 1980:

It was my Anglican Catholic [Now Orthodox Church in America] brother, Andrew, who first drew my attention to the theosophical links of the Anti-revolutionary movement, in connection with the book, *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, ed. and trans. Jack Lively (New York: The Macmillan Company/London, Toronto: Collier-Macmillan, 1965; selections from the works, with an introduction). It was Andrew, also, who showed me the book, Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God*, in which I recognized the early Byzantine-Hesychast anticipation of non-dualistic “Reformational” wisdom. Since my copy of *Roots of Western Culture* arrived from Wedge only yesterday, it is, chronologically, a confirmation of the intuition of Reformational theosophical roots.

(3)

**The Reformational Cosmonomic Philosophy
of Herman Dooyeweerd as *Christian Theosophy*:
God's Self-revelation in the Word and the words.**

Theosophic Creation awareness

Given the presence of the problems of “*text-word*” and “*Power-Word*,” the *Word and the words* and “third category intermediary” Law-Word in Reformational thought, Hermetic, Gnostic and theosophic patterns are not nearly as far removed from the Reformational movement as sober-minded supporters might be wishfully inclined to think. Christian moderate-realist philosopher, Thomas Molner, not without considerable warrant (but seemingly without full understanding), has indeed gone so far as to place Herman Dooyeweerd in a line in or parallel to the old Hermetic tradition whose roots were mythically ascribed to a number of ancient Egyptian figures, especially Hermes Trismegistus, all seated at the feet of the “*Nous*”.²⁵

Nor is Molner alone in discerning a gnostic/hermetic pattern in the Reformational stream. Commenting on Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit in the matter of salvation, Gerard van Moorsel, a Reformed pastor and scholar, has observed:

We do not even dream of calling this too much abused neo-Calvinistic divine, philosopher, journalist and statesman (1837 – 1920) a gnostic or semi-gnostic, but this not alter the fact that, here, the *timoriai-dunameis* scheme is palpably present. Or rather: *has* to be present as a result of a “*prima regeneratio*” carried “à *outrance*.”²⁶

As by now must be well known to (modern) Reformationals, Kuyper never completely freed himself from the spiritualist²⁷, semi-mystical, two-world categories typical of 19th century

²⁵ T. Molnar: *God and the Knowledge of Reality*, (Basic Books, 1973).

²⁶ Gerard van Moorsel: *The Mysteries of Hermes Trismegistus, A Phenomenological Study in the Process of Spiritualization in the Corpus Hermeticum and Latin Asclepius*, (Utrecht: Drukkerij Kemink en Zoon, 1955), p 113, fn50.

²⁷ Note by Bill Gordon: Morbey has ‘spiritist.’

German Protestant theology.²⁸ I have already pointed out that Kuyper, aware of his theosophical propensities, confessed how he once had been tempted “to slide off into Baader’s theosophic stream, entranced by its hypnotic spell and tempted by its ethical force” (Berkouwer 196-197).

The mystical tendency of his [Kuyper’s] apologetics was a matter of concern to the American, Protestant-scholastic theologian, Benjamin Warfield,²⁹ just as Dooyeweerd’s alleged “*mystical dunamis*” is now [also] a problem for Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Theological Seminary and for backers of Robert A Morey’s little book, *The Dooyeweerdian Concept of the Word of God*,³⁰ whose title is actually somewhat of a misnomer, since the God-Word (and ‘words’)-creation scheme which Morey attacks should more properly be attributed to Vollenhoven and the Toronto Reformationals.

My own impression is that Kuyper, Bavinck, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven were by and large successful in breaking the Reformed tradition free of Protestant scholasticism by positively developing a genuinely Christian, Biblically rooted theosophy. This achievement was undoubtedly in the line of Calvin’s Calvinism. Elsewhere, I have written:

With Calvin, the metaphysical and cosmological speculation of Scholasticism, oriented to a substantially self-sufficient, hierarchical scale of being, was replaced by theosophic contemplation of the goodness, wisdom, power and love of God as personally revealed in the true order of Creation sustained and restored in Christ. Obscured for centuries by the subsequent rise of Scientific Rationalism and the Protestant return to “scholasticism,” this Biblically-realistic perspective has re-emerged through the re-reading of the Scriptures by Hendrik Berkhof and a number of other modern theologians, in the Dooyeweerdian Idea of cosmonomic order and the ‘God-Word-creation doctrine of D.H. Th. Vollenhoven and the Toronto Reformationals. Perhaps it is no small measure due to a high regard for the Scriptures and for Church discipline, and to a “close” Christian community structure, that Calvin’s positive, God-centred vision of the creation ordinances and the power structures or “means” of God’s activity in the world, has never been fully lost to the Dutch tradition of Reformation.

²⁸ See John C. van der Stelt: “Kuyper’s Semi-Mystical Conception,” in *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy, Essays in Honour of D.H. Th. Vollenhoven*, (Toronto: Wedge, 1973).

²⁹ Cornelius van Til: *The Defence of the Faith* (Revised and Abridged), (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1963), p 260.

³⁰ R. Morey: *The Dooyeweerdian Concept of the Word of God* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1974).

b) Byzantine Christian Orthodox parallels

I have also written elsewhere,

Theosophic creation awareness, however, is not unique to Genevan Calvinism (Habakkuk 3:3-4; Romans 1:18-23). In precisely this context Byzantine theology argues strongly against any attempt to separate the inscrutable essence and divine counsel of God from His providential, redemptive, elective, and renovative work in His Son incarnate. The doctrine of “*Power-Word and text word*,” the “*Word and the words*,” which is at the heart of the educational curriculum, *Joy in Learning*, and is currently being articulated in Reformational creation theory, in fact, seemingly independently, recapitulates almost in exact detail even the debates and controversies of the ‘Palamite’ essence-and-energies (words) theology of Hesychast Orthodoxy, which has long been a bulwark against the encroachment of neo-Platonism, Scholasticism and rationalism in the Eastern Church. This tradition has recently been made readily accessible to the general reading public in a number of devotional books by the Jesuit scholar, George A. Maloney, founder of the John XXIII Institute for Eastern Christian Studies at Fordham University.

Henk Hart has made the classical theosophical distinction between *theosophical or cosmonomic order*, and *rational order*, which is merely one of the irreducible (but analogically-interrelated) aspects of the former, an important cornerstone of his work in God-centred Wisdom epistemology. On the basis of this [same] distinction Dooyeweerd has described the difference between the intentional inter-modal, inter-functional meaning synthesis of theoretical thought and the merely logical mode of uniting which is also found in naïve experiential thought. Almost a century ago, the Metropolitan of Denmark, Dr. Hans Lassen Martensen, included this important distinction of the theosophical and the rational in his very ‘Reformational’ description of Christian theosophy:-

Here we simply observe provisionally, that theosophy signifies wisdom in God, in the Spirit of God (not in the spirit of the world); an intuitive apprehension of Divine and natural mysteries, on the basis of God’s revelation in Holy Scripture and in the book of nature.[...] In so far as Theosophy is assigned a place in the history of philosophy, and is not excluded as an unscientific or superscientific vagary, it belongs to that department of philosophy which Schelling has styled *positive* philosophy, in contrast to a *negative*, purely rational, non-postulating philosophy, which seeks its principle out of reason itself. The difference between Theosophy and purely rational Philosophy may be thus indicated, in terms borrowed from Leibniz: “Theosophy pursues the path of light (In Thy Light we shall see light) while purely rational Philosophy pursues the path of gloom, because it simply roams among the dim shadows with its own faintly glimmering light.

Theosophy [...] is the mysticism of the mind as distinguished from that of the heart.[...] Practical mysticism starts from the soteriological standpoint, seeks the union of the individual soul with God, and immediate communion of love with God by means of the absorption of prayer, and detachment from the world; it often manifests hostility to nature.[...] Theosophy, on the contrary, is eagerly attracted towards nature.[...] As the mysticism of the mind, Theosophy is attracted, not only to the microcosm, but also to the macrocosm, the universe and universal life in all its multiplicity, but in this multiplicity it beholds only one God, the Living and Triune.[...] But on the other hand, it must be emphasized, that there is no genuine theosophy which is not qualified by the mysticism of the heart, by a regard for the salvation and perfection of the individual, and by a personal relation to God in believing and prayerful love.³¹

c) Anamnesis of spirituality: modern Gnostic parallels within Western post-Christian rationalism, existentialism, atheism, and German idealism

Vladimir Soloviev says:

Western philosophy affirms under the form of *rational knowledge*, the same truths which under the form of *faith* and the *spiritual contemplation* were affirmed by the great theological doctrines of the Orient.³²

According to Eric Voegelin

...Philosophizing about time and existence today occupies the place that was once held by meditation before thinking in Christian categories dissolved. The analysis of the time-consciousness of world-immanent man is the laicist residue of the Christian ascertainment of existence in meditation with its spiritual climax of the *intentio animi* toward God.³³

Hans Jonas has provided an illuminating account of his own progressive awakening to the very strong possibility that the Existentialism to which he was oriented was one with Gnosticism.³⁴ He indicates how a thinker might go on for years with little or no awareness of the transcendental

³¹ H. Martensen, Metropolitan of Denmark: *Jacob Boehme (His Life and Teaching, or, Studies in Theosophy)*, tr. T. Rhys Evans (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1885).

³² Soloviev: *The Crisis of Western Philosophy*. (1874). Quoted in J. Webb: *The Occult Establishment*, (Open Court, 1976), p 151.

³³ Eric Voegelin: *Anamnesis*, tr. Gerhart Miemeyer (Notre Dame, 1978), p 14.

³⁴ Hans Jonas: *The Gnostic Religion The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

categories and potential personal religious experiences already embedded in his own philosophy and theology.³⁵

Thomas J.J Altizer observes:

Ancient Gnosticism—which [...] followed the archaic or traditional religious way—negated the world as *profane reality* in its quest for an other-worldly *sacred reality*. But modern Gnosticism—inheriting the Faustian transformation of absolute transcendence into absolute immanence, a transformation symbolically portrayed in Nietzsche’s proclamation of the death of God—attempts to escape a cosmos and a history in which man has lost his human reality by searching for a non-transcendent and non-sacred state of subjective purity and existential authenticity.[...] We must note the extreme difficulty in distinguishing Christianity and Gnosticism when it comes to the conception of faith held by such theologians as the early Barth, Tillich, and Bultmann...³⁶

Eric Voegelin says,

The more we come to know about the gnosis of antiquity, the more it becomes certain that modern movements of thought, such as progressivism, positivism, Hegelianism, and Marxism, are variants of Gnosticism.[...] The idea that one of the main currents of European, especially German, thought is essentially Gnostic sounds strange today, but this is not a recent discovery. Until about a hundred years ago the facts of the matter were well known. In 1835 appeared Ferdinand Christian Baur’s monumental work *Die Christliche Gnosis, oder die Religionsphilosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*. Under the heading “Ancient Gnosticism and Modern Philosophy of Religion” the last part of this work discusses: (1) Böhme’s theosophy, (2) Schelling’s philosophy of nature, (3) Schleiermacher’s doctrine of faith, and (4) Hegel’s philosophy of religion. The speculation of German idealism is correctly placed in its context in the Gnostic movement since antiquity.

