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Abraham Kuyper and natural theology

ABSTRACT

This paper explores Kuyper's approach to natural theology and general revelation. Kuyper's view of natural theology was that it is important but limited. Kuyper rejected the view that general revelation provides the foundations for special revelation as it results in the autonomy of reason. Furthermore, he rejected natural theology as rational proof or argument for the existence and nature of God. He distinguished but did not separate general and special revelation from each other. Kuyper also accepted "creational revelation", which is a better term for his view of general revelation.

Keywords: creational revelation; general revelation; Kuyper; natural law; natural theology; special revelation

OPSOMMING

Hierdie artikel ondersoek Kuyper se benadering tot natuurlike teologie en algemene openbaring. Kuyper se siening van natuurlike teologie was dat dit belangrik maar beperk is. Kuyper het die siening verwerp dat algemene openbaring die grondslag vir spesiale openbaring bied, aangesien dit tot die outonomie van die rede lei. Verder het hy natuurlike teologie as rasonele bewys of argument vir die bestaan en aard van God verwerp. Hy het tussen algemene en spesiale openbaring onderskei, maar dit nie van mekaar geskei nie. Kuyper het ook "skeppingsopenbaring" aanvaar, wat 'n meer gepaste begrip vir sy siening van algemene openbaring is.

Kernwoorde: algemene openbaring; Kuyper; natuurlike teologie; natuurlike wet; skeppingsopenbaring; spesiale openbaring

1. Introduction

The statesman theologian Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) was something of a polymath. He wrote on a wide range of topics. Although he didn't write explicitly on natural theology or natural law, his contributions to the topic were significant. This paper aims to explore his view of natural theology and general revelation, particularly as there have been conflicting opinions on Kuyper's view of these topics.¹

Ballor and Flikkema, in their introduction to Kuyper's *Common grace: Volume 3*, natural law is defined as "the moral aspect of the penetrating arrow of general revelation" (as cited by Charles, 2008:130). They maintain that "Kuyper himself is quite clear: natural law is a manifestation of God's common grace" (Kuyper, 2020:xviii). Also, "Kuyper frequently

1 Muller (2019:5-35) also notes the diverse views. Muller (2019:33) argues that "Kuyper and, to an even greater extent, Bavinck retain a more positive approach to natural knowledge, natural principia, and natural theology ...".

speaks of the moral law by using the grammar of ‘divine ordinance’” (Ibid.). They also assert: “Because there is such a close connection between the natural, moral law and common grace, Kuyper often catachrestically uses the terms interchangeably.” (Kuyper, 2020:xx). Whereas Demarest (1982:141) asserts the following in his overview of *General revelation*:

Although Abraham Kuyper and Karl Barth, in many respects, were poles apart theologically, the two theologians converge in rejecting the ultimate utility of general revelation. Both insist that man’s rational capacity to know God has been destroyed by sin. Both maintain that only through a supernatural experience is man capable of knowledge of God in any sense.

Demarest (1982:244) briefly examines Kuyper’s approach to general revelation. He provides a diagram, which is shown in Figure 1 below.

