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Do you have to be a Calvinist in order to be a Kuyperian? In Memoriam John H. Kok



by Eduardo Echeverria

In the new book by Richard J. Mouw on the neo-Calvinist doctrine of common grace, he asks the question that I pose in the title of this essay: “Do you have to be a Calvinist in order to be a Kuyperian?”¹ This question is raised in a section titled “An Ecumenical Spirit,” where Mouw gives us a sense of the ecumenical spirit of neo-Calvinism, for example in the works of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1921) and other neo-Calvinists, such as Herman Bavinck (1854-1921)² and Al Wolters.³ Kuyper himself wrote in his famous 1898 Princeton Stone Lectures, *Lectures on Calvinism*, about his alliance with Roman Catholics. There is no false irenicism on Kuyper’s part. He gives a very articulate state-

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ment, not only of the common creedal heritage of faith shared by Reformed Christians and Catholic Christianity but also of their common spiritual enemies, such as atheism and pantheism. Kuyper wrote,

Now, in this conflict [with theological liberalism and secularism] Rome is not an antagonist, but stands on our side, inasmuch as she also recognizes and maintains the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Cross as an atoning sacrifice, the Scriptures as the Word of God, and the Ten Commandments as a divinely-imposed rule of life. Therefore, let me ask ... [as] Romish theologians take up the sword to do valiant and skillful battle against the same tendency that we ourselves mean to fight to the death, is it not the part of wisdom to accept the valuable help of their elucidation? ... I for my part am not ashamed to confess that on many points my views have been clarified through my study of the Romish theologians.⁴

But there are also Wesleyan neo-Kuyperians, such as Richard Middleton. Mouw cites an introductory remark that Middleton made when Mouw was a guest speaker at Robert Wesleyan University: “Like Rich Mouw I am a Kuyperian. But while he is a Calvinist Kuyperian, I’m a *Wesleyan* Kuyperian.”⁵ Mouw alludes to “folks many of us know who wed key neo-Calvinist themes to Lutheran and Catholic theological allegiances.” What themes? “[T]he supreme kingship of Christ, the antithesis, common grace, sphere sovereignty.”⁶ Furthermore, Mouw cites Al Wolters, who captures what is philosophi-

cally essential to the Kuyperian tradition,⁷ namely, “the philosophical commitment to the constancy of creation, and to creation as delivered by the creator, prior to the Fall, as the normative standard to which creation is being redeemed and restored.”⁸ Now, I am a “*Roman Catholic* Kuyperian” who is not only deeply committed to the truth of Catholic doctrines but also affirms Kuyperian themes as listed above by Mouw. Mouw rightly explains that Kuyperians with Catholic theological allegiances have “likely done some serious theological work in exploring ways in which neo-Calvinist ideas can be grounded in non-Calvinist confessional commitments.”⁹ I agree with Mouw. I would like to sketch briefly some “meta-Catholic” considerations in which I justify how Kuyperian ideas could be grounded in Catholic confessional commitments.

I am a committed Catholic philosophical theologian, with roots in the Evangelical and Reformed traditions, and a member of the almost twenty-five-year-old American ecumenical initiative, *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*. My commitment to ecumenical dialogue with both traditions is evident from many of my writings.¹⁰ As a Catholic scholar, I do philosophical theology within the normative tradition of confessional Catholicism, and thus in the light of Catholic teaching. Yet, all my works manifest an ecumenical spirit; indeed, they are all works in receptive ecumenism, and hence I am listening attentively to the writings of fellow Christian theologians from other traditions of reflection and argument.

What is *receptive ecumenism*? The practice of receptive ecumenism means, “Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an ‘exchange of gifts’ Dialogue does not extend exclusively to matters of doctrine but engages the whole person; it is also a dialogue of love.”¹¹ More exactly, this practice presupposes the distinction between propositional truths of faith and their formulations in reflecting on the sense in which a doctrine, already confirmed and defined, is more fully known and deeply understood by another Christian tradition. John XXIII drew this distinction in his opening address at the Second Vatican Council: “For the deposit of faith, the truths contained in our venerable doctrine, are one thing; the fashion in which they are

expressed, but with the same meaning and the same judgment [*eodem sensu eademque sententia*], is another thing.”¹²

The subordinate clause, which I have cited in its Latin original, is part of a larger passage from the First Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on Faith and Reason, *Dei Filius* (1869-70), which is earlier invoked by Pope Pius IX in the bull of 1854, *Ineffabilis Deus*, also cited by Pope Leo XIII in his 1899 encyclical letter, *Testem benevolentiae Nostrae*. This formula in *Dei Filius* is itself taken from the *Commonitorium* of St. Vincent of Lérins (445 A.D), a Gallic monk and the chief theologian of the Abbey of Lérins: “Therefore, let there be growth and abundant progress in understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, in each and all, in individuals and in the whole Church, at all times and in the progress of ages, but only within the proper limits, i.e., within the same dogma, the same meaning, the same judgment” [*in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententia*].”¹³

In this Vincentian light, Vatican II’s Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (no. 17), provides a justification for legitimate differences in the elaboration of revealed truth, and hence for receptive ecumenism:

It is hardly surprising, then, if from time to time one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed it to better advantage. In such cases, these various theological expressions are to be considered often as mutually complementary rather than conflicting Thus they promote the right ordering of Christian life and, indeed, pave the way to a full vision of Christian truth.¹⁴

I have in mind here, for example, Kuyper’s three-volume work (1911-1912), *Pro Rege: Living under Christ’s Kingship*, where he shows that he has a fuller appreciation of that aspect of a mystery of revelation that complements rather than conflicts with Catholic theology. I turn now to discuss the theme of the Lordship of Christ in a Catholic context. Following that discussion, I will consider the themes of common grace, the antithesis, the normative creation order, and the purpose of common grace.

The Lordship of Christ

In Pope Pius XI's Encyclical Letter *Quas Primas*, On the Kingship of Christ, December 11, 1925, he inserts into the Church's sacred liturgy the special feast of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He reflects on the nature and meaning of Christ's Lordship, essentially arguing that Christ is Lord of not only spiritual reality (i.e., eternal salvation) but also temporal realities, indeed of all things created, including nature, society, culture, and human existence. In sum, Pius explains,

If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth [Matt 28:18]; if all men, purchased by his precious blood [1 Cor 6:20], are by a new right subjected to his dominion [Phil 2:11]; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire. He must reign [1] in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign [2] in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign [3] in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign [4] in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, as instruments of [righteousness] unto God [Rom 6:13]. If all these truths are presented to the faithful for their consideration, they will prove a powerful incentive to perfection.¹⁵

The Kingship of Christ is, then, sovereign over the whole man, including his intellect, as Pius XI makes clear above. The French Catholic philosopher Etienne Gilson also stresses this point in his essay "The Intelligence in the Service of Christ the King"¹⁶; namely, a Christian's first intellectual duty is to deny homage to autonomous human reason. By its very nature, human reason is dependent upon God, submitting to and serving divine revelation, indeed, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, as Gilson puts it, and hence it inherently lacks self-sufficiency, not

just with respect to divine revelation, but within its own sphere. In Gilson's own words,

The great discovery, or rediscovery of Pascal, is to have understood that the Incarnation, by profoundly changing the nature of man, has become the only means that there is for us to understand man. Such a truth gives a new meaning to our nature, to our birth, to our end Let us apply these principles to the exercise of our intelligence; we shall immediately see that that of the Christian, as opposed to one which knows not Jesus Christ, knows itself to be fallen and restored, incapable consequently of yielding its full return without grace, and, in this sense, just as the royalty of Christ dominates the order of nature and the order of society, so also it dominates the order of the intelligence.¹⁷

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And in a moment of complete honesty, he adds, "Perhaps we Catholics have forgotten it too much; perhaps we have never even truly understood it, and if ever there was a time that needed to understand it, it is indeed our own."¹⁸ What, then, does the mystery of the Incarnation and, indeed, of the Lordship of Jesus Christ teach us in regard to the ends and nature of human reason?