Moreover, Baur’s work was not an isolated event: it concluded a hundred years of preoccupation with the history of heresy—a branch of scholarship that not without reason developed during the Enlightenment.[...] It was well understood that with the Enlightenment and German idealism the Gnostic movement had acquired great social significance.[...] On this issue as on many others, the learning and self-understanding of Western civilization were not submerged until the liberal era, the latter half of the nineteenth century, during the reign of positivism in the sciences

³⁵ Hans Jonas: *Philosophical Essays From Ancient Creed to Technological Man* (Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc, 1974, Essay 15, “Myth and Mysticism: A Study of Objectifications and Interiorizations in Religious Thought.”

³⁶ J.J.H. Altizer(“The Challenge of Modern Gnosticism,” *The Journal of Bible and Religion* 30:18-25 (1962), pp 20,22.

of man and society. The submergence was so profound that when the Gnostic movement reached its revolutionary phase its nature could no longer be recognised.³⁷

Gnosticism tends to be world negating and the Hermetic tradition more world-affirming, but both are types of the cult of self-deified, Human Reason (variously defined) with its fundamental theme of the self-proclaimed autonomy of man and his “material” and “spiritual” elementary and rudimentary “cosmonomic order” of hinderers and helpers which/who must be transcended in the self-diremptive³⁸ upward flight of the soul, or reflective bi-location, into a wishfully-utopian region or transcendental realm, “sacred” or “secular.” That is to say, both partake of the classical occult ‘gospel’ that self-knowledge, salvation, growth, and immortality are to be achieved by participation in and/or transcendence of “matter” through the overcoming of the so-called “subject-object relation” of dichotomy, tension, and alienation between the allegedly autonomous observer and the observed which ironically, is a consequence of the very process which has been enlisted to overcome it.

Herman Bavinck was a first-hand and unsympathetic witness to early modern Gnostic German idealist attempts to rationalize and secularize the orthodox Judeo-Christian theosophic concept of God (en-sof, Divine essence) in His revelatory self-disclosure in the order of Creation (Law-words, Divine- energies, conceived and constituted in Christ according to the fullness of Christian revelation). Bavinck was well aware of the occult roots described by Voegelin but seems to have been constrained (by his Protestant scholastic conditioning?) to reject the possibility of an orthodox, Biblical, Christian theosophy even as he rediscovered the foundations of theosophy’s reformation. According to Bavinck :

Now among the *isms* which deny God’s immutability because they apply to God the idea of ‘becoming’ we think first of all of Gnosticism; furthermore of the theosophy of the Cabala, and of Böhme, Schelling, Rothe, Hamberger, etc., which exerted its influence upon the doctrine of *kenosis* (self-emptying, cf. Phil. 2:7 ff.); and finally, we have in mind the pantheistic philosophy of Fichte, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann; etc.

The elaborations may differ, the *basic idea* in all these systems is the same: God *is* not; he *becomes*.[...] Nevertheless the doctrine of God’s immutability is of the

³⁷ Eric Voegelin: *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, (Henry Regnery Company, 1968). [Two essays: *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* tr. William J. Fitzpatrick; *Ersatz Religion*, pp v, 3-4].

³⁸ With reference to Hegel—A *tearing apart*.

highest significance for religion. The contrast between being and becoming marks the difference between the Creator and the creature. Every creature is continually becoming.[...] Every change is foreign to God.[...] Aristotle so conceived God's being as "the First(Primary) Idea or Form," without any "potentiality," as "absolute energy or activity"...

The idea of absolute becoming was first clearly expressed by Heraclitus and recurs again and again in philosophy. Plotinus, more than any one else made use of this concept, and he applied it not only to matter by also to that which he regarded as absolute being. He taught that God brought forth his own being, that He was active before He existed... [The Kabbala] gave rise to the view advocated by Christian theosophists in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity, that God, who is not a being at rest but rather an eternally developing life, not only inwardly ascends from darkness to light, from nature to Spirit, but also outwardly surrounds Himself with some kind of nature, corporality, glory or heaven, in which he assumes a form and glorifies Himself. That is the representation of Böhme, Oetinger, Baader, Delitzsch, Auberlin, Hamberger, etc.³⁹:

In connection with his studies of the relationship between revelation and history Wolfhart Pannenberg has attempted to show that the modern concept of revelation as essentially self-revelation on the part of God is a derivation of German idealism:

Hegel appears to have been the first to introduce the idea of revelation as used strictly of self-disclosure on the part of the Absolute. For it is in his works that it first becomes evident that the self-proclamation of God cannot be otherwise than unique.[...]

In Pannenberg's modern gnostic opinion,

...the idea of a direct verbal self-disclosure of God, even when mediated through a revealer, is found in the New Testament only to the extent that unmitigatedly Gnostic ideas on revelation are expressed in it.⁴⁰

Here Pannenberg seems to be indulging in the not unknown modern gnostic practice of labelling Biblical Christian truth uncongenial to modern Gnosticism as 'gnostic.' He mentions Heb.1:2; John 1:1ff.

In Chapter I, "In Search of a Process" of his *A Theology of 'Uncreated Energies,'* George A. Maloney, having presented a brief synopsis of modern process thought, following the philosophy of Whitehead, writes:

³⁹ *The Doctrine of God*, pp. 148,149-150, 177-178.

⁴⁰ See discussion and quotations from Pannenberg in O. Loretz: *The Truth of the Bible*, (Burns & Oats Ltd, 1968), Chapter II, "Revelation as History?", pp 23, 27.

What I would like to do in the remaining part of this essay is to contrast this view [i.e. of Whitehead and the process theologians] with that of the doctrine of the ‘*essence and energies*’ of God as seen by the Greek Fathers, climaxing with the synthesis of St Gregory Palamas.[...] [Modern process thinkers] seem to be unaware that there is a wealth that can be drawn from the Greek Fathers. A knowledge of this would enable them to bring together the transcendence and the immanence of the Christian God in a better way than they have done.⁴¹

d) Herman Dooyeweerd as Christian Contemplative Mystic and Theosophist

According to David Hugh Freeman:-

Certain features of Augustine’s philosophy have been especially influential on Dooyeweerd. Augustine’s entire writings are permeated by a single desire: to know God and the human soul. By contemplating the realities of consciousness, the primary objects of contemplation, Augustine proceeded to contemplate the world.[...] Dooyeweerd follows Augustine’s withdrawal from the external world, and seeks truth in the inner consciousness. Philosophy is thought to be impossible apart from critical self-reflection, without which even the external world is unintelligible. ‘Know thyself’ must be written above the portals of philosophy.⁴²

Dooyeweerd speaks of “abysmal depths”:

Slechts Gods Geest kan ons de radicale zin van de Woord-openbaring onthullen, die ons in afgrondelijke diepten tegelijk de *waarachtige God en ons zelve* ontdekt.⁴³

[Only God’s Spirit can disclose the radical meaning of the Word-revelation, which in abysmal depths reveals to us simultaneously the true God and our selves].

The “transcendental critique of theoretical thought” is the key to understanding the Dooyeweerdian philosophy itself:

...de ‘transcendentale critiek van het theoretisch denken’, die de sleutel is tot het verstaan van de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee zelve...⁴⁴

⁴¹ George Maloney: *A Theology of “Uncreated Energies”*, (Marquette University Press, 1978), p 18.

⁴² David Freeman: *Recent Studies in Philosophy and Theology*, (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962), Chapter II *The Neo-Augustinianism of Herman Dooyeweerd*, pp 33,36. Note by Bill Gordon: Morbey also finds this quote in Nash, 8, 10.

⁴³ Herman Dooyeweerd: *Vernieuwing en Bezinning*, (Zutphen: J.B. Van den Brink & Co., 1963), p. 11.

⁴⁴ Herman Dooyeweerd: *Verkenningen in de Wijsbegeerte de Sociologie en de Rechtsgeschiedenis*, (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1962), p. 15.

[...the “transcendental critique of theoretical thought,” which is the key to understanding of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea itself...].

For Dooyeweerd as Christian contemplative mystic and theosophist, the cosmonomic order of the Law-spheres functions as a “*ladder of contemplation*” also in philosophy. In theosophic contemplation (*theoria*), the inter-modal meaning synthesis gives rise to a transcendental synthetical Idea (to be distinguished from a foundational concept) which is, “in the full sense of the word, a *limiting concept* “par excellence,” the final transcendental *foundation* or ὑπόθεσις [hypothesis] of philosophy, in which we retire into ourselves when thinking...”⁴⁵

Only as a Christian contemplative and theosophist could Dooyeweerd write:

In the Idea of a meaning-modus philosophical reflection oriented to our cosmonomic Idea passes through a process of successive meaning-coherences in the transcendental direction of time [the direction of the return inwards “towards the religious root of our cosmos, in which the selfhood participates in its transcendence beyond cosmic time].⁴⁶

The internal unrest of meaning drives it on from anticipatory sphere to anticipatory sphere, and so from one anticipatory connection to another. At last we arrive at the at the transcendental terminal sphere [faith⁴⁷] and reflect on the insufficiency of the modal Idea [*apophatic impossibility* of an “adequate intuition of essence”⁴⁸ [...] We then direct our glance to the transcendent meaning-totality and the Origin, in which at last our thought finds rest in its religious root .⁴⁹

Note that...

The retrocipatory direction of time offers to theoretical thinking, at least provisionally, some resting-points in the original meaning nuclei. It is true that these resting-points are again done away with by the transcendental direction of time without which they would become rigid and meaningless.[...] In the transcendental direction of thought [philosophic reflection] must necessarily be resolved into the essential unrest of meaning.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ NC II: 434-435, 187-188; I:87-88.

⁴⁶ NC II: 53-54.

⁴⁷ NC II: 302-305.

⁴⁸ NC II: 485-487

⁴⁹ NC II: 284

⁵⁰ NC II: 190, 53-54, 192, 486

Peter Steen ⁵¹ [on the other hand] seems to have fallen prey to the common trap of confusing the reciprocal foundational and transcendental directions of cosmic time, a non-“dualistic” duality relationship, with “semi-mystical” dualism. Consequently he has failed to understand that Dooyeweerd’s mystical depth-dimension, the “central sphere of occurrence,” does not involve a duplication of the temporal horizon, and is radically, Biblically different than metaphysical Greek or humanistic conceptions of the ‘supra-temporal’⁵². Steen’s difficulty may be related to the apparent common tend in Westminster apologetics to reject transcendental inwardness almost completely (e.g. as Greek “scale of being”) in favour of foundational argumentation strongly bound to dramatic pictorial representation (e.g. as in the *Jerusalem and Athens* debate between Cornelius Van Till and Dooyeweerd).