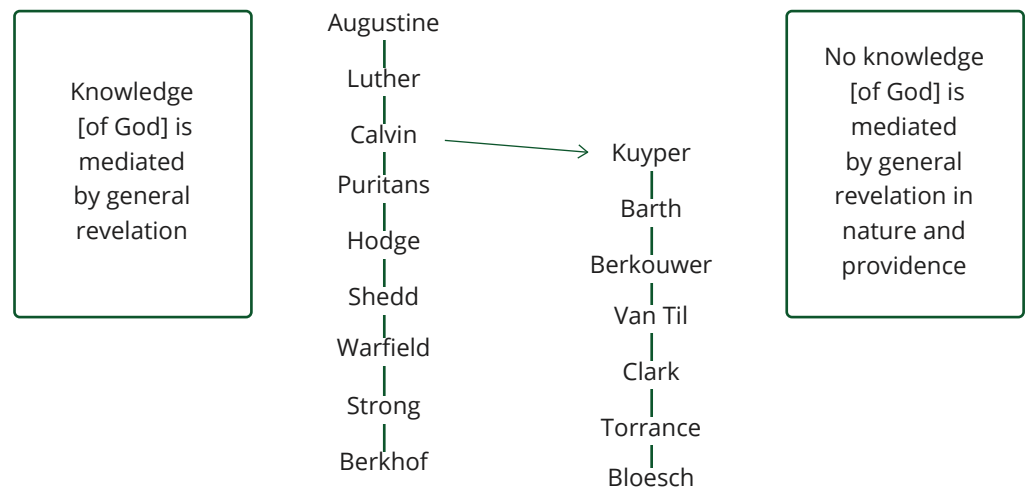


Figure 1: Two approaches to general revelation.

Source: Demarest (1982:244)

Figure 1 clearly shows that according to Demarest ,Kuyper is a theologian and philosopher who denies that knowledge about God can be mediated by general revelation², which is a denial of natural theology.

Likewise, Sudduth (2009:3) argues that Kuyper is among those who are critical of natural theology:

This is particularly true of representatives of Reformed orthodoxy in the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition originating with Abraham Kuyper in the Netherlands in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Herman Bavinck, Herman Dooyeweerd, and G.H. Kersten, for example, provide highly negative evaluations of natural theology.

Plantinga (1980:49) remarks as follows on the range of Reformed views on natural theology: “A few Reformed thinkers – B.B. Warfield, for example – endorse the theistic proofs; but for the most part the Reformed attitude has ranged from tepid endorsement, through indifference, to suspicion, hostility, and outright accusations of blasphemy.”

2 Demarest (1982:244) concludes “that general revelation mediates a modest fund of knowledge concerning God’s existence, perfections, providential purposes, and moral demands”. He thus places himself in the line of the Puritans.

If Charles and Ballor (Kuyper, 2020:xviii) and Demarest (1982:244) are correct, then these views are visible not only in reformed theology but also in Kuyper. In order to understand Kuyper's position, we first need to define what the seemingly elastic term "natural theology" means.

2. Defining critical terminology

What is the relationship between general and special revelation, common and particular grace, natural law, and natural theology? These terms are often used loosely and interchangeably and have even been associated with the two-kingdoms view. VanDrunen (2010) asserts that common grace is part of natural theology.³

As Novak (2019) puts it: "Until quite recently, natural law thinking had been a Catholic preserve." This preserve was primarily associated with Thomas Aquinas. However, this has been changing.⁴

Haines (2021:12) defines natural theology as "that part of *philosophy* which explores that which man can know about God (his existence, divine nature, etc.) from nature alone, via man's divinely bestowed faculty of reason on aided by special revelation from any religion, or that presupposing the truth of any religion".⁵ In his turn, Vos (2022:4) defines natural theology as follows: "Natural theology is a knowledge of God that takes its content and method from the world as it presents itself to us as governed by fixed laws."

Sudduth (2009:4) discerns two types of natural theology α and β .⁶ He writes: "First, there is a distinction between natural theology as natural *knowledge* of God and natural theology as rational *proofs* or *arguments* for the existence and nature of God. ... I will designate

3 The title of VanDrunen (2010) explicitly joins the terms "natural law" and "two kingdoms".

4 On the resurgence of reformed scholasticism, see, for example, Van Asselt (2011), McGraw (2019) and Grabill (2006). For a re-evaluation of the reformed view of Aquinas, see Svensson and VanDrunen (editors) (2018). There seems to be a selective re-appropriation of Aquinas. For example, his view of Mary as a co-redeemer or of purgatory seems not to be appropriate.

