

A Latter Day Augustinian: Diemer on Creation and Miracle

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J H (Harry) Diemer (1904-1945) was one of the early adherents of the reformational philosophy developed by Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd. Diemer was the son of a pastor of the Gereformeerde Kerk (Christian Reformed Church) in the Netherlands, Ds. N Diemer, who studied for the ministry at the Free University under Abraham Kuyper. Diemer attended Christian schools in Friesland and the Christian High School in Haarlem, and then studied biology at the University of Leiden, as at that time there was no biology department at the Free University.

His interest in the nature of Christian scientific enterprise led him to examine the thought of Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck and Jan Woltjer, the latter a central figure in the early years of the Free University who has been almost entirely forgotten today. Woltjer was a professor in classical languages at the Free University, a department that at that time included philosophy. While Woltjer was far more scholastic in his thinking than Bavinck and Kuyper, and had an adverse affect on their philosophical conceptions to a considerable extent, Kuyper especially lamented the lack of a truly Christian philosophy. However, he and Bavinck made considerable progress in developing the basic position on which a truly Christian philosophy could be built. Woltjer's contribution was of less help in this regard. [1]

Diemer was eventually introduced to the reformational Christian philosophy developed by Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd in the 1920's and 1930's. At the time Diemer was working on his doctoral thesis in biology, and in the last chapter he discusses the philosophical problem involved in determining a species, and works this out in terms of the theory of individuality structures developed by Dooyeweerd.

Diemer wrote a number of significant articles on problems relating to evolution and the concept of species, arising from his work in biology, as well as on problems of animal psychology. His thought on creation and miracle grew directly from his

biological research. Through attempting to determine the nature of a species, and thereby inevitably grappling with the problem of evolution, he found that he had to tackle the nature of creational structures and their principles.

Diemer found little of help in the writings of Kuyper, Bavinck and Woltjer. He quickly detected the dualism in their thought based on their use of scholastic form-matter ideas, a result of the influence of Woltjer's emphasis on "logos" speculation: a view which holds that the thoughts of God, the ideas in the Divine Mind or Logos, are the inner structures of created things. [2] The "logos" is the form within each thing which actively shapes it from matter. Thus matter is opposed to form and as a result the creation is understood as ruled by two conflicting principles. This conception is at variance with the Biblical confession that God has established but one law-order for the creation. Moreover, the idea that the form of a thing is determined by God's idea inside itself implies that God's law is part of the creation. This form-matter dualism is evident throughout the works of Kuyper and Bavinck, and appears also in the early works of Diemer. Although Diemer was able to penetrate the unbiblical character of the form-matter motive, it was not until the late 1930's that he was able to shake off the influence of "logos" speculation. Nevertheless, an element of logos speculation continued to remain active in his thinking.

Diemer was influenced by the thought of Augustine, whom he greatly admired. He read Augustine's work avidly, especially *De Genesi ad litteram*, Augustine's most extensive commentary on the first three chapters of Genesis, in which he develops most fully his view of creation and miracle. This book shaped Diemer's thought on creation perhaps more than any other. Dooyeweerd was also heavily influenced by Augustine, and both Dooyeweerd and Diemer displayed this influence in their work.

1. The nature of reality

According to Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, the creation was called into being by God by his Word, and is subject to this Word, the law-order for the creation, which maintains all things in existence with their proper character and individuality. That is, this Word provides the Law or condition for the existence of the creation and governs

the functioning of all things. The entrance of sin into the creation through man's rebellion against God was the result of his refusal to be subject to that law-order, and brought with it brokenness and disorder. And yet even in this situation God sustains his creation, and through the redeeming death and resurrection of his Son, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, the devastated creation is being restored as the kingdom of God.

Diemer's concept of creation was built on the insight of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven that God had created *things*, with specific characteristics and individuality, and had made them subject to his laws. This insight led him to reject the scholastic concept of creation: the form-matter dualism which had plagued the work of Bavinck, Kuyper and Woltjer, and had blunted their biblically-reforming insights. The dominant theme in Diemer's perspective on creation and miracle is his battle against this dualism.

Diemer saw Augustine as a Christian thinker who strived for the truth, but who was always to a certain extent hindered by neo-Platonism. He especially criticises Augustine's use of the idea of formless matter created by God, and identified by Augustine with the "formless and empty earth" of Genesis 1:2, which was later given form. [3] In spite of this serious criticism, Diemer followed Augustine's thought in developing his own view of creation, and although modifying it in many ways, he diverges very little from the framework established by Augustine. The major difference between them is this very doctrine of form and matter.