For Dooyeweerd, the foundational and transcendental directions of the temporal order of creation are reciprocally, not “dualistically” related, just as the earth and the heavenlies (the realm of angels and spirits) are related as foundational to transcendental in the Scriptures. Consequently there is no dualism in Dooyeweerd’s statement that

...the central sphere of human existence is in the full sense of the word a *dynamic one*. Out of it the dramatic conflict between the *civitas Dei* (city of God) and the *civitas terrena* (earthly city) takes its issue in the history of the world.⁵³

Similar to Peter Steen, the South African sociologist-philosopher, J.A.L. Taljaard, viewing Dooyeweerd through the colouring of his (Taljaard’s) own dualistic lenses, refers to his alleged “semi-mysticism” as “monarchianism.”⁵⁴ It is Taljaard’s own (professedly “Vollenhovenian”) thinking which, however, is an example of monarchianizing thought par excellence. In spite of his many valuable discussions and much food for thought, Taljaard remains dualistically unable to correctly relate Dooyeweerd’s foundational and transcendental. Consequently the full Biblical

⁵¹ Peter J. Steen: *The Idea of Religious Transcendence in the Philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd With Reference to its Significance for Reformed Theology*, (Westminster Theological Seminary, Th.S., Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, Xerox, 1970). Later published as *The Structure of Herman Dooyeweerd’s Thought* (Toronto: Wedge, 1983).

⁵² NC I: 32-33; II: 52-54.

⁵³ NC I:32 For an excellent study of this conflict and its Biblical cosmic and cosmological frame of reference see Calvin R. Schoonhoven, *The Wrath of Heaven*, (Eerdmans, 1966).

⁵⁴ J.A.L. Taljaard: *Polished Lenses: A Philosophy That Proclaims the Sovereignty of God Over Creation and Also Over Every Aspect of Human Activity*, (Potchefstroom: Pro Rege Press, 1976), pp 70-73;142-149;83-86. 178-182.

disclosure of the “correlation” of the heavenlies and the earth as a reciprocal relation remains hidden from him.

But to return to Dooyeweerd: on the basis of the underlying cosmonomic order of mutually-irreducible (sphere-sovereignty) yet analogically-interrelated (sphere-universality) Law-spheres, Dooyeweerd makes the theosophical distinction already noted between the rational, “logical synthesis, found also in pre-theoretical naïve thought” and the transcendental “*inter-modal, inter-functional meaning-synthesis*” which “has no transcendental-logical character, but is based on a theoretical disjunction of the cosmic *systasis* of meaning” and is related also to orders of creation other than the rational.⁵⁵

Although this theoretical synthesis is an *intentional*, critical process oriented to the antithetical *Gegenstand*-relation, it does not occur apart from the temporal total structure of religious self-reflection in the cosmonomic context of a “diversity of realms of order and correlative realms of existence.”⁵⁶

The structure of the inter-modal meaning-synthesis [...] remains enclosed by the cosmic horizon of time and by the religious horizon of the selfhood. We only gain access to it in a subjective-theoretical way in the actual transcendental self-reflection.⁵⁷

Theoretical intuition, actualized in synthetical thought, is no more detached from pre-theoretical intuition, operative in enstatic thought, than the transcendental direction in the cosmic order of time is detached from the foundational direction.[...] All theoretical reflection on the modal aspects of reality, and all intuitive insight is founded in experience in identity, only deepened, but never cancelled in theoretical intuitive insight.[...] And in this process a truly Christian philosophy will realize, with ever increasing clarity, that the fulfilment of meaning refracted in cosmic time into various modalities, is not given us in an eidetic intuition but in the religious self-reflection on our part with Christ.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ NC II: 434.

⁵⁶ NC I: 38-40 See also Hendrik Hart: *The Impasse of Rationality Today: A Précis*, (Toronto: ICS, 1977), and James Olthuis: *Visions of Life and Ways of Life: The Nature of Religion*, (Toronto: AACS, 1977).

⁵⁷ NC II: 554.

⁵⁸ NC II: 479-480; 486 + John 13:8.

When a philosopher has “been conquered by the Divine Truth revealed to us in Christ,” then

The transcendental horizon of his experience is *opened and liberated* from the prejudices of immanence philosophy [...] Not only the so-called *a posteriori* theoretical insights must be justified, *viz.* in a process of *factual theoretical experience*. But the transcendental insights must also vindicate their claim to relative truth, *viz.* in a process of *transcendental experience* in the forum of the Divine world order. For in the [Divine world-order] are founded the structural states of affairs, which are undeniable, when they have been laid bare to theoretical insight.[...] From the transcendent horizon, liberated by Christ, the light of Truth can shine through our temporal horizon, and reveal the transcendental theoretical verity to our subjective insight.⁵⁹

We cannot interpret the Divine order on the basis of a self-sufficient and autonomous reason. Apart from the Divine Word-revelation, this order maintains the unfathomable silence of the Sphinx.[...] The Divine world-order begins to *appeal* to us only when our heart and our function of faith are open to the voice of God’s Word. Then we become aware of the religious foundation of that wonderful universality of each of the modal aspects. For only in the disclosed insight into this profound state of affairs does the Christian see the true connection between temporal reality and the Christian religion in the *theoretical cognitive attitude*.[...] In the *pre-theoretical attitude of thought* he ought to experience this relation immediately in faith apart from any theory.

Anyone who, as a Christian thinker, has seen through the modal sphere-universality, cannot fall back into the nominalistic dualism between believing and thinking, and between ‘nature’ and ‘grace.’ [...] If it were permissible for a Christian to choose a purely eschatological standpoint with regard to our sinful cosmos, the Idea of universal meaning-disclosure would no longer hide any internal tensions and antitheses.[...] If there were no sin the harmony among the law-spheres would be fully realized, just as in a perfect work of art. In such a work the “natural” sides of the material are subjected to guidance of the aesthetic structural function to such a degree that they no longer obtrude themselves as a *disconcerting resistance*. In their individual deepening of meaning and “spiritualization” they are a pure expression of the artist’s conception. Reality is, alas, different. The deification⁶⁰ of the temporal meaning-aspects of the cosmos, in *apostate faith*, expanded to free striving leadership, causes a fundamental disharmony in the opening process.⁶¹

⁵⁹ NC II: 574, 577-578.

⁶⁰ Morbey’s note: read ‘self-deification,’ *contra* Biblical Byzantine *deification*, *theosis*, or *transfiguration*, of creation, in Christ.

⁶¹ NC II: 334-335

According to Holmes Ralston, III:-

The self-declaration of God is potentially complete.[...] The problem with the knowledge of God in the natural order is not, as later Reformed thought was to say, its partial nature, or its inadequacy to fallen man. The problem is that man ignores it.[...] Through our perversity and unbelief [we] cut off and disrupt both natural and spiritual gifts, God's original gracious order has not been rescinded; Man, from his side, manufactures sin out of God's grace.[...] That God has not deserted his order for man's life becomes again clear as He redeems man and re-establishes him in the original order of grace.[...] It is important to see that when God's particular revelation in Israel and in Christ comes, this is a reaffirming of God's original order, and not—as later Reformed dogmatics interpreted it—the establishment of a new and different kind of order.[...] Calvin holds that man may reasonably be held responsible for his ignorance.[...] Calvin's chief obstacle to plausibility is, of course, the disarray of the natural world, problematic enough in the sixteenth century to say nothing of the twentieth.

Is it a sober reading of the natural order to argue that God speaks so graciously and plainly there? Calvin is sensitive to this point.[...] That we see so little proves no inadequacy in God's self-revelation, but rather how sin clouds the mind. An exemplary religious viewing of nature is not found in the alienated natural man, but in Jesus, [...] It is by considering the lilies that we ought to be led to faith. This is not a naïveté unmindful of the elements of evil and tragedy now commingled in the natural order, but one which can penetrate through them to a father's heart, to the ideal order of nature distinct from yet hidden in the present course of nature. Calvin develops this in the various passages in Psalms, Acts, Romans, Corinthians, etc., which give him opportunity [...] God's word in nature is as His word in Gospel.

Put the case that man did respond to the natural invitation. It would not be in his own strength, any more than it is so when man answers the Gospel calling.[...] If we have followed Calvin faithfully, the problem of responsibility is one under nature or gospel. The natural man's culpability is not so much his wanting in able works (as the *Westminster Confession* must say), as it is thwarting of divine grace.[...] A rather remarkable passage on Ephesians reflects the spirit of Calvin.[...] God offers Himself to us in his works. But we are dazzled and fall into an abyss, wholly unable to understand. Why? The trouble is that when *we think ourselves* able to actively search out God, we are wholly unable.[...] The problem is man's attitude, not his aptitude. Had the former been right, the latter would have sufficed. The wrongness of this disabling attitude consists in man's presuming for himself an aptitude which was never his...⁶²

It is said that Dooyeweerd's vision of the universality of the Law-spheres first occurred while he was out walking in the dunes. He recalls:

⁶² Holmes Ralston, III: *John Calvin Versus the Westminster Confession*, (John Knox Press, 1972), pp 27, 28, 33, 100, 101-102, 104-105; 103, 104.

The great turning point in my thought was marked by the discovery of the religious root of thought itself.[...] I came to understand the central significance of the ‘heart’, repeatedly proclaimed by Holy Scripture to be the religious root of human existence.[...] Confronted with the religious root of creation, nothing less is in question than a relating of the whole temporal cosmos, in both its so-called ‘natural’ and ‘spiritual’ aspects, to this point of reference...⁶³

The religious foundation of the wonderful universality of each of the modal aspects of the Divine world-order began to appeal to Dooyeweerd in the opening up of his heart and faith to the voice of God’s Word.⁶⁴ He told me some years ago at an A.R.S.S. conference that he had received his philosophy as a gift, which had unfolded over the years. I understood this to mean a gift of the Spirit (Heb. 6:14).

e) New Testament angelomorphic parallels to Dooyeweerd’s theosophic Christology

The Biblically angelomorphic character of Dooyeweerd’s theosophic Christology in the context of the Law-spheres can hardly be denied. In a more Semitic and Hebrew imagery, his account of his transcendental faith experience of time-intuitively entering *enstatically* into the temporal coherence of the cosmos in the transcendental and radical religious self-reflection in Christ⁶⁵, i.e. of “*spiritualization*”—a reflective and visionary journey of freedom through the law-spheres⁶⁶—in which the “complete relativity and lack of self-sufficiency of all that exists in the created mode of meaning,” “that wonderful universality of each of the modal aspects” is revealed⁶⁷, can be rendered as a returning transcendently inward through the flesh of closed and foundationally-bound concepts⁶⁸, a piercing to the heart, and an ascent of the Mount of Transfiguration of the fulfilment of the Law, guided by the Law-words, the uncreated energies—the ranks of functionaries in whom God makes angelic declaration of His Glory and Power in Christ. Not to Mount Sinai and the Law but to Mount Zion (Heb. 12:22-24) Dooyeweerd has come—to a taste⁶⁹ of the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come (Heb.6:4). This is to look

⁶³ NC I: v.