The Word became flesh; God became man. His divinity and humanity refer to two natures, which are found united in the same person of Christ, who is both God and man. Gilson explains the transformation that Jesus Christ "introduced into all nature and consequently into the manner in which we must henceforth be conceived."¹⁹ Furthermore, "Like the [human] nature which it crowns, the intelligence is good; but it is only so if, by it and in it, the whole nature turns towards its end, which is to conform itself to God. But, by taking itself as its own end, the intelligence has turned away from God, turning nature with it, and grace alone can aid both of them in returning to what is really their end, since it is their origin."²⁰ Now, to understand properly Gilson's explanation, we must see it in light of his theology of nature and grace.

Nature and Grace

We need some background before turning to Gilson's account of nature and grace. The redemption accomplished through Jesus Christ's saving work—His life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, in short, the Christ event—does not (a) stand opposed to, and hence replace altogether, created reality, as if to say that the structures of reality need to be by-passed or suppressed because they are hopelessly corrupt as a consequence of the fall into sin, meaning thereby the replacement of one nature by another. But nor does his redemptive work merely (b) supplement or (c) parallel that reality, which would leave nature untouched by grace, and thus nature and grace would have only an *extrinsic* relation to each other. Furthermore, nor does his redemptive work merely involve (d) acceptance of created reality, of humanity, *as it is*, for that would deny created reality's structures' fallen state, which would, as leading Catholic systematic theologian Thomas Guarino puts it, "overlook God's judgment on the world rendered dramatically in the cross of Christ."²¹ Rather, nature, meaning the structures of reality, stands in need of being reconsecrated to its Maker; hence, Christ's redemption (e) seeks to penetrate, restore, and renew *from within* the fallen order of creation.²² This last possibility of conceiving the relation of nature, sin, and grace is reflected in Gilson's understanding.

When addressing the question of the relation of nature and grace, we err in ignoring either the distinction between nature and grace or their union.²³ Nature has to do with the fundamental structures of reality, in particular of human reality, in short, the deepest foundations of what God created. How has sin affected those foundational structures of creation? Has the *nature* of creation been corrupted or completely destroyed by sin, or is the deepest foundation of creation still what God made it? What has been called the Augustinian Principle—Gilson embraces this principle—affirms that the *nature* of humanity persists in the regime of man's fallen state.

Let me cite several key passages on the relation between nature and grace from Gilson. First, "The true Catholic position [on this relation] consists in maintaining that nature was created good, that it has been wounded, but that it can be at least par-

tially healed by grace [here and now] if God so wishes. This *instauratio*, that is to say, this renewal, this re-establishment, this restoration of nature to its primitive goodness, is on this point the program of authentic Catholicism." As Gilson also rightly says elsewhere, "To say that grace is necessary to restore nature is quite other than to suppress that nature to the profit of grace: it is to confirm it by grace. Grace presupposes nature, whether to restore or to enrich it. When grace restores nature, it does not substitute itself for it but re-establishes it; when nature, thus re-established by grace, accomplishes its proper operations, they are indeed natural operations [now transformed] which it performs." Finally, as Gilson also says later in his book *Christianity and Philosophy*, "Catholicism teaches ... before everything the restoration of wounded nature by the grace of Jesus Christ. The restoration of nature: so there must be a nature, and of what value, since it is the work of God, Who created it and re-created it by repurchasing it at the price of His own Blood! Thus grace presupposes nature, and the excellence of nature which it comes to heal and transfigure."²⁴ In sum, *grace restores or renews nature*, meaning thereby that God's grace in Christ *restores all life to its fullness, penetrating and perfecting and transforming the fallen creation from within its own order*, bringing creation into conformity with His will and purpose with the normative order of creation. This, too, is the view of Mouw about Christ's redemption and its relation to the whole fallen creation.²⁵

The Intelligence in the Service of Christ the King

Accordingly, the submission of the intellectual life to the mystery of Christ is at the heart of the call to holiness: "bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). This obedient thinking "adores the self-revealing God and thinks within the mystery of grace in a renewed way," according to Catholic theologian Aidan Nichols. "Paul told his hearers," adds Nichols, "that their minds were to be renewed by the grace of Jesus Christ [T]he Fathers [of the Church] ... understood Paul to be speaking about the difference made to the very way the human mind operates by the redemption and trans-

figuration of the world through Jesus Christ and the Spirit. *Outside the sphere of salvation, reason is adapted to the fallen state of [man].* It is, often, happily and successfully so adapted, but adapted nonetheless it is. Fallen reason can generate truth.²⁶ Reason here includes, I take it, the belief-producing human capacities of intuition, reasoning, sense perception, memory, introspection, testimony, moral intuition, and what Calvin calls the *sensus divinitatis* and Monsignor Luigi Giussani calls the religious sense.²⁷ In particular, all of these capacities are reliable, whether fallen or renewed; e.g., human reasoning can construct valid arguments; one may correctly remember what he had for breakfast this morning; one may see, hear, feel, taste, and smell things like flowers; one may have insight into self-evident truths, and so forth.²⁸ In particular, since human reasoning can construct valid arguments, there is no reason to take a negative stance towards theistic arguments.

“Yet it [human reasoning] remains fallen reason,” Nichols continues, “and the telltale signs are scattered throughout the history of thinking.”²⁹ Now, since the whole of human nature is wounded by original sin and needs to be redeemed, made holy, sanctified, this therefore includes as well the knowing powers of human reason, says Aquinas, which suffers the wound of ignorance and is deprived of its direction toward truth.³⁰ This leaves the proper ordering of our intellectual powers to the truth in a precarious, confused, and disordered state. This deprivation may also affect “man’s desire to know the truth about creatures,” adds Aquinas, for he may wrongly desire to know the truth by not “referring his knowledge to its due end, namely, the knowledge of God.”³¹ This brings us back to the biblical remedy for the noetic effects of sin and to our conclusion of this section in preparation for the next:

The Christian message insists that thought cannot go beyond the limits of fallen humanity, of a fallen world, unless it undergoes a death and a resurrection. The “death” in question is a discipline, an asceticism, provided for the human mind by ecclesial experience (worship, meditations on the Scriptures, prayer, religious

love) all of which purify little by little the eye of the human intellect. The “resurrection” involves the transformation of fallen reason into that understanding which mirrors the Word of God, in whose image and to whose likeness we were originally made. In this resurrection of the mind we rise into the life of the Holy Spirit. The mind becomes spiritual, penetrating into the ultimate significance or bearing of things, as it becomes attuned to the Spirit of God.³²

Of course, faith needs natural reason. Understanding what natural reason is requires distinguishing among “absolute reason,” “pure reason” and “natural reason.” Following Dominican theologian Aidan Nichols, I explain these distinct concepts of reason as follows:

[1] ‘Absolute reason’ refuses all revelation, as of set purpose; [2] ‘pure reason’, beloved of rationalism, belongs only with a state of pure nature which has never, in the concrete, existed; [and 3] ‘natural reason’, on the other hand, remains open and *disponible* [disposable, available] where revelation is concerned: it is able to enter into a relation with the historically realized situation of humankind, whether fallen or renewed.”³³ Gilson rejects not only [1] but also [2]. In particular, regarding [2], “pure reason” does not, concretely, exist because the natural reasoning of actual human beings is a religious act, that is, already influenced by the central religious disposition of the heart, whether fallen or renewed, either for or against God. Furthermore, natural reason is not self-sufficient—reason is finite, fallible, and fallen; it has a ministerial, or subsidiary, role and certainly not a magisterial one; by its very nature, reason is dependent upon God, submitting to and serving divine revelation, indeed, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, as Gilson puts it; hence, it inherently lacks self-sufficiency, not just with respect to divine revelation but in its own sphere. In sum, the Christian scholar’s vocation is to put his whole life, including his intellectual life, at the service of Christ the King.