"From the conclusions we have drawn above (III:86:4, III:86:5; Supplement:12:1), I answer that it is sufficiently clear that there is a purgatory after this life. For if the debt of punishment is not paid in full after the stain of sin has been washed away by contrition, nor again are venial sins always removed when mortal sins are remitted, and if justice demands that sin be set in order by due punishment, it follows that one who after contrition for his fault and after being absolved, dies before making due satisfaction, is punished after this life. Wherefore those who deny Purgatory speak against the justice of God: for which reason such a statement is erroneous and contrary to faith. Hence Gregory of Nyssa, after the words quoted above, adds: 'This we preach, holding to the teaching of truth, and this is our belief; this the universal Church holds, by praying for the dead that they may be loosed from sins.' This cannot be understood except as referring to Purgatory: and whosoever resists the authority of the Church, incurs the note of heresy." (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Appendix 2)

On Kuyper's view of Aquinas, see Eglinton (2021:452-467).

5 In his *Natural theology* (2021), David Haines identifies what he perceives to be objections to natural theology. These include the following:

1. No Trinity = not the true God.
2. Natural theology introduces Greek thought into Christian doctrine.
3. Greek philosophy is erroneous and incoherent.
4. Finding theistic proofs in the early church fathers is anachronistic.

6 Van den Brink takes issue with the title of Sudduth's book. He notes: "*The Reformed Endorsement of Natural Theology* would not only have been both a more original and provocative title, but also one which would have much more truthfully captured the book's thesis" (Van den Brink, 2012:309).

the former natural theology α and the latter natural theology β ." The β form is evident in Haines's definition above and the α in Vos's definition.

Sudduth's natural theology α appears to be a form of general revelation. We hope to show that Kuyper has little problem with natural theology α but would take issue with natural theology β .

3. Kuyper's approach

There has been a tendency among theologians to conflate natural theology with general revelation, though some blurring of boundaries is inevitable. However, Berkouwer (1955:47) believes this identification is "untenable". Kuyper acknowledges the distinction. Although there is some ambiguity in Kuyper's view of natural theology – as evidenced in the contrasting views of Demarest and Charles mentioned above – Kuyper acknowledges both the importance and the limitations of natural theology.

There has also been a tendency to separate special and natural theology. In *Principles of sacred theology*, Kuyper (1968:373) states the following:

It is, therefore, of the greatest importance, to see clearly, that special theology may not be considered a moment without natural theology, and that on the other hand natural theology of itself is unable to supply any pure knowledge of God. That special revelation (revelatio specialist) is not conceivable without the hypothesis of natural theology, is simply because grace never creates one single new reality.

Kuyper thus rejects separation since special theology and natural theology are connected. Truth cannot be separated out. They are distinct but not separate since they are "allied to one another" and are thus "capable of affecting each other" (Kuyper, 1968:376). There is but one knowledge of God, the content of which flows from "both sources, whose waters have mingled themselves" (Kuyper, 1968:377). He also argues: "It is on the canvas of natural knowledge of God itself that special revelation is embroidered" (Kuyper, 1968:374).

For Kuyper, natural theology is important. In this regard, he states the following: "Without natural, Theology there is no Abba, Father, conceivable, any more than a Moloch ritual." (Kuyper, 1968:374) Kuyper (1968:301) acknowledges that the seed of religion (*semen religionis*)⁷ that is still universally present in the life of fallen sinners creates a generic unity between "the most repulsive idolatry" to the "purest revelation". However, Kuyper (1968:301) states that Christianity and Paganism do not move in the same direction but in two completely different directions, where the first is ranked higher than the second. Christianity is a positive development, whereas Paganism is a negative development from the seed of religion. If the first is a "plus", the second is the "minus" form of development (Kuyper, 1968:301–2).

Special revelation builds upon natural theology; natural theology is the basis for special revelation. In this regard, Kuyper (1968:309) states the following:

Natural theology is and always will be the natural pair of legs on which we must walk, while special revelation is the pair of crutches, which render help, as long as the weakened or broken legs refuse us their service.