⁶⁴ NC II: 334.

⁶⁵ NC II: 480,550.

⁶⁶ NC II: 474;478-479; II:284,554 qualified by II:556, 561-563.

⁶⁷ NC I: 123; II: 334.

⁶⁸ NC I:86-87; II: 474,479,486.

⁶⁹ NC II:561.

into the Perfect Law, the Law of Liberty, and he that perseveres, “being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing.” (James 1:25)

If Dooyeweerd speaks of the transcendental modal anticipations as *guided or directed meaning-functions* and of the modal meaning-functions of the anticipated spheres as *guiding or directing functions* (this guidance can become inactive) he might just as well speak of *guiding spirits, ubiquitous or catholic “invisible” angelic functionaries or qualities*, which, as provisional resting points in the internal unrest of the architectonic order of creation, point the way towards the opening of meaning.⁷⁰

To speak of the modal functions as spiritual realities is merely to adopt an older terminology that gave way to the reduced, modern scientific concept of function, which became well established in the aftermath of the Scientific Revolution. It serves to emphasize that science really does not deal with mere “abstractions” but has intercourse with God Himself in His Law-words, uncreated energies, or powers conceived and constituted in His only begotten Son, Himself God, the True Philosopher’s Stone. Man is not cut off from Divinity by a hierarchy of analogies in which creation is a pale replica, an attenuated emanation of the Godhead. Rather, the Divine Law, God Himself, is immediately accessible to him written in his heart. In Christ the Uncreated Light and Divine Energies of the Eternal Power and Godhead are clearly seen, sustaining, enlivening, and illuminating the things that are made.

The idea that the Uncreated Energies or Law-words are necessarily only indirectly accessible via inference from the “regularities of nature” (ie., via natural religion and rational theology) and that this is what the Scripture’s teach, is neither Biblical, nor Byzantine, nor Reformational. In God we live and move and have our being—*coram Deo*—not in the mythical world “regularities of nature.” On the immanence standpoint, the providential self-disclosure of God in His Son as also the cosmonomic ordering principle of so-called ‘general revelation’⁷¹ was bound to be misinterpreted and misappropriated (Romans 1) as some sort of intermediary “spiritual hierarchy” or rudimentary and elementary “scale of being” in which man then becomes subjected

⁷⁰ NC II:184-185, 113-114 fn2, 190, 284, 312-219, 335, 474-475, 500.

⁷¹ NC I: 174.

in bondage—but also in tutelage—with the whole creation (Romans 8:20) to his temporal functions “a little lower than the angels.”

Since “in man the whole ‘earthly’ temporal cosmos finds its religious root” [...] Adam’s fall into sin is the fall into sin of the whole ‘earthly’ world, which is not independent of the religious basic relation between God and the human race (in any of its temporal functions).”⁷² Since there is no natural reality in itself independent of man (*Ibid.*), the restoration of Man in Christ is the restoration of the true order of creation.

Subjugation and tutelage issue in fulfilment, and God is all in all. Thus, although the Scriptures *do* seem to connect the Law of Moses with the existence of ‘intermediaries’ (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19; Heb. 2:2; Deut 33:2?) St. Paul goes on to say in Galatians 3:20, “there is no call for an intermediary when only one person is involved; and God is one.”

Note also Jean Daniélou’s view that when the Law-words or λόγοι [*logoi*] are identified as ‘angels’ in New Testament Jewish Christianity, the Semitic categories which underlie this expression are not Hellenistic concepts:-

In fact the word *angel* has an essentially concrete force; it connotes a supernatural being manifesting itself. The nature of this supernatural being is not determined by the expression but by the context.[...] The use in this domain of expressions borrowed from apocalyptic speculations was, as will be seen plainly enough, to a high degree ambiguous.

It is sometimes impossible to decide whether it is divine persons or angels that are spoken of, while on the other hand there is no denying that in many cases a subordinationist tendency is implied by this terminology. In certain heterodox writers the Word and the Spirit are frankly likened to angels in the full sense of the term. All these reasons must be held responsible for the very rapid decline of this first form of the theology of the Trinity.⁷³

Just as the Law itself is understood as assimilated to and fulfilled in Christ already in early Jewish Christian Biblical angelomorphic Christianity, so also in Dooyeweerd’s cosmonomic Idea, or Idea of Law as the “boundary” between Creator (Being) and Creation (meaning) as a *limiting concept* pointed beyond itself as insufficient, to its fulfilment in Christ. Consequently the Idea of obedience to this Law as well as concrete obedience to it implies

⁷² NC II: 52.

⁷³ Jean Daniélou: *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*, Volume One: *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, tr. and ed. John A. Baker (Westminster Press, 1964/1978), 118-119.

...a complete surrender to Him Who is the new root of mankind, and Who overcame death through His sufferings and death on the cross. In Christ's human nature our heavenly Father has revealed the fullness of meaning of all creation, and through Him according to His Divine nature, God created all things as through the Word of His power.⁷⁴

It is Jesus Christ Himself in His two natures Who is the link between Creator and creation for Dooyeweerd, the fullness of meaning of creation in His human nature created through the Divine Word of His Power without intermediary. Dooyeweerd had absolutely no intention of interposing a third-category 'boundary' or link, but merely wished to indicate the essential distinction between Creator and creature, ie., between God's *Being* and creation's *meaning*.⁷⁵ "Beyond [the horizon of meaning] there exists nothing except the Divine being which is the Origin of all meaning."⁷⁶

[Similar in some respects, but not all, is Calvin's conception]. Calvin says:-

For we do not, with the Stoics imagine a necessity consisting of a perpetual chain of causes, and a kind of involved series contained in nature, but we hold that God is the disposer and ruler of all things,—that from the remotest eternity, according to His own wisdom, He decreed what he was to do, and now by his power executes what he decreed. Hence we maintain that, by his providence, not heaven and earth and inanimate creatures only, but also the counsels and wills of men are so governed as to move exactly in the course which He has destined.⁷⁷

"As above, so below."⁷⁸ When God is drawing near to us, we are drawing near to Him. When we are turning away from Him, He is turning away from us but *remaining faithful comes again in His Son*. His turning away from us in His wrath is our turning away from Him in our sin and alienation. I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew it was not I but He who found me seeking Him: Every action "below" dependent on activity "above" yet without sin on the part of God—Simultaneously our sin, its alienation, its punishment and our restoration here "below" is the dependent reflection of the righteous indignation and wrath of our loving Father "above." "Correlation"?

⁷⁴ NC II: 568 + Ephesians 1:10; Hebrews 1:2-3

⁷⁵ NC I: 99 n 1

⁷⁶ NC III: 69

⁷⁷ John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Chapter 16:8.

⁷⁸ Note by Bill Gordon: This quotation comes from the beginning of *The Emerald Tablet* in the cryptic wording of Hermes Trismegistus.

f) Parallels with Byzantine Orthodox Christianity

Timothy Ware :

Accordingly Saint Athanasius summed up the purpose of the Incarnation by saying: “*God became man that we might be made god*” [...] Now if this “*being made god*,” this *theosis*, is to be possible, Christ the Saviour must be both fully man and fully God. No one less than God can save man; therefore if Christ is to save, He must be God. But only if He is also truly a man, as we are, can we men participate in what He has done for us.

A bridge is formed between God and men by the Incarnate Christ, who is both. ”Hereafter you shall see heaven open,” our Lord promised, “and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (John 1:51). Not only the angels use that ladder, but the human race.[...] Christ must be fully God and fully man. Each heresy in turn undermined some part of this vital affirmation.[...] To acquire the likeness is to be deified, it is to become a “second god,” a “god by grace.” “I said, you *are gods*, and all of you sons of the Most High” (Psalm 82:6) [...]

For Orthodoxy man’s salvation and redemption mean his *deification*.[...] The idea of deification must always be understood in the light of the distinction between God’s essence and His energies. Union with God means union with the divine energies, not the divine essence: the Orthodox Church, while speaking of deification and union, rejects all forms of pantheism.[...] Orthodox mystical theology has always insisted that man, however closely linked to God, retains his full personal integrity. Man, when deified, remains distinct (though not separate) from God.[...] Deification is something that involves the body [...] the incarnate Christ has saved and redeemed the whole man.[...] Not only man’s body but also the whole of the material creation will eventually be transformed.[...] Redeemed man is not to be snatched away from the rest of creation, but creation is to be saved and glorified along with him.

This idea of a cosmic redemption is based, like the Orthodox doctrine of the human body and the Orthodox doctrine of icons, upon a right understanding of the Incarnation: Christ took flesh—something from the material order—and so has made possible the redemption and metamorphosis of all creation—not merely the immaterial, but the physical.⁷⁹

What we tend to call the natural, “objective” world “external” to man is really only a mantle of individuality structures, etc. (Ezekiel 28:11-19) peripheral to or contained in the heart of man in

⁷⁹ T. Ware: *The Orthodox Church*, (Great Britain: Pelican Books, 1963/1976), pp. 29, 224, 236, 237, 239, 240.

Christ, in Whom [...] “the whole ‘earthly’ temporal cosmos finds its religious root, its creaturely fullness of meaning.”⁸⁰ According to Dooyeweerd,

The human body is man himself, in the structural whole of his temporal appearance. And the human soul, in its pregnant religious sense, is man himself in the radical unity of his spiritual existence, which transcends all temporal structures.[...] Naturally a human body is not to be identified with a corpse.⁸¹

The deeper identity experienced in our self-consciousness is of...

...a transfunctional and super-temporal character. [...] It is knowing oneself to be [at] one and the same time in and beyond all cosmic temporal functions and knowing one’s functions as one’s own[...]

No matter how constructed, any establishment of a dualism between our functions of consciousness and reality, has nothing to do with naïve experience, but is rather a specific theory.[...] Man, in his *full selfhood*, transcends the temporal “earthly” cosmos in all its aspects, and partakes in the transcendent root of the cosmos. He cannot be a self-contained and isolated microcosm, a mirror of a so-called macrocosm [...]

According to the temporal relation between foundation and superstructure in the cosmic world order, man is not there before the things of inorganic nature. But, viewed from the supertemporal creaturely root of the earthly world, this inorganic nature, just as the vegetable kingdom and the animal kingdom, has no existence apart from man, and man has been created as *the Lord* of the creation.⁸²

Since “..in man the whole ‘earthly’ temporal cosmos finds its religious root,” Man in Christ is consequently even the ultimate root of Dooyeweerd’s linden tree.⁸³

G) Further notes and discussion

Bavinck’s almost consistently negative attitude to Eastern Orthodox Christianity and to Kabbalistic theosophic thought, however, is questionable, reflecting both his own lingering “static” [Protestant Reformed] scholasticism and his Biblically-justifiable Christian antipathy to the murky, occult and Romantic, 19th century context in which degenerate, “neo-Platonized” forms of theosophical speculation were mediated to him. Yet he himself approached the “positive,” Christian theosophic insight that Grace is the internal ground of nature, nature the

⁸⁰ NC II: 52

⁸¹ NC III: 89, 198 fn1.