Furthermore, Gilson affirms that what faith and reason bring each other is mutual aid: in sum, reasonable faith on the one hand, faithful reason on the other. Here Gilson echoes the teaching of Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, August 4, 1879:

In sum, grace restores
or renews nature, ...

Those, therefore, who to the study of philosophy unite obedience to the Christian faith, are philosophizing in the best possible way; for the splendor of the divine truths, received into the mind, helps the understanding, and not only detracts in nowise from its dignity, but adds greatly to its nobility, keenness, and stability. For surely that is a worthy and most useful exercise of reason when men give their minds to disproving those things which are repugnant to faith and proving the things which conform to faith. In the first case they cut the ground from under the feet of error and expose the viciousness of the arguments on which error rests; while in the second case they make themselves masters of weighty reasons for the sound demonstration of truth and the satisfactory instruction of any reasonable person. Whoever denies that such study and practice tend to add to the resources and expand the faculties of the mind must necessarily and absurdly hold that the mind gains nothing from discriminating between the true and the false. Justly, therefore, does the Vatican Council [I] commemorate in these words the great benefits which faith has conferred upon reason: Faith *frees* and saves reason *from error*, and endows it with *manifold* knowledge. A wise man, therefore, would not accuse faith and look upon it as opposed to reason and natural truths, but would rather offer heartfelt thanks to God, and sincerely rejoice that, in the density of ignorance and in the flood-tide of error, holy faith, like a friendly star, shines down upon his path and points out to him the fair gate of truth beyond all danger of wandering.³⁴

Accordingly, faith needs reason in order to *show* the reasonableness of holding Christian beliefs to be true. But *vice versa*, most significantly, human reason needs faith in order for its truth-oriented capacities to be freed from the noetic effects of sin, especially the presumption of the human mind's self-sufficiency,³⁵ and be led to attain the fullness of truth. Thus, faith leads human reason by properly relating it to the truths of revelation and, in turn, helping man's reason to think faithfully in the light of these truths about God, man, and the world.

Common Grace, Particular Grace, and the Antithesis

What is common grace? Dutch neo-Calvinist philosopher S.U. Zuidema (1906-1975) correctly states, in his penetrating study of Kuyper's doctrine of common grace, that there is a tension or contradiction in Kuyper's view, particularly regarding the relationship between common grace and particular grace, also called saving grace by Mouw,³⁶ et al, or, by neo-Calvinist philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977), "renewing" or "regenerating grace."³⁷ Does common grace have an independent purpose such that it "has a purpose of its own, next to and even against God's special, saving grace"? On this construal of Kuyper's doctrine of common grace, the latter "has a purpose which as such cannot be placed in subservience to God's reconciling, redeeming and electing work in His covenant of grace."³⁸ This construal, on the one hand, reflects a dualistic construal of nature and grace such that "the Christian ... need not live out of God's grace in Christ but can go his own 'natural' way."³⁹ Zuidema puts it correctly, on the other hand, when he states that the doctrine of common grace "in no way suggests or implies the existence of anything like an area of life where the Christian can operate autonomously, i.e., independently of God's Word and detached from the grace of regeneration. Wherever 'common grace' functions as a blank cheque for a non-Christian walk of life and a non-Christian mind, there the doctrine is brutally violated."⁴⁰ This, too, is Mouw's view: "Common grace must be held alongside a clear recognition of the reality of 'the antithesis', the deep opposition between redeemed and unredeemed patterns of life and thought."⁴¹ On the ground of common grace, the cultural activity neither of Christians nor non-Christians is neutral with respect to the antithesis, that is, as Mouw puts it, "the deep opposition between redeemed and unredeemed patterns of life and thought."⁴²

Zuidema continues by arguing that there is an inner contradiction in Kuyper's thought: "Kuyper explicitly both combats the idea of an independent purpose of common grace and teaches it approvingly. He combats the idea when he asserts that also with respect to the divine order for the present dispensation it must be said that 'the order of particular grace obtains.'⁴³ In other words, Kuyper's

“doctrine of common grace was not at all to pave the way for some sort of ‘neutral’ appreciation of the cultural activity and achievements of the unbelievers.”⁴⁴ Adds Zuidema, “Here the doctrine of the independent purpose of common grace is denied in so many words, and history, which in the present dispensation takes place ‘in the doctrine of common grace’, is conceived of Christocentrically and soteriologically. Here *Pro Rege* sounds the dominant note, or to put it more correctly: here Christ is confessed also as the ‘King of common grace’ and common grace is denied a purpose of its own independent of particular grace.”⁴⁵

In this connection, we need to ask what the purpose of *particular grace* is. To answer that question, we shall see that we need an understanding of the relationship of nature and grace, such as expressed above by Catholic philosopher Gilson. To help us with that understanding, Zuidema explains, “Common grace checks the operation of sin and the curse of sin, and in principle makes possible again the unfolding of creation’s potentialities and the development of the creature.”⁴⁶

Mouw also defines common grace as a grace “*restraining* the sinfulness of depraved humanity.”⁴⁷ But he pushes his definition to go beyond restraint of evil to include “an ‘internal’ capacity to do good in the life of the unbeliever.”⁴⁸ Why? Essentially because God’s purposes in the world are not limited to the restraint of sin’s having its full way with the creation.⁴⁹ He posits a link here to Kuyper’s view of common grace. As Mouw explains,

Kuyper insisted God also extends “internal” gracious benefits to unregenerate human beings. His list of examples is significant here. We see common grace at work, he says, “wherever civic virtue, a sense of domesticity, natural love, the practice of human virtue, the improvement of the public conscience, integrity, mutual loyalty among people, and a feeling for piety leaven life [exist].”⁵⁰

This, too, is the view of Bavinck. Although he recognizes the restraining grace of God, he holds

... God’s purposes in the world are not limited to the restraint of sin’s having its full way with the creation.

that the unregenerate man is still able “to achieve much good,” and hence he has the internal capacity to do good as a fruit of God’s common grace. Still, he distinguishes the restraining or conserving grace of common grace from what Dooyeweerd later calls “renewing” or “reconciling grace”⁵¹ and Kuyper calls “particular grace.”⁵² Bavinck adds, “When the Heidelberg Catechism says that man is wholly incapable of doing good, and inclined to all evil, then by this *good*, as the *Articles against the Remonstrants* clearly state, we are to understand *saving good*.” Bavinck elaborates on the distinction between common grace and particular grace:

Of such saving good[,] man is by nature wholly incapable. He can do no good which is internal, spiritual good, which is perfectly pure in the eyes of God[,] who searches the heart, which is in total agreement, both in a spiritual and in a literal

sense, with the demands of the law, and which therefore according to the promise of the law should be able to earn eternal life and heavenly blessedness. But this is absolutely not to say that man should not by the common grace of God ... be in position to bring much good to pass. In his personal life he can by his reason and will restrain his evil imagination and lusts and apply himself to virtue. In his community and social life he can honestly and faithfully fulfill his obligations and assist in the promotion of welfare and culture, science and art. In one word, by means of all the forces with which God surrounds the natural sinful man, he enables him still to live a human life here on earth.⁵³

Dooyeweerd “recognizes in ‘common grace’ a counter force against the destructive works of sin in the cosmos.”⁵⁴ He refers to common grace as a “conserving grace.”⁵⁵ “Its conserving effect is primarily manifest in the preservation of the temporal world-order by God in Christ Jesus, as Head of the Covenant, so that the disintegrating effect of the fall into sin in temporal life is checked.”⁵⁶ Dooyeweerd eloquently describes the conserving grace *in* Christ. He explicitly avoids the image that

common grace and particular grace run along parallel tracks, existing independently side-by-side, with completely independent purposes, having only an extrinsic relationship to each other. On the one hand, says Dooyeweerd,

Nothing in our apostate world can get lost in Christ Whoever relinquishes the “world” taken in the sense of *sin*, of the “*flesh*” in its Scriptural meaning, does not really lose anything of the creaturely meaning, but on the contrary he gets a share in the fullness of meaning of Christ, in Whom God will give us *everything*. It is all due to God’s common grace in Christ that there are still means left in the temporal world to resist the destructive force of the elements that have got loose; that there are still means to combat disease, to check psychic maladies, to practice logical thinking, to save cultural development from going down into savage barbarism, to develop language, to preserve the possibility of social intercourse, to withstand injustice, and so on. All these things are the fruits of Christ’s work, even before His appearance on the earth. From the very beginning God has viewed His fallen creation in the light of the Redeemer.⁵⁷

On the other hand, adds Dooyeweerd, “Common grace is meaningless without Christ as the root and head of the regenerated human race. Meaningless without Him, because it only manifests itself in the temporal cosmos. And the latter is necessarily related to its religious root and does not have any existence apart from it. *Gratia communis* is grace shown to mankind as a whole, which is regenerate in its new root Jesus Christ, but has not yet been loosened from its old apostate root. This is the meaning of Jesus’ parable of the tares among the wheat. The wheat and the tares must grow together until the harvest.”⁵⁸ Significantly, Dooyeweerd’s reflections on common grace cut through the difficulties Kuyper had in formulating the relationship between common grace and particular grace. Does common grace have a purpose independent of Christ’s redemptive work? No, argues Dooyeweerd:

Common grace in the first place consists in the maintenance of the temporal world-order in all its structures against the disintegration by sin. In this sense common grace embraces “the

evil and the good together” and is restricted to temporal life. Special grace [particular grace or saving grace], however, is concerned with the renewal of the religious root of the creation in Christ Jesus as Head of the regenerated human race and must not be considered in an individualistic soteriological sense. From this it follows that particular grace is the real root and foundation of common grace. It is therefore absolutely contrary to the Biblical standpoint when a distinction is made between two independent realms or spheres of grace. As the Redeemer, Christ is the Regenerator of the entire fallen cosmos. As the Mediator of the Covenant of grace in its religious fullness, He is the Root of common grace, the King whose kingship embraces the whole of temporal life.⁵⁹

Zuidema argues that all things considered, Kuyper resolved the question regarding the relationship between common grace and particular grace because Kuyper does affirm that the purpose of the former does not exist outside the latter, given that the latter—in Kuyper’s words—“restores creation in its root.” Indeed, Zuidema sees more maturity in Kuyper’s later statement: “Christ as the Mediator of Redemption not only may lay claim to the central, spiritual core of man, but also is in principle the new Root of all created reality and the Head, the new Head, of the ‘human race’. With that, Kuyper had broken with his own polarly dualistic contrast between particular grace and common grace. That is why he could state more forcefully in his writings on *Pro Rege* [For the King] than in those on *Gemeene Gratie* [Common Grace] that we are in the service of Christ throughout the entire domain of common grace.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, to claim that particular grace restores creation at its root includes the idea not only that the original creation structures hold and are enduringly valid in the regime of sin, but also that those “creation structures . . . serve to realize the original goal and purpose of the world in the present dispensation.”⁶¹ As Mouw puts it, “God did not give up on these original designs.”⁶² And Zuidema explains, “Common grace only operates by linking up with the creation and always relates things back to the creation. The creation, to be sure, is in constant development. But this dynamic unfolding is itself creaturely, is embedded in the creation.”⁶³

Moreover, Zuidema adds, Kuyper’s “Pro Rege call and his doctrine of the antithesis were always intrinsically connected with the acceptance and recognition of the creation ordinances and creation structures and never with an imaginary would-be ‘Christian’ world.”⁶⁴ That is, Zuidema argues, “Cultural activity *Pro Rege* arises from regeneration, but abides by the ordinances for the life of the creature, by the creation ordinances as maintained and developed by common grace.”⁶⁵ In other words, Kuyper rightly sees that nature and grace belong together such that grace renews and restores creation from its root. Says Kuyper, “You cannot see the richness of grace if you do not see how its root fibers everywhere penetrate into the joints and rifts in the life of nature. Now this connection [between nature and grace] you cannot see if ‘grace’ makes you think first of the salvation of your soul and not first and foremost of the *Christ of God*. It is for this very reason that Scripture constantly reminds us that the Savior of the world is at the same time the Creator of the world; in fact, that He could only become its Savior because He was its Creator.”⁶⁶ Thus, the purpose of common grace is not independent of particular grace, of redemptive grace. And this can only be seen if our understanding of the relationship between nature and grace is such that God’s grace in Christ—as I said above—restores all life to its fullness, penetrating and perfecting and transforming the fallen creation from within its own order, or creation structures, bringing creation into conformity with His will and purpose with the normative order of creation.

John Paul II, Common Grace, and Creation Order

Now, John Paul II never uses the term “common grace,” but he does have in mind what the latter is about. “But no darkness of error or of sin can totally take away from man the light of God the Creator”⁶⁷: These opening sentences of Vatican II’s *Lumen gentium* state that Christ, not the Church, is the light of all nations, but that this light shines

... Kuyper rightly sees that nature and grace belong together such that grace renews and restores creation from its root.

on the Church’s face, especially in its proclamation of the Gospel. The human reception of that light—and hence of the Gospel—is, however, open to resistance and hence to distortion, misinterpretation, and rejection.⁶⁸ And consider this: “And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not understood it He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him” (John 1: 5, 10). These verses speak of the negative reaction of the world to the coming of the light. As Karol Wojtyła, the future John Paul II, rightly said, “Jesus is both the light that shines for mankind and at the same time a sign of contradiction . . . , that sign which, more than ever, men are resolved to oppose.”⁶⁹

Vatican II’s ecclesiology, as it is expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*, is not just about the Church being in the world.