Natural theology has a limited role as it is not to be fully trusted or depended upon, so Kuyper (1968:309) argues. It provides no infallible information. Those who celebrate natural theology often fail to consider the effects of sin on human thinking and reasoning. This is something that Kuyper (1968:309) stresses:

7 A form of natural theology α .

And for this reason, you cannot depend upon natural theology as it works in fallen man; and its imperfect lines and forms bring you, through the broken image, in touch with the reality of the infinite, only when an accident enables you to recover this defective ideal for yourself, and natural theology receives this accident only in special revelation.

If “natural” within the context of natural theology implies something autonomous, natural theology is a myth. If “natural” within the context of natural theology implies that which can be understood by all through reason, that is also a myth. If natural theology is the process of proving the existence of God by reason and without recourse to revelation, then natural theology is flawed (Russell, 1985:171–174). Kuyper (1968:302) distances himself from this version of natural theology – he describes it as a “barren scheme of individual truths ... which was made to stand as natural theology alongside of the supernatural”. This point of view rejects what Sudduth designates natural theology β.

According to Kuyper, there’s a structure and direction to natural theology, although he doesn’t use these terms. In terms of structure, Kuyper (1968:302) says the following:

Natural theology is with us no schema, but the knowledge of God itself, which still remains in the sinner and is still within his reach, entirely in harmony with the sense of Rom. 1. 19 sq. and Rom. 2. 14 sq.

Furthermore, Kuyper (1968:301) states that, as in ethics, normal development is discernible in natural theology:

With natural theology, it is the same as it is with faith and ethics. Ethical life knows only one normal development, viz that to holiness; but over against this positive stands the negative development along the line of sin.

However, there is also a negative side. It has been clouded and darkened by sin, fortunately, mitigated by common grace. This leads to a tension, similar to that in Calvin: “It made men without excuse, and yet was not sufficient to salvation” (Calvin s.a).

Kuyper (1968:378) uses the image of a grafted tree to illustrate the distinction without the separation of natural and special theology. It is worth quoting him at length (Kuyper, 1968:378):

He who grafts plants no new tree, but applies himself to one that exists. That tree is alive, it draws its sap from the roots, but this vital sap is wild, in consequence of which the tree can bear no fruit that is desired. And now the grafter comes, and inserts a nobler graft, and thereby brings it to pass that this vital sap of the wild tree is changed, so that the desired fruit now ripens on the branches. This new graft does not stand by the side of the wild tree, but is in it; and if the grafting is a success, it may equally well be said that the true graft lives by the old tree, as that the uncultivated tree is of use solely because of the new graft. And such, indeed, is the case here. The wild tree is the sinner, in whose nature works the natural principium of the knowledge of God as an inborn impelling power. If you leave this natural principium to itself, you will never have anything else than wild wood, and the fruit of knowledge does not come. But when the Lord our God introduces from without, and thus from another principium, a shoot of a true plant, even the principle of a pure knowledge into this wild tree, i.e. into this natural man, then there is not a man by the side of a man, no knowledge by the side of knowledge, but the wild energy remains active in this human nature, i.e. incomplete knowledge; while the ingrafted new principium brings it to pass, that this impelling power is changed and produces the fruit of true knowledge. The special knowledge is, indeed, a new and proper principium, but this principium joins itself to the vital powers of our

nature with its natural principium; compels this principium to let its life-sap flow through another channel; and in this way cultivates ripe fruit of knowledge from what otherwise would have produced only wood lit for fire.

In his *Lectures on Calvinism*, Kuyper (1931:71) states his dislike for the term “laws of nature” as it suggests the laws originate from nature; they are, however, “imposed upon Nature”. Kuyper (1968:71) is only prepared to accept the term provided this distinction is clear:

What now does the Calvinist mean by his faith in the ordinances of God? Nothing less than the firmly rooted conviction that all life has first been in the thoughts of God before it came to be realised in Creation. Hence, all created life necessarily bears in itself a law for its existence, instituted by God Himself. There is no life outside us in Nature, without such divine ordinances – ordinances which are called the laws of Nature—a term which we are willing to accept, provided we understand thereby, not laws originating from Nature, but laws imposed upon Nature.