⁸² NC II: 500; III: 36; II: 593, 53.

⁸³ NC II: 52, 418; III:56ff

external ground of Grace, in his “basic thesis that grace restores nature, or that salvation means the restoration of creation.”⁸⁴

His view that the reformation of nature by Grace is not merely rehabilitation but raises the natural to a higher level than it originally occupied, approaches not Neo-platonic self-deification but the doctrine of deification, *theosis*, or transfiguration central to cultural mandate and salvation in the Palamite tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy.⁸⁵ Bavinck undoubtedly put his Antithetical Biblical finger on the (heliocentric) religions of the earth, [especially that kind of] Romanticism, in which the occult religious roots of the Enlightenment revealed themselves, in the virtual self-deification of the subjective-protensive side of time–existence/becoming and praxis *over against* essence/being and (rational) order [“static” theory]—a tendency evident also in “back to mother-earth” counter-culture and in so-called ‘Process Theology’ today.

Dooyeweerd illustrates his Idea of Law with reference to Calvin who has written, “and therefore He is above the laws, because He is the Law to Himself and to everything”⁸⁶ God *is* the Law. Obviously our confession “*who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ*” (Athanasian Creed No 34) has profound theological implications for our understanding of the Law as the “boundary” between the Divine and human natures of Christ, and consequently for our understanding of the Law as “boundary” between Creator and creature.

The Vollenhovenian-Reformational formulation of ‘Law-Word’ comes remarkably close to the Byzantine formulation which also distinguishes the creation of the cosmos from the putting of the Law but interprets the verbal ‘putting’ not as an objectified (reified), monarchian “third mode of being” but as “God putting,” i.e., as the dynamic immanent presence in Grace of the transcendent Triune God in His Uncreated Energies and Light (Byzantine Law-Words). This procession or manifestation (δοξα) [*doxa*] of God in His Uncreated Energies would shine forth even were there no creation. That the Law-word for human marriage and whatever fulfils it in the Age to Come is Uncreated, implies that human marriage also is in the image and after the

⁸⁴ Jan Veenhof: *Nature and Grace in Bavinck*, tr. A.M. Wolters, (Toronto: I.C.S/A.A.C.S, no date) [‘Veenhof’].

⁸⁵ Veenhof: 7-8, 19-20

⁸⁶ NC I:518 fn1.

likeness of its Creator, i.e., absolutely dependent on its Origin, not that it is “eternal” (as in the false pagan idea of deity as “temporal duration with neither beginning nor end”).

In Law as “mirroring” or “imaging,” God as Absolute Origin retains the initiative. God’s Absolute Freedom is reflected in the openness of the dependent freedom of His people. Led by the Spirit we are drawing near to Him when He is drawing near to us. In our falling away from Him and from each other, He is turning away from us in wrath. What loving human father has not experienced this alienation [Hebrew term ‘*hating*’] from his children in his righteous indignation? Those chosen in Christ, called *transcendentally* out as first fruits into the Heavenly Places before the *foundation* of the world, are the vessels (vehicles, ministers) of God’s measures of mercy in the world, while those as yet outside in reprobation experience the very measures of wrath they mediate. Punishing my children hurts me too. Both in wrath and the Mercy which outweighs it, the relation of the vessels or pots to the Potter is one of absolute dependency—*correlation*, correspondence: “as above, so below” in a Biblical setting—Calvin’s Biblical teaching abounds with examples of this dual reference to Creator and creation—This is Law as “mirroring.”

In the *perspective structure* of our experience of the Divine order of the creation, of our experience of Truth, this *correlation* or *mirroring* is appropriately approximated by a projective–geometrical analogy in which it is seen as a *projective correlation* in which *absolute dependence* is implied. As known to students of this interesting branch of mathematics, the notions of “betweenness” and “boundary” are irrelevant here except as limiting symbols of this dependence. According to James, failure to maintain the *projective correlation*, to remain *standing in the Light*, in the *perspective structure of the Truth*, would be to fall away from the fullness, into the realm of astronomical parallax and shadow cast by turning (James 1:17-18).⁸⁷ As we continue to maintain our gaze into the Perfect Law of Freedom fulfilled in Christ, as into a mirror, we continue to hear and do God’s works (James 1:22-25).

⁸⁷ NC II: 560-561, 571-572.

Byzantine tradition, according to Vladimir Lossky,

...knows no [...] supernatural order between God and the created world, adding as it were, to the latter a new creation. It recognizes no distinction, or rather *division*, save that between the created and the uncreated...⁸⁸

It [the Byzantine tradition] speaks of God and the cosmos, with the distinction between the Essence and the energies (words, law-words, powers) *in the former*, paralleling the traditional distinction known to the Reformers but of whose significance, Bavinck indicates, the theology of the Reformation soon lost sight.⁸⁹

Western theology's rejection of the distinction between the Essence and the Law-words or Uncreated Energies of God seems to take on the form of a confusion or conflation of this distinction with the Creator-creature distinction. Bavinck himself may not be free of this error in spite of his Biblical intentions when he writes,

In a certain sense polytheism is guilty of [the error of regarding God's attributes as separate from and more or less independent of His essence] inasmuch as it personifies and deifies the various energies that operate in the creature.⁹⁰

Here the Uncreated Energies may be scholastically and rationalistically reduced not simply to "gnostic" intermediaries but to created "essences" whose divinity is denied. As Christos Yannaras puts it,

...A line of demarcation is drawn separating *created essence* from the *Uncreated Essence*, the empirically knowable from the empirically unknowable, reality that can be perceived and measured from mental supposition; and so, on the fundamental level, God is separated from the world...⁹¹

Thus Bavinck reduces Scriptural references to the human perception of the Uncreated Light of God's Glory to merely symbolic, metaphoric, figurative, scale-of-being analogical references to God's veracity, holiness, and blessedness, in keeping with the Scholastic view that

Man is a corporal, physical being. All his knowledge originates in and derives from sense perception. Our thinking is linked up with our senses just as our soul

⁸⁸ Vladimir Lossky: *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, (Cambridge and London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1957/1973).

⁸⁹ Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, pp 25-26.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p 121.

⁹¹ Christos Yannaras: "Scholasticism and Technology," *Eastern Churches Reviews* 6 (no date): pp 162-169, 166.

is united with the body. We never perceive spiritual realities directly or immediately but always through the medium of material things...⁹²

This is an evident departure from Calvin's sharp distinction of intuitive-auditive and abstractive knowledge and his view that neither percepts nor concepts, nothing—neither heights nor depths—nothing separates the knower from the known even when the known is God.⁹³

Bavinck claims to discover a dualism between mind and heart, ideas and emotions, doctrine and life, in the Eastern mystical theological rejection of Western Scholasticism.⁹⁴ According to Al Wolters, the Orthodox vision of the biblical drama is dualistic:

This vision of the biblical drama is in a sense common to all of orthodox Christianity, be it Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinistic or Anabaptist [...]

Now what is distinctive about the Calvinistic tradition (and this is the tradition in which the reformational movement stands) is that it understands all the basic words in this [traditional] formulation [favoured by Bavinck] ["*the father reconciles His created but fallen world through the death of His Son, and recreates it by His Spirit into a Kingdom of God*"] in an all-embracing and cosmic sense, whereas the other traditions tend in one way or another to restrict the scope of their significance to one 'realm' thus setting up various two-realm (nature/grace, sacred/secular) dualisms.⁹⁵

Such dualism is in reality alien to the Hesychast/Palamite tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy. The 'Reformational' religion of the "heart" is a monastic tradition of long-standing in the Eastern Church in spite of disruption by Turks and Western scholastic Crusaders. Reformational Christianity now recognizes that 'asceticism'—the life of the 'monk-in-the-world'—far from being "*monnikenwerk*" [tedious monk's work], is an indispensable element of Biblical stewardship.⁹⁶

According to Timothy Ware:

The defence of the Hesychasts was taken up by Saint Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), Archbishop of Thessalonica [...] who upheld a doctrine of man which

⁹² *The Doctrine of God*, pp 249-251, 93-95

⁹³ See T.F. Torrance: *Theology in Reconstruction*, (SCM Press, 1965/Eerdmans, 1975), Chapter 5; and see Lucien Joseph Richard: *The Spirituality of John Calvin*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1974), p 159.

⁹⁴ *The Doctrine of God*, p 317

⁹⁵ A. Wolters: "A Historical Movement with a Unique Vision," *Vanguard*, Nov./Dec.

⁹⁶ Compare Christos Yannaras, *Technology and Scholasticism*.

allowed for the use of bodily exercises in prayer, and he argued, against Barlaam, that the Hesychasts did indeed experience the Divine and Uncreated Light of Thabor. [...] Gregory began by reaffirming the Biblical doctrine of man and of the Incarnation. Man is a single, united whole: not only man's mind, but the *whole* man was created in the image of God.[...] Gregory took up and developed the ideas implicit in earlier writings, such as the Macarian Homilies; [...] The Macarian Homilies revert to a more Biblical idea of man—not a soul imprisoned in a body (as in Greek thought), but a single and united whole, soul and body together. Where Evagrius speaks of the *mind*, Macarius uses the Hebraic idea of the heart. The change of emphasis is significant, for the heart includes the whole man—not only intellect but will, emotions, and even body.[...] Using 'heart' in this Macarian sense, Orthodox often talk about "*prayer of the heart*."