This document views the Church against the religious dynamics of our culture. In sum, “A monumental struggle [of the Kingdom of God] against the powers of evil pervades the whole history of man.”⁷⁰

Thus, the drama of man’s life is a spiritual battle throughout the whole of the temporal creation⁷¹: “Finding himself in the midst of the battlefield man has to struggle to do what is right, and it is at great cost to himself, and aided by God’s grace, that he succeeds in achieving his own inner integrity. Hence, the church of Christ, trusting in the design of the creator (to be cultivator and custodian of the goods of creation) and admitting that progress can contribute to man’s true happiness, still feels called upon to echo the words of the apostle: ‘Do not be conformed to this world’” (Rom. 12:2). The Council Fathers add, “‘World’ here means a spirit of vanity and malice whereby human activity from being ordered to the service of God and man is distorted to an instrument of sin.”⁷²

The Second Vatican Council was gripped by St. Paul’s vision of cosmic redemption in Christ (Col 1: 9-23). Basic to this vision is the truth that *the whole creation is recapitulated in Christ*. In the written Word of God, the lordship of Jesus Christ over cre-

ation and redemption is revealed (Phil. 2:11). This is the Church's greatest resource for transforming the world.

In this light, the Council affirmed, "The good news of Christ continually renews the life and culture of fallen man ... as it were from within; it fortifies, completes and restores [it] in Christ."⁷³ This view, according to the Pontifical Council for Culture, "gives Christ, the Redeemer of man, center of the universe and of history, the scope of completely renewing the lives of men 'by opening the vast fields of culture to His saving power.'⁷⁴ That is, "the primary objective of [this] approach to culture is to inject the lifeblood of the Gospel into cultures, to renew from within and transform in the light of Revelation the visions of men and society that shape cultures, the concepts of men and women, of the family and of education, of school and of university, of freedom and of truth, of labor and of leisure, of the economy and of society, of the sciences and of the arts."⁷⁵ In sum, God created everything good, but this whole creation has suffered the radical fall into sin. Requiring divine recreation, renewal, and restoration, creation is thus redeemed in Jesus Christ, made a new creation at its very root. This, too, is the view of Mouw, and hence of the Kuyperian tradition.⁷⁶

Thus, the Council teaches, "The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the desires of history and civilization, the center of mankind, the joy of all hearts, and the fulfillment of all aspirations" (§45). Vatican II supported the idea of a sanctified laity whose responsibility is to be engaged in the transformation of the full spectrum of culture for the sake of Christ's Lordship.

According to John Paul, then, culture is, unqualifiedly, neither good nor evil. Interestingly, neo-Calvinist Dooyeweerd and Pope John Paul II both take the gospel parable of the good grain and the weeds (cf. Matt 13:24-230), of the good and evil, growing together until the harvest as a "key to the entire history of mankind." This history, John Paul says, "is the 'theater' of the coexistence of good and evil" until the eschaton. "So even if evil exists alongside good," he adds, "good perseveres besides evil and grows, so to speak, from the same soil, namely human nature."⁷⁷ Significantly, the doctrine of common grace, whether called restraining

grace or conserving grace, affirms that God himself has imposed a definitive limit upon evil in light of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ: "The limit imposed upon evil by divine good has entered human history ... through the work of Christ. So it is impossible to separate Christ from human history." That is, "it is impossible to think of the limit placed by God himself upon ... evil without reference to the mystery of Redemption."

As we saw above, this Christological focus to common grace, what John Paul II calls the "limit" that God imposed upon evil is, too, the view of Kuyper and Dooyeweerd. This is so, only for the reason, says John Paul, that "The Paschal Mystery confirms that good is ultimately victorious, that life conquers death and that love triumphs over hate."⁷⁸ Put differently and succinctly by Dooyeweerd, "the antithesis between sin and creation is *really* abrogated by the redemption in Jesus Christ."⁷⁹

John Paul II's view on nature and grace, as reflected in catechesis on the sacrament of marriage in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, is given in light of creation, fall, and redemption.⁸⁰ The sacrament of marriage belongs to the order of redemption and is under the regime of sin, but marriage itself is grounded in the order of creation. John Paul II wrote the following, regarding marriage in light of creation, fall, and redemption: "Willed by God in the very act of creation, marriage and the family are interiorly ordained to fulfillment in Christ and have need of His graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin and restored to their 'beginning' [back to creation], that is, to full understanding and the full realization of God's plan."⁸¹ This major claim along with its undergirding theology of nature and grace is developed throughout John Paul II's *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*:

When we undertake the analysis of the "beginning" according to the dimension of the theology of the body, we do so by basing ourselves on the words of Christ with which he himself appealed to that "beginning." When he said, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator created them male and female?" (Mt 19: 4), he ordered us and always orders us to return to the depth of the mystery of creation. And we do so in the full awareness of the gift of original inno-

cence, which belonged to man before original sin. Although an insurmountable barrier divides us from what man was then as male and female, through the gift of grace united to the mystery of creation, and from what both were for each other as a reciprocal gift, we are nevertheless *trying to understand that state of original innocence in its link with man's "historical" state after original sin, "the state of fallen and at the same time redeemed nature* [status naturae lapsae simul et redemptae].⁸²

Indeed, John Paul II imitates Christ (see Matt 19:3-9) by appealing to the “beginning,” to the creation structure for marriage, drawing on Genesis 1 and 2 for his understanding of the normative intent of a biblical ontology of creation, the objective structures of creation, in which the original meaning of the union of man and woman as willed by God—a two-in-one-flesh union—from the beginning is grounded. His treatment of these foundational texts is ultimately theological, because grounded in a historical-redemptive dialectic of creation, fall, redemption, and fulfillment, but also philosophical—articulating a philosophical anthropology of the body-person, which in its broadest sense is man himself in the temporal form of existence of human life.

The Word of God teaches that the redemptive work of Christ reaffirms and simultaneously renews the goodness of creation and hence of marriage, of the human body sharing in the dignity of the image of God, of the complementary sexual differentiation of man and woman, and of a faithful, reciprocal, and fruitful love. Yes, in light of the redemptive work of Christ, the Catholic sacramental tradition teaches that the sacrament of marriage renews and restores the reality of marriage—given that it is savagely wounded by the fall and our own personal sin—from *within* its order.

The grace of marriage communicated by the sacrament has two main ends: first, that of *healing*, i.e., of repairing the consequences of sin in the individual and in society; and second and above all,

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that of *perfecting* and *raising* persons in the conjugal institution: “According to faith the disorder we notice so painfully does not stem from the *nature* of man and woman, nor from the nature of their relations, but from *sin*. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman.”⁸³ Vatican II’s *Gaudium et spes* summarizes all of this: “This [marital] love God has judged worthy of special gifts, healing, perfecting and exalting gifts of grace and of charity.”⁸⁴

This two-fold effect means that the grace of the “marital sacrament is not a ‘thing’ added to the reality of the couple from the outside; rather, the couple itself is and must become the living sign of an invisible reality of grace,” as Marc Cardinal Ouellet puts it.⁸⁵

There is an intrinsic relationship between the natural order and the order of Christ’s grace such that grace renews the fallen order of marriage from *within*, orienting it to its proper ends, grace penetrating fallen nature and renewing it from within (“*gratia intra naturam*”). There is an essential continuity in man and a link between creation and redemption. “Endowment with grace is in some sense a ‘new creation,’” says John Paul. “New creation” does not, however, mean that grace is a plus-factor, a gift superadded to the order of creation. Rather, nature and grace, creation and re-creation, the sacrament of creation and redemption are united such that God’s grace affirms and simultaneously renews the fallen creation from *within* its own internal order. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it, “Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins.”⁸⁶

Elsewhere the *Catechism* explains, “In his preaching Jesus unequivocally taught the original meaning of the union of man and woman as the Creator willed it from the beginning *By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin*, [Jesus] himself gives the strength and grace to live marriage in the new dimension of the Reign of God.”⁸⁷ This sacrament not only recovers the order of creation but also, while reaffirming this ordi-

nance of creation, simultaneously deepens, indeed, fulfills the reality of marriage in a reciprocal self-giving, a joining of two in a one-flesh union that is a visible sign of the mystery of the union of Christ with the Church (Eph 5:31-32).