He designates creation as a revelation. Within creation, God placed ordinances or laws as it was the task of humanity to unfold the creation according to these norms. These norms “continue to this day” despite sin (Kuyper, 1931:40). Kuyper (1873 in Skillen and McCarthy (1991:242)) stresses three facts: i. Divine ordinances exist, ii. they are ordinances of God, and iii. there is a way to know them.⁸ They are not products of human construction; neither are they arbitrary. Kuyper (2015a:31) argues that the ordinances can only be known by the study of God’s Word and by empirical research.

We can see this in his attitude towards art. For Kuyper (1931:163), art has a revelatory nature: “Art reveals ordinances of creation which neither science, nor politics, nor religious life, nor even revelation can bring to light.” Art is also a form of creational revelation since it reveals something about the artist to us (Kuyper, 1931:119–120). Kuyper (1931:119–120) emphasises this notion when he states that creation reveals something of the creator (Kuyper, 1931:119–120). It is God’s handwork and “a revelation of God’s attributes” (Kuyper, 1931:119–120).

Through his famous notion of sphere sovereignty, Kuyper (1988:463–490) appealed to the creation ordinance as a moral compass. Kuyper’s spheres of the family, church, the state, science, art, and so forth are drawn from scripture *and* creation. In the early 1870s, he used this notion in a political sense that the church should be free from government intervention. He regarded the relationship of the Dutch Reformed Church to the state as a mistake, for the church should have its own sphere of sovereignty as it is with the state. Religion should not religionise politics, nor should politics intervene in the matter of religion.

In 1874, Kuyper used this notion of sphere sovereignty again in a political sense when he gave a lecture on “Calvinism: The origin and safeguard to our constitutional liberties” (Kuyper, 1895). He stated that freedom is not limited to the church and religion alone but to whole aspects of the society. He started to emphasise *the freedom of conscience*, which he argued is the basic notion of Calvinism. Kuyper then extended the notion of sphere sovereignty beyond political matters. From 1876 onwards,⁹ the notion of sphere sovereignty was not just about politics but about every essence of created things. In other words, Kuyper thus started to use the notion ontologically. In his *Our program*, Kuyper (2015a:70) wrote:

8 *De Standaard*, 16 October 1873 – translated by Harry der Nederlander, with Gordon Spykman extracted in James W Skillen and Rockne M McCarthy (eds.) *Political order and the plural structure of society* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991:242)

9 Harinck (2020:271) notes that the first shift towards ontological sphere sovereignty was in *De Standaard*, January 22 1876. Kuyper (as quoted by Harinck, 2020:271) wrote: “De organen, waarin dit leven zich uit, zijn niet van menselijke vinding, maar in het wezen der dingen gegrond en dus van God geschapen.”

The various entities – human persons first of all – which God called into being by his creative powers and to which he apportioned power are almost all, in whole or in part, of a moral nature. There is a distinctive life of science; a distinctive life of art; a distinctive life of the church; a distinctive life of the family; a distinctive life of town or village; a distinctive life of agriculture; a distinctive life of industry; a distinctive life of commerce; a distinctive life of works of mercy; and the list goes on. Now then, next to and alongside all these entities and ever so many other organisations stand the institution of the state. Not above them, but alongside them. For each of these organisations possesses sphere-sovereignty, that is to say, derives the power at its disposal, not as a grant from the state but as a direct gift from God.

The power or sovereignty that God has given to each sphere of life *in whole or in part* has moral implications. By way of illustration: By the grace of God, a father could discipline his children but should not injure them since the power or sovereignty that God has given to parents over their children comes with a moral responsibility to make the family flourish. The same principle applies to other life spheres: God's apportioned sovereignty to each of them is followed by a moral responsibility to make the relevant aspect of life flourish.