To...the main problem: how to combine the two affirmations that man knows God and that God is by nature unknowable... Gregory answered: we know the *energies* of God, but not His *essence*. This distinction between God's essence (*ousia*) and His energies goes back to the Cappadocian Fathers.[...] These energies are not something that exists apart from God, not a gift that God confers upon men: they are *God Himself in His action and revelation to the world*. God exists complete and entire in each of His divine energies. The world, as Gerard Manley Hopkins said, is charged with the grandeur of God; all creation is a gigantic Burning Bush, permeated but not consumed by the ineffable and wondrous fire of God's energies.[...] It is through these energies that God enters into a direct and immediate relationship with mankind. In relation to man, the divine energy is in fact nothing else than the *grace of God* [...] a direct manifestation of the living God Himself, a personal confrontation between creature and Creator...⁹⁷

According to Lossky:

Revealing himself through His creative "thought-wills." God can be known in creatures and by means of creatures, but He can also be known immediately in mystical contemplation, in His uncreated energies which are the splendour of His face.[...] The δυνάμεις [*dunameis*], or energies, in which God proceeds forth, are God Himself; but not according to His substance.[...] In spite of the terminological identity, these 'words' [λόγοι, δυνάμεις, energies, thought-wills, Law-words] have little in common with the λόγοι σπερματικοί [*logoi spermatikoi*] or 'seminal reasons' of the stoics. Rather they are the 'words' of creation and of providence, which are found in Genesis and the Psalms. Every created thing has its point of contact with the Godhead; and this point of contact is its idea, reason or *logos* which is at the same time the end towards which it tends [as created meaning].[...] The whole is contained in the Logos, the second person of the Trinity who is the first principle and the last end of all created things. Here the Logos, God the Word, has the 'economic' emphasis proper to antinocene

⁹⁷ *The Orthodox Church*, pp 76-77, 74, 77-78.

theology: He is the manifestation of the divine will, for it is by Him that the Father has created all things in the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸

and

...Together with the Easterns, [John Scotus Eriugena] puts the ideas outside the divine essence, but at the same time he wants to maintain with St. Augustine their substantial character; and so they become the *first* created essences. Eriugena did not grasp the distinction between the essence and the energies; on this point he remained faithful to Augustinianism, and was therefore unable to identify the ideas with God's creative acts of will.⁹⁹

In the Vollenhoven-Runner formulation, to which the Toronto Reformationals have commonly subscribed,

The law, which is the boundary between God and cosmos is neither divine being nor is it created. It is with God and cosmos, a third mode of being. God creates the cosmos, *puts* the Law. The Law's mode of existence is a 'holding for', an 'obtaining for', a 'being valid for'.¹⁰⁰

Note the similarity in pattern and even in terminology of the Vollenhoven-Runner Idea of Law [God-Law-Word-Cosmos] to a Neo-Kantian pattern.¹⁰¹

Although he rejects a third category of being other than *Being* or *meaning*, Dooyeweerd also seems to argue that the Law is both other than God and other than creation, since Law is "necessarily related to a subject, is thus relative and consequently cannot be the absolute 'Ἀρχή [*Arché*] of meaning."¹⁰² This particular construction has been pointedly criticized by Dr. John Frame of Westminster Theological Seminary, as dangerously close to the thinking of Gnostics, Arians, and all 'chain of being' thinkers.¹⁰³ We might also suggest that it leads to the strange result that between the two natures of Christ, is to be found an intermediary Law, Word, or Law-Word, which as a third category of being neither created nor divine, joins the two natures together but keeps them from being confused.

⁹⁸ Lossky: *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p 72, 98-99.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 96.

¹⁰⁰ Vollenhoven and Runner: *Syllabus for Philosophy 220 The History of Ancient Philosophy*, Calvin College 1958-1959, p 18, 19-20.

¹⁰¹ NC I: 129-137; 132; 92-93; 76; 328-329 [Höningwald].

¹⁰² NC 1: 136

¹⁰³ *Vanguard*, Jan-Feb 1975, p 7.

Jim Olthuis has explained to me that this God-[Law-]Word-Creation distinction is merely an attempt to safeguard the Scriptural Creator-creature distinction in a philosophical conceptual scheme in which God will not become far removed from His creation (dualistically) or lost in His creation (monistically). Vollenhoven introduced it into Reformational circles, although Jim is of the opinion that it is not absent from Dooyeweerd. As Jim argues it, the Law of God for man, for example, the law for marriage, cannot be identified ontically with God Himself:

The law for marriage is certainly God's law and bears His authority and in this way is one with Him, but it is hardly God Himself.¹⁰⁴

Since Reformationals use 'Law,' 'Law-Word' and 'Word' more or less interchangeably, this implies that also the Word, contrary to John 1:1, is hardly God Himself (although one with Him). On the other hand, law *as relative* cannot be identified with its subject, creation: "By no means. The Bible is clear that nature as creation obeys God's Law."¹⁰⁵ In what may be a complete inversion of the Biblical order, in which creation itself is subject to definition by Law, whose universal validity, according to Dooyeweerd, is given *its meaning character* by God [*not by Creation*],¹⁰⁶ Jim suggests,

Is it not true that the law of God for man, whether the law for marriage, the law for physical movement or the ten words, only has meaning in terms of man and creation, for which it obtains?¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, argues Jim, identification of the law with God might face us with the "danger of adapting the idea of external, necessary creation."¹⁰⁸

To the argument that the Law is *relative* and that its identification with God might lead to acceptance of the idea of an external, necessary creation, Byzantine Reformed Theology replies, "No! Not Necessarily." Lossky says that a Law-word (= divine energy).

...is not a divine function which exists *on account of* creatures, despite the fact that it is through His Energies, which penetrate everything that exists, that God creates and operates. Even if creatures did not exist, God would none the less manifest Himself beyond His Essence[...] Thus the divine energies in

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ NC I: 163, 106, 521 fn1

¹⁰⁷ *Vanguard* Jan-Feb, 1975, p. 10.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

themselves are not the relation of God to created being, *but they do enter into relationship with that which is not God....*”

Moreover

the created world does not become infinite and coeternal with God because the natural processions, or divine energies are so. The existence of the energies implies no necessity in the act of creation, which is freely effected by the divine energy but determined by a decision of the common will of the Three Persons. Creation is an act of the will, which makes a new subject outside the Divine Being, *ex nihilo*; to the sphere of God’s manifestation comes into being. As for the manifestation itself, it is eternal, for it is the glory of God.¹⁰⁹

(4)

Early New Testament Jewish Christian

Angelomorphic Christology

According to Jean Daniélou:

First, it will now have become clear that when the language of this, the most archaic form of Christian theology, is correctly interpreted, it becomes even less possible than it was to consider the complexities of orthodox doctrine, the teaching of the great Church, as a superstructure added to some simple basic Gospel by later centuries. Here, so early as in some instances even to go behind the New Testament, we find still the divine pre-existent Christ–Name, Son and Word–his divinity attested all the more forcefully by the strange distortions to which the figure of Michael, or the great Angel, is subjected when compelled to act as the vehicle of such a visitant. We find the divine Person of the Holy Ghost, the fact of His true personhood again made undeniable by the angelic symbolism.¹¹⁰

“The distinguishing marks of this theology [...] Fundamentally it is characterised by the fact that its imagery is that of the dominant Jewish thought-forms of the time, namely apocalyptic. It is conceived in terms of the revelation of cosmic secrets; of the dwelling-places of angels and demons and the souls of men; of the secrets of history written beforehand in the book of God; of the mystery of the Cross of glory; and of the pre-existent Church, at once old yet young and beautiful. The heart of its faith is the affirmation that Christ alone has penetrated

¹⁰⁹ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, pp 74, 89, 74-75

¹¹⁰ Jean Daniélou: *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 407-408.

beyond the veil, and opened the seals of the heavenly scroll, achieving Paradise for those who bear the Name of the Son of God.¹¹¹

Leonard Hodgson says,

We have already had occasion to note that in Hebrew and Jewish thought God was always an active Being, consciously and intelligently purposive, and in that sense, personal. In this tradition the demand for beings intermediary between God and the world did not come from philosophic considerations, from any difficulty concerned with the relation of temporal events to the unruffled unity of eternal changelessness. Hebrew thought moved in the language of dramatic, personal relations [...] the Jewish ideas of intermediary beings arose in a “universe of discourse” which was occupied with the “dramatic” relations of personal beings, divine, superhuman and human. We must also remember that both Greek and Hebrew thought were influenced from other sources; there were Oriental myths which in their personification were more akin to the Hebrew than to the Greek mode of thought, in so far as by “Greek” we mean “philosophical” [...] The statement, sometimes made, that the personification of intermediary beings in later Jewish theology is due to the influence of Greek philosophy on Hebrew religious thinking, can only proceed from those who have never understood what philosophy is.¹¹²

Jean Daniélou says,

Harnack, for example, regarded Theology as born from the union of the Gospel message and Greek philosophy; and in his *History of Dogma* a Jewish Christian theology finds no place, simply because he never suspected its existence.[...] The reasons for this mistake, for such it must now be counted, were twofold. First, the fact that our own civilisation derived its manner of expressing metaphysical things entirely from the Greek conceptual system blinded scholars to the possibility that the classical documents of their faith might contain other quite different terms and images for the same realities.[...] The second, and complementary, reason for this false picture of Christian history was something which could not be helped; the paucity of material from which this earliest theology could be reconstructed.[...] No hypothesis seemed to propose a satisfactory *Sitz in Leben* for [...] literature so laboriously collected; it was not truly at home either with the writings of the New Testament, or with those of Hellenistic Gnosticism, or with Rabbinic Judaism—the only three candidates [...] there was a great void in our knowledge of the religious world of the first and second centuries after Christ.[...] The breakthrough came when, in the years following 1946, this void was at least partly filled by the almost simultaneous

¹¹¹ *Ibid*; p 4.

¹¹² Leonard Hodgson: *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, (James Nisbet and Company Limited, 1943); Croall Lectures, 118, 119-120.

discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the twelve volumes of Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi, north of Luxor in Egypt. Since these texts became available, the whole picture of the world of the Early Church has changed, as is well known, and not least a coherent setting has been found which it makes it possible in large measure to identify a great many elements in writings already familiar as belonging to a homogeneous body of thought which we may call the theology of Jewish Christianity.¹¹³

One of the characteristics of theology which is genuinely archaic and Jewish Christian is the use of terms borrowed from the vocabulary of angelology to designate the Word and the Holy Spirit. 'Angel' is one of the names given to Christ up to the fourth century. After that the practice tends to disappear because of the ambiguity of the expression and of the use made of it by the Arians. [...] The practice can be traced to several sources. Of these the chief is the expression *mal'ak Yahweh*, 'Angel of Yahweh,' by which the Old Testament often refers to the manifestations of God under the old dispensation. The Christians appropriated these theophanies to the Word. The expression in no way implied that God himself was not involved.[...] But this conception, dear to the Apologists, is not specifically Jewish Christian.[...] A second source is the development of angelology in the true sense of the word in later Judaism. Here the angels constitute a supernatural world of intermediaries between God and men. Many of the functions attributed by Judaism to God were now conceded to them. Eminent figures begin to stand out among them...Michael, the leader of the heavenly hosts, is the most important. According to Josephus the Essenes also had speculations on the angels. The most important of these is the doctrine of the Angel of Light to whom God gave in charge the conduct of all history, and to whom is opposed the Prince of Darkness. [...] Finally Hellenistic Judaism had developed its own angelology parallel to that of Palestinian Judaism. The translation of the LXX is already a witness to this trend, which was to reach full development in Philo. [...] in Philo is developed the idea of a certain relationship between the Logos, who is the πρῶτος ἄγγελος [*protos angelos*], and the angels who are λόγοι [*logoi*]. The consequences of this will be seen especially in Origen and the Arians, but it also played a part in the formation of primitive theology.¹¹⁴

Leonard Hodgson:

In a paper to the Oxford Philological Society, Professor J.A. Smith said that "the original meaning of λόγος [*logos*] was just talk, conversation, prose as distinct from poetry.[...] From this original meaning the word came to be used for what is said about something, and so for the definition of things [...] [and by extension of this] [...] became connected with the idea of reason, for only that which is