The unity attained in becoming “two-in-one-flesh” (Gen 2:24) in marriage is grounded in the order of creation, and it is affirmed and simultaneously renewed and restored in redemption. Jesus calls us back to the law of creation (Mark 10:6-7) that grounds an inextricable nexus of permanence, twoness, and sexual differentiation for marriage. In particular, marriage is such that it requires sexual difference, the bodily-sexual act, as a foundational prerequisite, indeed, as *intrinsic* to a one-flesh union of man and woman: “So then they are no longer two but one flesh” (Mark 10:8). Since continuity exists between creation and redemption, we can understand why John Paul II sees marriage as “*the primordial sacrament.*” When we look at the visible sign of marriage (“the two shall be one flesh”) in the order of creation from the perspective of the visible sign of Christ and the Church, which is defined in Ephesians as the fulfillment and realization of God’s eternal plan of salvation, we can see John Paul’s point. He says, “In this way, the sacrament of redemption clothes itself, so to speak, in the figure and form of the primordial sacrament Man’s new supernatural endowment with the gift of grace in the ‘sacrament of redemption’ is also a new realization of the Mystery hidden from eternity in God, new in comparison with the sacrament of creation. At this moment, endowment with grace is in some sense a ‘new creation.’” Let’s be clear that it is a “new creation” in the specific sense that “*Redemption means . . . taking up all that is created [in order] to express in creation the fullness of justice, equity, and holiness planned for it by God and to express that fullness above all in man, created male and female ‘in the image of God.’*”

Thus, nature and grace, creation and re-creation, the sacrament of creation and redemption are united such that God’s grace affirms and simultaneously renews the fallen creation from *within* its own internal order: “Marriage is organically inscribed in this new sacrament of redemption, just as it was inscribed in the original sacrament of creation.”⁸⁸

The Purpose of Common Grace

One final element in Zuidema’s penetrating analysis of Kuyper’s doctrine of common grace is his brief discussion of the reason for the existence of common grace. Why is there a prolongation of common grace after the fall and before the eschaton? Mouw considers this question, as I shall show below. In Zuidema’s words, “The prolongation itself is not particular grace: it does not regenerate and does not lead to the blessedness of eternal life in the hereafter. But grace it is: it is the postponement of curse and punishment.” Still, adds Zuidema, “common grace is an act of God’s mercy, of His longsuffering, of His unmerited kindness and forfeited favor.”⁸⁹ Zuidema’s point is rooted in 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, nor wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

In this connection, certain questions arise regarding the treatment of common grace by Calvinists such as Dutch neo-Calvinist theologian Klaas Schilder (1890-1952) and the Dutch-American Presbyterian philosophical theologian Cornelius van Til (1895-1987).⁹⁰ Does God unfold his plan for creation with the defining interest being only the ultimate end, or eternal destinies, of individuals, both of the elect and reprobate? Alternatively, are there multiple divine purposes in the unfolding of God’s design for the total creation?⁹¹ The brief answer to these two questions are “no” and “yes.” No, because creation and fall are not simply a means to realize God’s prime decrees of election and reprobation. Yes, because the totality of creation is not only affected by the fall into sin but also taken up within the purview of God’s redemptive work in Christ. Both Bavinck and the Dutch master of ecumenical and dogmatic theology G.C. Berkouwer (1903-1996) heartily agree with these answers,⁹² but so do Mouw and Kuyper, at least according to Zuidema’s discussion of the latter.

For one, Mouw states his answer to these questions: “[T]he Creator of the world has very broad interests As important as we are in God’s renewing purposes, we fit into a much larger divine agenda. To put it a little differently, God has multiple purposes in the divine plan for both creation

and redemption.”⁹³ Thus, it would be a case of theological reductionism to hold that creation and fall are mere means to realizing God’s primal and basic purpose in election and reprobation, as if to say that creation itself with its multiple divine purposes is not itself taken up within the sweeping unfolding of God’s design for creation. For another, says Berkouwer, “To be sure, the question concerning the meaning and significance of creation entered in—whether creation did not have its own God-given purpose and hence was not more than just a ‘means’ to realize God’s primary decree—but the main concern was nevertheless the question concerning the relation between predestination and fall.”⁹⁴ Moreover, Bavinck explains,

Creation is not just a means for the attainment of the fall, nor is the fall only a means for the attainment of grace and perseverance, and these components in turn are not just a means for the attainment of blessedness and eternal wretchedness. We must never lose sight of the fact that the decrees are as abundantly rich in content as the entire history of the world, for the latter is the total unfolding of the former. Who could possibly sum up world history in a logical outline of just a few terms? Creation, fall, sin, Christ, faith, unbelief, and so forth, are certainly not just related to each other as means, so that a preceding one can fall away the moment the next one has been reached.⁹⁵

Zuidema contrasts Kuyper’s view with that of Schilder, et al. He argues that Kuyper rejects the equal symmetry of election and reprobation; and although Zuidema does not say so, this is the claim of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619); it too categorically rejects equal symmetry:

That the same doctrine of [predestination] teaches that God, by a mere arbitrary act of his will, without the least respect or view to any sin, has predestinated the greatest part of the world to eternal damnation, and had created them for this very purpose; that in the same manner in which election is the fountain [source] and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is

the cause of unbelief and impiety [ungodliness]; and many other things of the same kind ... the Reformed churches not only do not acknowledge, but even detest with their whole soul.⁹⁶

One can surely imagine that the Synod, when writing this passage in the Epilogue of the Canons, had in mind Canon 17 of the Decree on Justification of the Council of Trent (1547): “If anyone says that the grace of justification is given only to those who are predestined to life and that all the others who are called are called indeed but do not receive grace, as they are predestined to evil by the divine power, let him be anathema.”⁹⁷ Not to be outdone in hurling anathemas, however, the Synod of Dort “warns calumniators themselves to consider the terrible judgment of God which awaits them, for bearing false witness against the confessions of so many

Why is there a prolongation of common grace after the fall and before the eschaton?

Churches; for distressing the consciences of the weak; and for laboring to render suspect the society of the truly faithful.”⁹⁸

Berkouwer refers to the Synod’s rejection of an “equal symmetry” between reprobation and election as “an emphatic denial of what many critics conceive to be an essential part of the orthodox doctrine of election.” He insists that the Synod’s “sharp defense [of an “essential asymmetry”] be honored as an essential motif [of Reformed theology]. For thus, very seriously, do the Canons [of Dort] mean to make clear that God is not the author of sin and unbelief.” Throughout his magisterial study *Divine Election*, Berkouwer comes back to this “essential asymmetry” as central to understanding not only the Canons of Dort but also Reformed theology.⁹⁹ He concludes, “It is certainly not Reformed theology that feels called upon to protest against the ‘essential asymmetry’. It is, rather, one of its most important characteristics that it emphatically affirms this asymmetry.”¹⁰⁰

Berkouwer derives this expression of “essential asymmetry” from Gérard Philips, the Belgian Catholic ecclesialogist and key drafter of Vatican II’s *Lumen Gentium*, who, according to Berkouwer,

“sees in it a mark of Roman Catholic theology.”¹⁰¹ There is a definite point of convergence here, he rightly insists, regarding the Reformed view as expressed by the rejection of “the *eodem modo* in the Canons,” on the one hand, and “the Roman Catholic doctrine of election,” on the other.¹⁰² Both share the view that there is a basic asymmetry between election and reprobation. Hence, they both agree that the unfolding of the differentiation between the elect and the reprobate cannot be the main purpose of common grace.