Instead of the neo-Thomistic form-matter concepts of Bavinck, Kuyper and Woltjer, Diemer holds that the creation is composed of things which have concrete structures and typical form subject to the laws of God for created reality: the decrees or ordinances of God which determine the structures and functions of things. The totality of these decrees comprises the created "world-order" which we call nature. [4]

Diemer stresses that the totality of created reality is a preformed order worked out through the subject. This subjective activity is directed to the completion of the divine world-order, although this subjectivity and order are to be distinguished. This totality

structure is a system of ordinances which is the foundation for the temporal course of the world. This totality of ordinances is found in Christ. [5]

2. The Logos Theme

Diemer agrees with Augustine, that the laws of God for created things are the concrete truths of God, eternal logical ideas which are worked out in the creation by the activity of the Holy Spirit. These truths are contained in the Word, the Logos, Christ. Thus the logical ideas which work themselves out in the things of creation are the eternal ideas in the mind of God; a conception Diemer arrived at, as did Bavinck and Kuyper, under the influence of Woltjer. For Diemer the Logos was the Law to which all individuality structures are subject. [6] Creatures are created by God out of the inexhaustible richness of the Divine Logos. [7]

The influence of Woltjer, who emphasised the unity of all things in the Logos, is evident in of Diemer's view of the order of creation as a *logical* order. Woltjer saw the human logos as the image and likeness of the Divine Logos, whose ideas express themselves in the creation, and whose world-idea holds all things together and provides the basis of human knowing. For him, the study of the structure and mutual inter-relationships of creation (philosophy) was the study of the human logos and its verbal expressions. [8] Diemer quotes J Jeans approvingly when he says, "...the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine." [9] For Diemer also the universe is a great thought - an idea planned in the mind of God, in Christ, the Logos.

As a result, Diemer has difficulty in explaining the relation of the creation to the Creator in a way which preserves the distinction between the two. The problem with logos-speculation is that it views the creation as an extension of the Creator. This is clearly apparent in the way Woltjer develops his view of the world to the completion of the divine world-order, order by means of the "analogia entis" [analogy although this subjectivity and order are to be of being], which assumes the legitimacy and primacy of a theoretical approach to ontology enc system of ordinances which is the foundation for passing both Creator and creation. [10]

The idea of the “degrees of reality” in the doctrine of the *analogia entis* means that something is more or less real in so far as it closely resembles the idea of the thing. This derives from Augustine’s attempt to accommodate the neo-Platonic idea of world-order to the Scriptural teaching about God’s creative will. [11]

Consequently, order is viewed from a logical standpoint, which means that it must have the same properties as analytical procedure. Order and the orderly way of discovering order are conflated. Thinking produces order where otherwise there would be no order, and the relations within the creation are seen as logical relations. Likewise, structure is seen as logical structure. [12] Both logos-speculation and the *analogia entis* are a logicising of the cosmos, looking at the cosmos as if it were a concept, so that the diversity of created things can only be of a logical nature. [13]

Diemer denies that the creation order has an “eternal reality,” an “idea of God,” that can be grasped by human thought. [14] God’s knowledge is a unity above time, and his knowledge of the world is simultaneous and taken as a whole. Human knowledge on the other hand is temporal, and separates events into cause and effect, before and after. Because of this difference between divine and human knowledge, the creation is seen as a sequence of separate acts by us, whereas for God it is seen as a coherent whole or unity. This coherent whole is the “real” while the separation is only apparent. Likewise the decree of God is a whole; it is not, unlike human decision-making, separated into setting a goal and planning means to achieve that goal. [15]

Human ideas are restricted to time, and human ideas are thus a diversity, since they do not grasp everything at once. God, according to Diemer, does not “think,” which is a temporal activity, but has eternal creative wisdom. [16] God’s Idea is his world-plan, his inscrutable counsel, which is a connected totality of Ideas, the world-event which God sees before himself in his Son, before he called the world into being. It is thus an eternal, uncreated idea. Steen summarised Diemer’s position thus:

God created the fulness, totality and unity of the creation “in the beginning.” This could not happen in time because God is not

subjected to the diversity of laws and to time. Time itself was comprehended in the totality of creation. Therefore, God's creative act could not be in time since time itself pre-supposes the finished total creation of the root unity, fulness and totality of creation. [17]

For Diemer, then, creation of the root unity and totality was outside of time. It took place "in the beginning," which Diemer identifies with Christ, the Word or Logos of God.