¹¹³ Danielou J, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp 2,3, cf neo-Gnostic Elaine Pagels (1979) *The Gnostic Gospels*, Random House, New York.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

rational is definable.[...] Only the rational is λογικόν [*logikon*]. [...] Professor Smith then denied that the word was used in the Greek tradition for the active reasoning faculty in man, or for a cognate principle in the universe. The phrase for this faculty, he said, was τὸ λογιστικόν [*to logistikon*], and there is no instance of λόγος being used for τὸ λογιστικόν. The roots of that later usage, he said, were probably to be found in Hebrew thought. Through such men as Philo the word *logos* came to be used to translate the Hebrew *Memrah*, and theologians in their ignorance had read back the later meaning, with which they were familiar, into earlier writings where it was out of place.[...] [The λόγοι σπερματικοί [*logoi spermatikoi*] of the Stoics], he suggested, described a biological theory according to which the fact that the offspring of horses are horses and of goats goats is due to the fact that in each case the male spermata are miniature copies of the full sized animals.¹¹⁵

Franz Cumont:

It has often been observed that the masters of the Stoic school are for the most part Orientals.[...] In a certain sense it may be said that Stoicism was a Semitic philosophy.[...] A native of the very heart of Syria, but naturalized as a Rhodian, Posidonius represented in all its fulness the alliance of Semitic tradition with Greek thought. He was the great intermediary and mediator not only between Romans and Hellenes, but between East and West. Brought up on Plato and Aristotle, he was equally versed in Asiatic astrology and demonology. If he is Greek in the constructive power of his speculative genius, in the harmonious flow of his copious and highly-coloured style, his genius remained Oriental in the singular combination of the most exact science with a fervent mysticism.[...] His pupil, Cicero, has frequent reminiscences of his teaching and translates his ideas into Latin. The symbolism of Philo the Jew is often inspired by his picturesque eloquence. Still later his ideas pass into and spread throughout the Stoic school—we see them, for instance, in the works of Seneca,—and they are echoed in the treatises of the astrologers of the imperial age.¹¹⁶

The Doctrine of the Two Spirits. This was an early Jewish Christian anticipation of *the radical religious Antithesis* described by St. Augustine, Abraham Kuyper, Sergius Bulgakov, Herman Dooyeweerd et al. Jean Daniélou says:

One of the most important features that Jewish Christianity received from Judaism, and more particularly from Essene circles, was the doctrine of the Two Spirits.[...] Essentially it expresses the existence of a dual orientation of the human soul. This is sometimes seen as a conflict between two tendencies, and it is similar to the doctrine of the two *yeseirim*, which existed in Judaism at the time

¹¹⁵ Leonard Hodgson: *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, pp. 217-218.

¹¹⁶ Franz Cumont: *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and the Romans* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960) [Reproduction of English translation of 1912], pp. 46, 47-48.

of Christ and was to endure in the rabbinic tradition. The doctrine may be studied in II (4) *Esdras*, where it is particularly prominent. The place of the *yese*r is the heart, and the evil *yese*r was in the heart of Adam from the beginning (4:30). It is not sin but a propensity to sin, and for this reason its origin can be attributed to God. Adam's consenting to it established its domination over him and his descendants.[...] It may be that this doctrine of the two *yese*rim is to be found in *Saint Paul*. It certainly appears in developed form in Jewish Christian writers.[...] The specifically Jewish Christian trait [...] was to associate these inclinations with the action of two spirits, the angels of Light and of darkness. This feature is characteristic of Essenism, and is developed at length in the *Rule of the Community* [...] [Hermas] writes: "Do thou trust the Spirit that cometh from God, and hath power; but in the earthly and empty spirit put no trust at all; for in it there is no power, for it cometh from the devil" (*Mand. XI, 17*) [...] It will be observed how different this is from the pessimism of II (4) *Esdras* in which the domination of the *yese*r-*ha-ra* was ineluctable. In Jewish Christianity everything is changed because the devil has been overcome by Christ. The concepts come from Judaism, but the outlook is quite different.¹¹⁷

How is this theology expressed in terms of angels to be interpreted? It seems fairly certain that the use of such terms in no way implies that Christ is by nature an angel. The Semitic categories which underlie this expression are not Hellenistic concepts. In fact the word angel has an essentially concrete force; it connotes a supernatural being manifesting itself. The nature of this supernatural being is not determined by the expression but by the context. The word represents the Semitic form of the designation of the Word and the Spirit as spiritual substances, as 'persons,' though the latter terminology was not to be introduced into theology until a good deal later. 'Angel' is its old-fashioned equivalent.[...] The use in this domain of expressions borrowed from apocalyptic speculations was, as will be seen plainly enough, to a high degree ambiguous. It is sometimes impossible to decide whether it is divine persons or angels that are spoken of, while on the other hand there is no denying that in many cases a subordinationist tendency is implied by this terminology. In certain heterodox writers the Word and the Spirit are frankly likened to angels, in the full sense of the term. All these reasons must be held responsible for the very rapid decline of this first form of the theology of the Trinity.¹¹⁸

The moment of truth in this ambiguity is disclosed in the intimate union of Creator and creature in Christ the Word, according to His Divine and human natures. For Eastern Orthodoxy,

¹¹⁷ Jean Daniélou: *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 357, 358, 362. See Sergius Bulgakov: "Karl Marx as a Religious Type" and "Two Cities," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, eds. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 57-74; Dr. A.P. Hayman: "Rabbinic Judaism and the Problem of Evil," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29 (1976), 461-476.

¹¹⁸ Jean Daniélou: *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 118-119.

This ‘*periochoresis*’ or dynamic co-penetration of what is created and uncreated in Christ finds its analogy in beings who are striving to become ‘gods by grace.’¹¹⁹

Here also, the ambiguous reference of the Dooyeweerdian Idea of Law as “boundary” to both Creator and creation (or perhaps to neither) finds its explanation. As a transcendental *limiting* concept, the Idea of Law finds its fulfilment in Christ, both Divine and human, Who *is* the Law.¹²⁰

A characteristic feature of the theology of *Hermas* is to call the Word ‘glorious (ἐνδοξος) [*endoxos*] angel’ or ‘most venerable (σεμνότερος) [*semnotatos*] angel.’ [...] In the parable of the willow-tree it was said that “by the willow there stood an angel of the Lord, glorious (ἐνδοξος) and very tall” (*Sim.* VIII, 1), and it has been shown that this angel is clearly the Word. *Hermas* explains the parable as follows: “the great and glorious (ἐνδοξος) angel is Michael, who has put the power over this people and is their captain. For this is he that putteth the Law into the hearts of the believers. Therefore he himself inspecteth them to whom he gave it” (VIII, 3:3). The comparison of the two texts shows that it is really the Word who is called Michael. [...] First, it is he who governs the people. Such was indeed Michael’s function as regards the people of Israel (*Dan.* 10:13); but with the coming of the New Covenant the Word of God replaces the angels, whose mission was only a preparatory one. It is he who now becomes the chief of the people of God. This stands out more clearly if we consider the second characteristic given by *Hermas*. Judaism believed that the Old Testament law had been given by the angels [Josephus, *Ant.* xv, 136; Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2]. The *Book of Jubilees* in particular attributes its promulgation to Michael (I, 27). But Paul contrasts with this the new Law communicated by the Word himself (Gal. 3:20; Heb. 2:3). In *Hermas* this function is performed by Michael. This name must therefore be regarded as a name of the Word.[...] The assimilation of Michael to the Word is not, however, peculiar to *Hermas*.[...] The way in which this tradition was developed by the Ebionites [heterodox Jewish Christianity], and by the main body of the Church respectively shows clearly the different point of view of each. For the former, Christ is simply a new manifestation of the Angel of Israel; but for the Great Church Christ is the Word of God who dispossesses all the angels of their functions and unites all the nations under his sole sovereignty. Whereas in the [Ebionite] *Homilies* the angel who gave the Law to Israel, Michael, is the same who reappears in Christ, the New Testament contrasts the

¹¹⁹ Vladimir Lossky: *The Vision of God*, tr. Asheleigh Moorhouse, (Bedfordshire, The Faith Press, 1963, 1973), p. 109.

¹²⁰ On the philosophical and theological problems of the “two natures” see Aloys Grillmeier: *Christ in Christian Tradition*, Volume One, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon* (451) (London and Oxford: Mowbrays, 1965, 2nd revised edition 1975); Thomas F. Torrance: *Space, Time and Incarnation* (London/New York/Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969); Thomas F. Torrance: “The Relation of the Incarnation to Space in Nicene Theology” in *The Ecumenical World of Orthodox Civilization Russia and Orthodoxy Volume III: Essays in honor of Georges Florovsky* (The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1974).

Law given by angels with the Gospel given by the Word [Gal. 3:19f; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2-3. In Rev. 12:7, Michael defeats the dragon, but the dominion is given to Christ] [...] Assimilation of Michael to the Word is confirmed by, and finds a counterpart in that of Gabriel to the Holy Ghost...¹²¹

One of the more striking features of Jewish Christian theology is the great variety of expressions used to designate Christ [...] The first of these expressions, and one of the first to be given up, since it was unintelligible and dangerous in a Greek milieu, is that which designates Christ as the "Name of God." [...] The origins of this Christology lie clearly in the Old Testament. There, the Name (*sem*) is frequently used of Jahweh's self-manifestation. The term is especially associated with God's revelation of himself (Ex. 23:21), and with his dwelling in the Temple (Deut. 12:11). It has the same attributes as Yahweh, holiness and glory (Tob. 8:5). [...] The Qumran texts give an important place to the Name as an expression of the power of Yahweh.[...] In the texts from Paul and John the Name seems to designate Christ's divine nature, that which He has in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, rather than the Person of the Word in himself. It was the latter aspect, however, that was to be developed in Jewish Christian theology [...] [Jewish Christian] theology of the Name does not merely continue the tradition of the Old Testament, in which the Name stands for the divine reality as a whole; it is also in sympathy with Later Judaism, in which the term takes on a quasi-hypostatic sense.[...] This conception of the Name as the personal power of God sustaining the Creation reappears in *The Shepherd of Hermas*. [...]

The Name was not the only expression of Semitic origin to be applied to the Word by Jewish Christian teaching. Another is νόμος [*nomos*], the Law, a translation of the Hebrew *torah*. Judaism at the time of Christ regarded the Torah as a divine reality existing before the world; and the roll which contained it was to become in the Synagogue the object of a genuine cultus: the Law is so to speak the visible sacrament of the presence of the divine Word. For the Jew the Torah is the true incarnation, as the Koran was to be for the Moslem.[...] In addition the identity of the Logos and Nomos had already been affirmed before Christianity by Philo.[...] It is not surprising therefore that νόμος is used to designate the Son of God in Jewish Christian theology [According to W.D. Davies: *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 149) the idea is already present in St. Paul]. This is not due however to any dependence on Philo, but is a parallel development, starting from the speculations of the apocalypses on the Torah, and clearly Jewish Christian in character. One of the first passages to be considered occurs in *Hermas* and treats of the vision of an immense willow tree: 'This great tree, which overshadows plains and mountains and all the earth is the Law of God (νόμος θεοῦ) [*nomos theou*] which was given to the whole world; and this Law is the Son of God preached unto the ends of the earth' (*Sim.* VIII, 3:2). The text could hardly be more explicit. The Law is the name of the Son of God. This is clearly an archaic expression in which νόμος takes the place of λόγος, which never occurs in the

¹²¹ *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 119, 123-124, 127.