In the inaugural oration of the Vrije Universiteit in 1880, Kuyper stated his well-known adage: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain in our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" (Kuyper, 1998:488) Here, Kuyper clearly did not restrict the usage of sphere sovereignty to the political sphere alone. Instead, he emphasised that Christ is the King of the universe, over all created things, and he had distributed relative power or sovereignty to multiple created spheres. Within this context, the kingship of Christ entails a moral obligation towards each life sphere the King created. Venema (2013:88) rightly proposes that sphere sovereignty could also be called "sphere responsibility".

Kuyper (1968:270) also has an all-embracing view of revelation: "All creation as such belongs to the domain of revelation." According to this statement, there is no separation between special and general revelation.

4. Evaluation and conclusion

Natural theology is, in many ways, a loaded term. There are many varieties of natural theology – not least the α and β forms that Sudduth identifies. Others have discussed the wide range of approaches that fall under natural theology (see, for example, McGrath, 2011:Part I).

Part of the problem surrounding the topic of natural theology is its definition – if Haines's (2021:12) definition is adopted, then Kuyper disagreed with natural theology as an option. If VanDrunen is correct and common grace and creation order are part of natural theology, Kuyper did adopt some aspects of natural theology. The problem is that Haines's definition is too narrow, and VanDrunen's is too wide. If we accept that general revelation is part of natural theology, then common grace is not a part of natural theology¹⁰ since common grace is not part of general revelation.

Masselink (1953)¹¹ defends Kuyper's (and Hepp's) view of common grace and general

10 Masselink (1953:70) maintains that the identification of general revelation with natural theology is an error that began with scholasticism.

11 Masselink (1897–1973) was a student of Hepp's while he did postgraduate work at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam (1936–1937). He was an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church, serving churches in Lafayette, Indiana, Holland, Michigan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Chicago, Illinois.

revelation, which he terms the “historic reformed faith” against the “reconstructionist”¹² movement of Klaas Schilder, Herman Dooyeweerd, Dirk Hendrik Theodoor Vollenhoven, and Cornelius van Til. Masselink (1953:67–72) helpfully identifies some misconceptions regarding general revelation – not least, common grace is not to be identified with general revelation. There are a number of reasons for this difference. General revelation precedes the fall into sin, whereas common grace comes after the fall. They differ in purpose: Common grace curbs sin and the effects of sin, whereas the role of general revelation is to reveal God in his creation. Knowledge of common grace is revealed to us through the Scriptures, not general revelation (Masselink, 1953:69).

For Kuyper, there is a distinction, but not a separation, between special and general revelation. They are in harmony and are not in conflict with one another. Special and general revelation are interrelated since they both provide a holistic understanding of God and his relationship with humanity (Kuyper, 2015b: 73–112).¹³

Creation, fall, and redemption are critical moments in the Christian narrative. It may be useful to explore natural theology in the light of this Christian ground motive. No common grace existed when the earth was created since all revelation was general and special. Thus, there was no distinction between special and general revelation. Humanity had an innate *sensus divinitatis*, a *semen religionis*. “Knowledge of God is implanted, infused into” humanity (Kuyper, 2015b:75). In this regard, Kuyper (2015b:75) states the following:

Furthermore, the natural knowledge of God exists thanks to the uninterrupted radiation of God’s majesty throughout creation, hence also in man who is sensitive to this radiation and is given a sense of that majesty. That is why it is called a *sensus divinitatis*, a sense of the Divine, a *semen religionis*, a seed of the relationship that ties us to God, and a *theologia innata*, a knowledge of God that is grounded in our relation to God as creatures.