Since the revelation of the meaning of the cosmos and its relation to God is encompassed by the Logos, the image of God, then mankind, created in that image, can come to know reality by self-consciousness. Thus in this approach Diemer is still using speculative and scholastic ideas about God.

For instance, in Steen's opinion, this idea of Diemer's that the structures of creation are first of all created in Christ, and then subsequently become manifest in the temporal order forges an ontological link, similar to that of logos-speculation, between God and the cosmos, and the boundary between God and creation is lost from view. [18]

3. Creation in the Word

Diemer sees creation as the act of God by which the entire temporal world-order is brought into being. Within this world-order are enclosed all the possibilities for realisation of various things in time. Everything has its origin in the act of creation: nothing new in principle appears in time which was not present in the act of creation as a possibility. These principles of order or structure cannot be reduced to earlier structures, nor should they be seen as the modification of principles of order or structure which have previously been realised. [19]

Diemer stresses the need to distinguish the subjective realisation of the creation order from the order itself. This is the distinction between law and subject worked out in detail by Dooyeweerd. [20] However, Diemer talks of a preformed order in a way that

Dooyeweerd would never do. He constantly refers to the creation “in the beginning” as a creation in Christ, the Word who is God. God has his design for the world before him from eternity in this Word, in which the minutest detail of the creation is prescribed and contained as potential. From this prescription of all things in the Word comes the act of creation. [21]

Steen identifies the idea of a pre-formed order in Diemer as neo-realism, an ideal pre-existence of the created in God’s spirit. He traces it to Diemer’s dependence on Augustine’s view of creation. [22] For Diemer, Christ is the root of creation within which the all-embracing totality of heaven and earth lies hidden before the beginning of the six-day creation act. [23] From the created totality enclosed in the Word all things are driven forth by the action of the Word and the Spirit. [24] This follows Augustine’s view of creation and is developed in the same way.

Diemer uses the idea of the root of creation to demonstrate the unity, the integral character of the creation. It is opposed to the idea of a nature-grace dualism. [25] Diemer sees the highest idea which a Christian thinker can attain to be “the idea of this unity, of this totality integrality of the creation in the divine world order. In this idea the unity of being was considered to be in God.” [26] Created reality is therefore bound together in the unity of the world order, and this unity expresses itself equally in all the aspects of reality.

4. “In the Beginning”

Diemer has a complicated view of the nature of the beginning. He follows Augustine, who makes a distinction between creation “in the beginning,” and appearance of things in time. Augustine interprets “in the beginning” to mean that all things were made by God through his Wisdom or Word, and says that this Word is called “the beginning” in Scripture, referring to John 8:25. Augustine says “Therefore, when the Jews asked him who he was, he answered that he was the Beginning.” [27] He was following the *Vetus Latina* translation of Genesis 1:1: “In principio,” which was itself a translation of the Septuagint, the pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Augustine says that when we read in Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God made heaven and earth,” it means that the Father created the heavens and the earth in the Son. Augustine also refers to Psalm 104:24 to demonstrate this, for it says “O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in Wisdom thou hast made them all...” Augustine identifies this Wisdom with the Word, who is Christ [28] based on passages like 1 Cor 1:24,30, combined with Proverbs 8:22-31. [29]

Diemer also identifies the “in the beginning” of Genesis 1:1 with Christ, and as a result, it becomes impossible to treat the beginning as a temporal reality. The act of creation is then in fact of a supra-temporal nature, outside of time, taking place “in the Word.” Following Augustine, he says that creation does not take place **in** time but **with** time. [30]

For Diemer the “beginning” is the absolute beginning of time, but it is not itself a specific moment in time. This “beginning” encompasses the entire temporal duration and temporal order of the cosmos. The creation could not have taken any time to occur, that is, to occur within time, since the creation is the establishment of the temporal order. Therefore the creation in the “beginning” transcends both time and cosmos. [31] The distinction between duration and order is derived from Dooyeweerd, who saw order as the law side and duration as the subject side of time. The order of the law side is the temporal order of succession or simultaneity, which is constant. The subject-side is the experience of duration which differs for various individuals, although the two sides are constant correlata and cannot exist apart from each other. [32]

If creation had occurred within time it would be subject to temporal duration, and thus the law-side would be subjected to the subject side. Since Diemer does not indicate how a temporal order can be established outside of time without being correlated immediately with temporal duration, he seems to hold to a view of law which lacks a subject, contrary to Dooyeweerd’s position. [33] This arises from his view that the root of creation, in which are enclosed all the structures which will come into being in

time, is independent of the creation. Here his neo-realist position exercises a powerful influence (See above).