Shepherd. [...] Another text of archaic character makes the same identification. Quoting the *Preaching of Peter*, Clement of Alexandria writes: ‘In the *Preaching of Peter* you will find the Lord called Law and Word (νόμος καὶ λόγος) [*nomos kai logos*]’ (Strom. I, 182:3). Finally a passage from the *Eclogae Propheticae* adds an interesting point: ‘the Lord is himself called Law and Word according to Peter in the *Kerygma*, and also according to the Prophet who writes: the Law (νόμος) shall go out from Sion and the Word of God from Jerusalem (*Is.* 2:3):’ (*Ec. Proph.* 58). The mention of the text from Isaiah is the more interesting, since it occurs also in the primitive *testimonia*. In Justin the Lord is called νόμος with reference to the same text. Thus in the *Dial.* XXIV, I he writes, ‘There is now another Covenant; another Law has gone forth from Sion, Jesus Christ.’ Justin again refers to Isaiah, though not to the same passage, a little further on: “The Son of God [...] Christ [...] was proclaimed as about to come as an everlasting Law (νόμος) and new Covenant for the whole world” (*Dial.* XLIII, I). It will be noticed that Christ is here called at the same time both Law and Covenant (διαθήκη) [*diatheke*]. This conjunction had already been made in *Dial.* XI, 21: ‘As an external and final (τελευταῖος) [*teleutaios*] Law was Christ given, and this Covenant is sure, after which there is no law, or ordinance, or command.’ [...] The conception of Christ as introducing a new covenant and bringing in the definitive Law was current in the New Testament. But the interest of the texts quoted here lies in the fact that they add a new element, the personal identification of the Son of God with the Law and the Covenant.[...] The designation of Christ as the Law was to continue in the later writers of the second century who drew their material from the same sources....”¹²²

God manifesting Himself in Reformational Law-Word (and words) would obviously have a Biblical Christian basis interpreted in this manner of Jewish Christian theology and not hypostatized as an alien *logos*-speculative “third-realm” category.

Another characteristic feature of Jewish Christianity is the importance of *gnosis*. The expression occurs in Saint Paul, and attempts have been made to regard this as a ‘Gnostic’ element in him. Gnosis in Saint Paul, however, is the knowledge of eschatological secrets, of the μυστήριον [*mysterion*] which is revealed in Christ; and this, as has often been remarked already, is a specifically Jewish conception, being indeed an essential factor in apocalyptic writing, which consists in the revelation of eschatological secrets and of the heavenly world, and is the true speculative theology of Judaism at the time of Christ. Far from this being an effect of ‘Gnosticism,’ the facts are rather that Gnosticism adopted the expression, and interpreted it both in its content and meaning in a heterodox manner, combining it with foreign, oriental or Hellenistic conceptions.[...]”¹²³

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148, 150-151, 163-165.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

In the *cosmic ladder* of Jewish Christian cosmology and apocalyptic,

There were many ranks of angels, the highest orders forming the heavenly court, while the lower spirits administered the affairs of this world.[...] If the higher angels are devoted to the celestial liturgy [pistical or faith realm], the lower ones are charged with administering the affairs of the cosmos and mankind. Here once more Jewish Christian angelology is greatly indebted to that of Judaism. Thus the angels are set over the various elements and over the life of nature; they preside over the movements of the stars (*Asc. Is.* IV,18; II *Enoch* IV, XIX); they keep the stores of rain, snow and hail (*Test. Levi* III,2; II *Enoch* V, 1-2); they watch over the rivers and the seas; they protect the harvests and the fruits (*Or. Sib.* VII, 34; II *Enoch* VI, XIX). These are not specifically Christian features [“common grace,” universal Divine Order], but it is interesting to note that when Celsus later accused the Christians of a lack of piety toward the *daimones*, who preside over the life of nature and distribute its benefits to men, Origen was happy to be able to retort that Christians also believe in these mysterious protectors, but do not venerate them [the energies, Law-words, angels] as gods. In this he was heir of the Jewish Christians [as is Dooyeweerd at least structurally, for his *qualifying and guiding or directing* meaning-functions (NC II, 184-185) do also thus operate angelically] [...] The angels, however, preside not only over natural phenomena, but also over human communities. Jewish Christianity inherited from Jewish apocalyptic the doctrine of the angels of the nations [...], and it must surely be through the medium of Jewish Christian tradition that the statement [implying “sphere-sovereignty”]: “The governments of the angels have been distributed over nations and cities” comes to appear both in Irenaeus [...] and in Clement of Alexandria [...] Besides angels set over groups there are angels who are put in charge of individuals [...] It is a remarkable fact that later theology can be proved to have borrowed the doctrine of the guardian angel from Jewish Christianity.[...] Other aspects of the activity of the angels are frequently to be found in our texts.[...] It may justly be said that in this domain Jewish Christianity left a heritage of major importance to later theology, liturgy and spirituality. Indeed, such angelology may have occupied an excessively important place in the early period, in view of the polemic which Paul, for instance, had to conduct against the angel cult among the Jewish Christians of Asia minor, in Galatia (Gal. 1:8) and at Colossae (Col. 2:18).¹²⁴

S.F. Mason says,

The removal of the angelic beings from the government of the universe in Calvinist theology was indeed a criticism of the idea that the universe was peopled by a graded scale of creatures or rather it was a criticism of the concept of hierarchy which was the kernel of the idea in the medieval world-picture. The Deity no longer ruled the universe by delegating His authority to a hierarchy of

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 182, 184-187.

spiritual beings, each with a degree of power which decreased as the scale was descended, but now He governed directly as an Absolute Power by means of decrees decided upon at the beginning. These decrees were nothing other than the laws of Nature, the theological doctrine of predestination thus preparing the way for the philosophy of mechanical determinism. Indeed it seems that both the term and the concept of 'laws of Nature' were first used consistently by the primary exponent of the mechanical philosophy, notably in the *Discourse on Method*, where Descartes spoke of the "laws established in Nature by God." The historian of the term, 'the laws of Nature,' has ascribed the usage of the phrase to hypostatization into the cosmic realm of the earthly rule through statute law developed by the absolute monarchs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "It is not mere chance, wrote Zilsel, "that the Cartesian idea of God as the legislator of the universe, developed only forty years after Jean Bodin's theory of sovereignty." Perhaps it is also not a matter of chance that, some forty years before Bodin, Calvin was working towards the conception of God as the law-giver of the universe, an Absolute Ruler who exercised His power directly, and not through the mediacy of subordinate beings.¹²⁵

Calvin says,

...I know that prattlers would easily evade this, by saying that Word is used for *order* or *command*; but the apostles are better expositors, when they tell us that the worlds were created by the Son, and that he sustains all things by his mighty word (Heb. 1:2). For we here see that *word* is used for the nod or command of the Son, who is himself the eternal and essential Word of the Father. And no man of sane mind can have any doubt as to Solomon's meaning, when he introduces Wisdom as begotten by God, and presiding at the creation of the world and all other divine operations (Prov. 8:22).¹²⁶

Hence the impiety of Servetus was the more detestable, when he maintained that God was never manifested to Abraham and the Patriarchs, but that an angel was worshipped in his stead. The orthodox doctors of the Church have correctly and wisely expounded that the Word of God was the supreme angel, who then began, as it were by anticipation, to perform the office of Mediator. For though he were not clothed with flesh, yet he descended as in an intermediate form, that he might have more familiar access to the faith. This closer intercourse procured for him the name of the Angel; still however, he retained the character which justly

¹²⁵ S.F. Mason, "The Scientific Revolution and the Protestant Reformation," I Calvin and Servetus in Relation to the New Astronomy and the Theory of the Circulation of the Blood, *Annals of Science* 9 (1953), 64-87 at 72. See also Edgar Zilsel: "The Genesis of the Concept of Physical Law," *The Philosophical Review* 51 (May, 1942), 245-279; W.P.D. Wightman: *Science and the Renaissance: An Introduction to the Study of the Emergence of the Sciences in the Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), Vol. I, Chapter XV: "The Embodiment of the Spiritual World." C.A. Patrides: "Renaissance Thought on the Celestial Hierarchy: The Decline of a Tradition," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959), 155-166; C.A. Patrides: "Renaissance Views on the 'Unconfused Orders Angelick,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* (April-June 1962), 265-267.

¹²⁶ Calvin: *Institutes*, tr. Henry Beveridge, 1:13.7.

belonged to him—that of the God of ineffable glory. The same thing is intimated by Hosea, who, after mentioning the wrestling of Jacob with the angel, says, “Even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial” (Hosea 12:5).¹²⁷

This paper was completed to this point around New Years, 1980. Just today (Jan. 17, 1980) I discovered Ladislaus Boros’ beautiful *Angels and Men* (London: Search Press, 1976).¹²⁸

Throughout this book I am concerned to defend only one hypothesis.[...] The angels help us to understand Jesus. The angels are pointers to Jesus, or signs of Christ and his works. In his death and resurrection Jesus Christ defeated all the powers. And so Jesus became our only angel.[...] The doctrine concerning the various choirs and hierarchies of angels is fulfilled in Christ; they are the various functions of Christ himself.[...] In Newman’s *Apologia pro vita sua* there is a very beautiful passage which conveys something very important for our theme: “I suppose it was to the Alexandrian school, and to the early Church, that I owe in particular what I definitely held about angels. I viewed them, not only as the ministers employed by Scripture, but as carrying on, as Scripture also implies, the Economy of the Visible World. I considered them as the real causes of motion, light, and life, and of those elementary principles of the physical universe, which, when offered in their developments to our senses, suggest to us the notion of cause and effect, and of what are called the laws of nature. I have drawn out this doctrine in my Sermon for Michaelmas Day, written not later than 1834. I say of the angels: “Every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect, is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God.” Again, I ask what would be the thoughts of a man who, “when examining a flower, or a herb, or a pebble, or a ray of light, which he treats as something so beneath him in the scale of existence, suddenly discovered that he was in the presence of some powerful being who was hidden behind the visible things he was inspecting, who, though concealing his wise hand, was giving them their beauty, grace, and perfection, as being God’s instrument for the purpose, nay, whose robe and ornaments those objects were, which he was so eager to analyze?” [...] [Boros]: “I could easily support these insights with texts from the Fathers of the Church, primarily from Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and others, right up to Bonaventure, the theologian of the high Middle Ages, for whom the visible world was *corpus angelicum*, the body of angels.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *Institutes* 1.13.10.

¹²⁸ Ladislaus Boros: *Angels and Men* (London: Search Press, 1976); (Illustrated by Max von Moos, tr. John Maxwell, © Walter Verlag AG Otten, 1974).

¹²⁹ Boros, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 45, 101-102, 104.