The fall, however, distorted humanity’s relationship with God, themselves, and the rest of creation. Reason becomes clouded – there are noetic effects of sin upon human reasoning. Humans are incapable of coming to a true knowledge of God through their own reasoning. Reason may lead to a god of the philosophers but not to the God of the Bible. There is still “creational revelation” (compare Psalms 19, Romans 1, and so on), but this revelation cannot result in a personal, saving knowledge of God. A knowledge of God is only possible through God’s revelation of himself, in other words, *special revelation*. As a result of the Fall, we cannot use reason to reach God since we cannot prove God’s existence. There are no “natural” ways to God. It is impossible for human reason to understand God’s existence and character. Neither reason nor observation can lead us to God. Kuyper puts it as follows (1968:343):

From the finite, no conclusion can be drawn to the infinite, neither can a Divine reality be known from external or internal phenomena, unless that real God reveals Himself in my consciousness to my ego; reveals himself as God; and thereby moves and impels me to see in these finite phenomena a brightness of His glory. Formaliter, neither observation nor reasoning would ever have rendered service here as the principium of knowing.

Those who adopt a form of natural theology downplay the noetic effects of sin often. General revelation is incomplete without special revelation since it does not impart “the least knowledge of God”, according to Kuyper (1968:250–251):

12 This should not be confused with the reconstructionism movement of Rushdoony *et al.* Masselink’s book was published a few years before Rushdoony’s work appeared.

13 This is an English translation of sections from Kuyper’s *Uit het Woord* III (Amsterdam, 1879).

Even though for the moment we do not reckon with the darkening of sin, all that is called “natural revelation” would not impart to us the least knowledge of God, if it were not willed by God, and as such make an intentional revelation, i.e., a disclosure in part of His Divine mystery.

Kuyper (2015b:74) also observes that the knowledge of God is suppressed but not extinguished by the Fall:

To know God is a demand of human nature. What sin corrupts is still our human nature. Amid our total depravity, there is a natural knowledge of God, a knowledge that can be suppressed but never extinguished. Remnants of it, however small, are never absent. The sinner hates God, but he cannot escape Him.

Furthermore, Kuyper (2015b:75) also states the following: “Were it not for sin, the natural knowledge of God would have led man to true knowledge of God. Hence the absolute necessity that man be born again.”

Redemption – the necessity of being born again – comes only through special revelation and regeneration. This is what Kuyper termed “palingenesis”. With regeneration, we can see the glory of the Trinitarian God in his creation. In the consummation, the fulfilment of redemption, humanity will be able to know God in his creation. As Kuyper (2015b:98) argues: “And that is why the natural knowledge of God ultimately falls short. It can go no further. The relation with God is broken. It is not restored until He heals it.”

Kuyper rejects the role of general revelation, providing the foundations for special revelation as this results in the autonomy of reason.¹⁴ As Kuyper (2015b:103) observes: “If we rely solely on the light of nature, reason, and tradition, we only increase our alienation from God and find no assurance.” However, Kuyper’s approach is ambiguous. It seems clear that he would accept natural theology if understood as a natural knowledge of God, as a *semen religionis*. However, he would still reject natural theology as rational proofs or arguments for the existence and nature of God. As FH Jacobi said: “A God capable of proof would be no God at all; since this would mean that there is something higher than God from which His existence can be deduced” (cited in Orr, 1908. Lecture III:94-95). Kuyper would agree with this statement.

The form of natural theology that Kuyper accepts is perhaps better called “creational revelation”. In a sense, it can also be called “general revelation” (Spykman, 1992:168). However, “creational revelation” is still a more suitable term. Kuyper saw creation as a revelation: “All creation is itself revelation; it is a sovereign act of a self-revealing God” (Kuyper, 1968:259). Furthermore, he also states: “Hence creation itself is primarily nothing else than a revelation of the power of God; of the God *Almighty*, who as such is *the Creator* of heaven and earth” (Kuyper, 1968:260 – see also Bishop, 2024:20–34).

The term “creational revelation” best sums up Kuyper’s approach since it acknowledges that special and general revelation are creational. Creational revelation acknowledges the limits of natural knowledge. Kuyper’s emphasis on creational revelation helps us to understand the relationship between general and special revelation in our understanding of God.

14 Kuyper (2015b:102) writes of the “bankruptcy of natural theology and the indispensability of special revelation”.

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