Against this background, we can understand Zuidema’s remarks about Kuyper’s rejection of “equal symmetry” of election and reprobation:

For with Kuyper, election and reprobation are not, as to their worth and end, on the same level. He does not believe in a *gemina praedestinatio*, a double predestination which attaches equal weight and value to election or (and) reprobation. On this point Kuyper [holds,] Christ did not come into the world to condemn the world [John 3: 17], yet it is precisely His coming that increases the condemnation of the unbelievers since they give no heed to so great a salvation [John 3: 18-19]; still, one may not draw the conclusion that Christ came in order that redemption and damnation could be equally realized.¹⁰³

Berkouwer presses the point that this question “is not one of a mere symmetry, but [rather] that God has loved the world (John 3:16).” As he explains in a passage,

It is then no longer understood that God did not send the Son to condemn the world (John 3:17) but that the world should be saved through Him. *This is the profoundest reason for rejecting parallelism [“equal symmetry”]. This rejection does not imply the triumph of a simple sort of universalism.* Immediately after John speaks of the purpose of Christ’s coming, he adds: “He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not has been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). He who contemplated and approaches the gospel from the point of view of symmetry can no longer understand that Christ has come to be a crisis in the world, but he can only see in Him the execution of the symmetrical decree.... The gos-

pel can be understood and preached only if balance, symmetry, and parallelism are excluded. And by that gospel, the Holy Spirit will “convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgments: of sin, because they believe not on me” (John 16:8).¹⁰⁴

In his infinite, all-embracing love, God truly and sincerely desires the salvation of all men in Christ (1 Tim 2:4; 1 John 4:10; Eph 2:4-5). The universal scope of the atoning work of Christ and also of God’s will to save all men from sin is foundational to the received tradition and doctrines of the Church, particularly the magisterial teaching of Vatican II, John Paul II, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This emphasis is consistent with the insistence on the “essential asymmetry” of election and reprobation, and hence with Zuidema’s interpretation of Kuyper’s view that the purpose of common grace is not about the unfolding of the elect and reprobate in history. In the words of the *Catechism*, “Jesus, the Son of God, freely suffered death for us in complete and free submission to the will of God, his Father. By his death he has conquered death, and so opened the possibility of salvation to all men.”¹⁰⁵ Further, we read,

The Scriptures had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of “the righteous, my Servant” as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin” [Isa 53:11; cf. 53:12; Jn 8:34-36; Acts 3:14] Having thus established him in solidarity with us sinners, God “did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all,” so that we might be “reconciled to God by the death of his Son” [Rom 8:32, 5:10].... The Church, following the apostles, teaches that Christ died for all men without exception: “There is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being, for whom Christ did not suffer” [Council of Quiercy].¹⁰⁶

Zuidema reiterates Kuyper’s view that “Christ did not come that the world might be condemned.” But Kuyper rightly adds, “Neither did he come that the world is now automatically saved.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, Kuyper is not a universalist, but neither is Mouw.¹⁰⁸ A significant distinction should be noted here between the universal sufficiency of Christ’s

atonement work and its efficacy.

Trent appeals to this distinction, as did Aquinas earlier. In its Decree on Justification, Trent states, “even though ‘Christ died for all’ [2 Cor 5:15], still not all do receive the benefit of His death, but those only to whom the merit of His passion is imparted.”¹⁰⁹ According to Aquinas, Christ is “the propitiation for our sins, efficaciously for some, but sufficiently for all, because the price of his blood is sufficient for the salvation of all; but it has its effect only in the elect.”¹¹⁰ The merit of Christ’s atonement is sufficient to forgive all human sin (1 Peter 1:18-19; Hebrews 8:18), but also God wills to save all fallen men from sin. Now, that God wills to save all men from sin by virtue of the universal scope of Christ’s atoning work does not mean that his work is efficacious for the salvation of all. So, in respect of its efficacy, Christ’s atoning work is restricted to the many. But in his infinite, all-embracing love, God provides sufficient grace to all men so that they might turn to him and be saved. In other words, the scope of Christ’s atoning work is universal, in his having died for all humanity, but it is efficacious only for the many. This, too, is the view of Mouw because he distinguishes between sufficiency and efficacy.¹¹¹

Conclusion

Thus, I have argued in this article that respecting the themes of common grace, the antithesis, the normative creation order, and the purpose of common grace, one does not have to be a Calvinist in order to be a Kuyperian. I am a “Roman Catholic Kuyperian” on these matters.

Endnotes

1. *All that God Cares About: Common Grace and Divine Delight* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2020), 135. This book is a follow-up to his book *He Shines in All that’s Fair: Culture and Common Grace*, The 2000 Stob Lectures (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).
2. Herman Bavinck, “The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church,” *Calvin Theological Journal*, 27 (1992): 220-251, and at 245. Bavinck praises “Jesuits [who] are diligently at work reconstructing theology and politics, history, and philosophy. In every field they have taken up the challenge and are doing such impressive work that only the naive

Protestant or rabid antipapist can fail to acknowledge or appreciate it.”

3. *Ibid.*, 133; see also, 129.
4. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 183-184.
5. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 129.
6. *Ibid.* 128. It would take us too far afield in this article to treat the complimentary nature of “sphere sovereignty” and the Catholic principle of subsidiarity; they are both anti-totalitarian principles seeking to recognize intermediate structures between the state and the individual. See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Chapter 4, Principles of the Church’s Social Doctrine, nos. 160-196.
7. *Ibid.*, 123.
8. Al Wolters, “What is to be done? Toward a Neo-Calvinist Agenda,” *Comment* 23, no. 2 (December 2005), 38.
9. *Ibid.*, 131.
10. Eduardo Echeverria, *Dialogue of Love, Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic Ecumenist* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010); *Berkouwer and Catholicism, Disputed Questions* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013); *Studies in Reformed Theology*, Vol. 24: *Divine Election, A Catholic Orientation in Dogmatic and Ecumenical Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publication, 2016); and *Revelation, History, and Truth: A Hermeneutics of Dogma* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2018).
11. St. Pope John Paul II, 1995 Encyclical, *Ut unum sint*, nos. 28, 47.
12. *Gaudet mater ecclesiae*, no. 14.
13. Heinrich Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions on Matters of Faith and Morals* ed. Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), no. 3020.
14. See Eduardo Echeverria, *Pope Francis: The Legacy of Vatican II*, Revised and Expanded Second Edition (Hobe Sound, FL: Lectio Publishing, 2019), 245-297.
15. Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, no. 33. Online: http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_11121925_quas-primas.html.
16. This is the title of an essay in Etienne Gilson’s

remarkable collection of essays, *Christianity and Philosophy*, translated by Ralph MacDonald, C.S.B. (New York & London: Sheed & Ward, 1939), Chapter V, 103-126.

17. Ibid., 108.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 107.
20. Ibid., 108-109.
21. Msgr. Thomas G. Guarino, *Foundations of Systematic Theology* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 20.
22. I owe this succinct way of formulating the various possibilities of relating nature, sin and grace to Al Wolters, "What is to be done? Toward a neo-Calvinist Agenda." For an introduction to his thinking, see *Creation Regained* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985).
23. Jacques Maritain states, "There is one error that consists in ignoring [the] distinction between nature and grace. There is another that consists in ignoring their union," *Clairvoyance de Rome*, 222. Cited in De Lubac, "Apologetics and Theology," *Theological Fragments* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 103, n. 28.
24. Gilson, *Christianity and Philosophy*, 21, 24, and 111, respectively.
25. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 9, 22, 32, 77.
26. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Epiphany: A Theological Introduction to Catholicism* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1966), 10.
27. Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, trans. John Zucchi (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
28. On the effect of sin upon reasoning, see Abraham Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, translated from the Dutch by Rev. J. Hendrik De Vries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), Chapter II, "Science Impaired by Sin," 106-114, particularly 110-111.
29. On this, see Abraham Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, 106-114, especially 106-107: "[I]n every theory of knowledge which is not to deceive itself, the fact of sin must henceforth claim a more serious consideration."
30. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q.85, a. 3, Resp.
31. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q.167, a. 1. I am indebted to Reinhard Hutter of the Catholic University of America for this reference to Aquinas, and who in his unpublished paper, "Intellect and Will in the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio* and in Thomas Aquinas," accurately comments on this passage from Aquinas: "What a sweeping anticipatory indictment of the whole range of modern immanentism, be it in philosophy, natural science, or the so-called humanities."
32. Nichols, *Epiphany*, 55.
33. Ibid., 10.
34. Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, Encyclical, August 4, 1879, no. 4.
35. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, divine revelation liberates reason from its presumption of self-sufficiency. On this, see Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One: God*, translated with an Introduction by Anton C. Pegis, F.R.S.C. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), Chapter 5, paragraph 4.
36. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 86.
37. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 3, *The Structures of Individuality of Temporal Reality*, trans. D. H. Freeman and H. de Jongste ((Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1953), 525).
38. S.U. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," in *Communication and Confrontation: A Philosophical Appraisal and Critique of Modern Society and Contemporary Thought* (Assen/Kampen: Royal Van Gorcum Ltd., 1972),
39. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 3.
40. Ibid., 7.
41. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 71.
42. Ibid., 71; see also 116.
43. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 3, 4.
44. Ibid., 3.
45. Ibid., 5.
46. Ibid., 14.
47. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 42.
48. Ibid., 46.

49. Ibid., 51.
50. Ibid, 52, citing Kuyper, *Common Grace: God's Gifts for a Fallen World*, 3 vols., trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman and Ed M. van der Mass (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 1:539-40. See also, 56, 60, and 65.
51. Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 3, 525.
52. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 9, citing A. Kuyper study on the Canons of Dort, *E Voto Dordraceno, of de Gelofte van Dordt* (4 vols.; Amsterdam, 1892-95), II, 537.
53. Herman Bavinck, *The Wonderful Works of God*, Introduction by R. Carlton Wynne, Indexing by Charles Williams, trans. Henry Zylstra (Glensdale, PA: Westminster Seminary Press, 2019 [1956]), 232-233.
54. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 1, *The Necessary Presuppositions of Philosophy*, trans. D.H. Freedman and William Young (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1953), 523.
55. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 3, *The Structures of Individuality of Temporal Reality*, trans. D. H. Freeman and H. de Jongste ((Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1953), 524.
56. Ibid.
57. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 2, *The General Theory of the Modal Spheres*, trans. D. H. Freeman and H. de Jongste (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1953), 34-35.
58. Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 1, 523.
59. Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 3, 506-507.
60. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 44-45.
61. Ibid., 17.
62. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 32, and also, 76.
63. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 18.
64. Ibid., 46.
65. Ibid., 39.
66. Ibid., 48, citing Kuyper, *Gemeene Gratie*, 1: 228. I am following here the English translation by Harry van Dyke in the Zuidema volume rather than the translation from *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, edited by James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 173.
67. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, Encyclical Letter, August 6, 1993, no. 1. Online: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html.
68. John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantum*, Encyclical Letter, May 18, 1986, nos. 55-56. Online: [Dominum et Vivificantumwww.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_18051986_dominum-et-vivificantem.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_18051986_dominum-et-vivificantem.html).
69. Karol Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 198.
70. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 37.
71. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 409.
72. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 37.
73. Ibid., no. 28.
74. Ibid., no. 58. The quote within the quote is from the Pontifical Council for Culture, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, May 23, 1999, nos. 3, 6. On line: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_03061999_pastoral_en.html.
75. *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, no. 25.
76. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 22.
77. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity: Conversations at the Dawn of the Millennium* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), 4.
78. Ibid., 15, 19, 21, and for this quote, 55.
79. Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 1, 523.
80. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1601-1617.
81. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, November 22, 1981, no. 3. Online: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html.
82. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*:

- A Theology of the Body*, translation, introduction, and Index by Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006 [1997]), 18.3. For a philosophical, theological and biblical study of John Paul's work, see my book, "In the Beginning" *A Theology of the Body* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).
83. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1607.
 84. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 49.
 85. Marc Cardinal Ouellet, *Mystery and Sacrament of Love: A Theology of Marriage and the Family for the New Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 60.
 86. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2336.
 87. *Ibid.*, nos. 1614-1615.
 88. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 97.3, 102.7, respectively.
 89. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 23; see also, 15.
 90. Mouw treats Van Til in Chapters 5-6 and Schilder in Chapter 14 of *All that God Cares About*.
 91. Mouw, *He Shines in all that's Fair, Culture and Common Grace*, 50. See also, Chapter Four, "'Infra' versus 'Supra,'" 53-74.
 92. I discuss their views and those of others, such as John Calvin, Karl Barth, Matthias Joseph Scheeben, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, on double predestination in my book, *Divine Election, A Catholic Orientation in Dogmatic and Ecumenical Perspective*.
 93. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 31.
 94. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, trans. Hugo Bekker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 263.
 95. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation II*, trans. John Vriend, edited by John Bolt (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 390-392. For Berkouwer's fundamental agreement with Bavinck, see *Divine Election*, 272-273.
 96. The Canons of Dort (1618-1619), in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Vol. 4, 1600-1693, Compiled with Introduction by James T. Dennison, Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), The Canons of Dort (1618-1619), 120-153, and at Conclusion, 152.
 97. *Denzinger*, no. 1567.
 98. Canons of Dort, 152.
 99. On the Canons, see *Divine Election*, 172, 175-178, 182, 189-190, 197-198, 201, 209. The late Dutch theologian, Klaas Runia rightly remarks, "We are not saying too much, when we call the non-*eodem modo* in particular the master key which Berkouwer uses to open the door to the real teaching of the Canons, especially its teaching about reprobation" ("Recent Reformed Criticisms of the Canons," in *Crisis in the Reformed Churches*, edited Peter Y. De Jong (Grand Rapids: Reformed Fellowship, 1968), 161-180.
 100. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, 182.
 101. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, 182n16; see also 20.
 102. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, 198.
 103. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 24.
 104. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, 201-202; emphasis added.
 105. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1019.
 106. *Ibid.*, nos. 601, 603, 605.
 107. Zuidema, "Common Grace and Christian Action in Abraham Kuyper," 31.
 108. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 146.
 109. *Denzinger*, no. 1523.
 110. *Commentary on Titus 1:2:6*. See also, *Summa theologiae* III. 48.2.
 111. Mouw, *All that God Cares About*, 55.