Diemer rejects the idea of a *creatio continua* understood as a continuously progressing deed of creation within cosmic time, as this involves a distension of the creation act “in the beginning” so that things even now are being created in the six “days.” But this *creatio continua* cannot be separated from the *creatio de novo* of all things “in the beginning” - both take place not in the subject side of time (duration) but in the law-side (order). [34]

The unfolding of the work of creation in providence takes place in the temporal order, so that the appearance of created things in time is the subject side of developments on the law-side which transcend time. [35] Thus providence and creation are both supra-temporal. The only way to understand this aspect of Diemer’s thought is in the light of his view of the root of creation in which all events take place.

Diemer maintains that mankind is unable to comprehend the law side, or temporal order, of the cosmos. God, however, has revealed this law-side to us in terms which we can understand in the Scriptures. Thus Diemer sees the days of creation, which establish the law order of the cosmos, to be outside our grasp, but revealed to us in a temporal framework so that we can attain to an understanding of this law-order in faith. [36]

5. The “days” of Genesis 1

The days of creation in Genesis 1 are then not temporal but supra-temporal. Time according to Diemer, as with Augustine, commences with the completion of the creation act at the end of the sixth day, so that the first “day” of created time is the rest-day of God. Both Diemer and Augustine are forced to this position by their view of creation “in the beginning” as meaning a creation “in the Word.” Hence the creation acts of the six days of Genesis 1 also take place “in the Word,” and not within the temporal order.

The six days of creation remain with the creation continually. They have not passed by in the course of history so as to be no longer present with us. The creation days are neither long nor short, since they are supra-temporal. [37]

Because they are not lengths of time which succeed one another sequentially in time, they cannot be separated from one another. The days are absolute moments of beginning; that is, there was no created time prior to their existence. These absolute moments of beginning are each the beginning of a particular creation norm, and they reveal a facet of the first beginning which encompasses the whole creation. The “days” enclose everything that will come into being in the unfolding process of cosmic time. [38]

The creation is revealed under the framework of six “days” which show us the *temporal arrangements* of the created world, in relationship to the totality in which the is enclosed, which came into being “at the beginning.” This “beginning,” that is, the totality or all-embracing whole, is still with us, as are the “days,” the fundamental structures of the various realms, which are the unfolding of the totality.

In Diemer’s view the days of creation are not moments of time but principles of *order*. If the “days” had been temporal they would have passed by in the course of time, and consequently the days would no longer be present, and neither would there be any *order*.

The completeness of the abiding creation order does not change, but its appearance in time is a changing phenomenon; it is the unfolding in time of what is present in the supra-temporal order. Therefore, as soon as new creatures appear in time they are related to all other creatures which have come to be in the unfolding of time; their relationships were already established in the supra-temporal order of creation. The six days are then the placing in time of the creation order. [39]

This implies that the emergence of individual creatures in the course of time makes the supra-temporal creation structure visible. The days are always present in this development of the specific creatures, as the beginning is always present in the totality

and fullness of God's plan. [40] From this point of view development is the work of providence, bringing to completion the possibilities of the creation which are enclosed in the created whole. [41]

Diemer describes the continuing presence of the days of creation as the continued speaking of the Word by which all things were made. This Word "was in no way silenced when this work was finished. The Word can be heard to the end of time as it supports all things by its power and wisdom." [42] This Word is the root in which all individual creatures are enclosed as structural principles. These structural principles are always present in creation as the constant order for the relationships which undergo change in time; and so the miracle of creation is continually present also. [43]

In order to gain some insight into Diemer's view, it is necessary to outline the way Augustine interpreted the "days." Diemer explicitly follows Augustine's interpretation in this regard, referring to Augustine almost every time he discusses the meaning of the "days." [44] Augustine understood the creation of the world to have taken place instantaneously. The "six days" of Genesis I were, according to Augustine, six simultaneous moments of revelation for the angels, in which God explained the creation to them. [45]

Augustine based this view of the simultaneous creation of all things on the apocryphal book of *Ecclesiasticus* 18:1, "He who lives in eternity created all things simultaneously." [46] The purpose of the six days is not to show the passing of time but to show that God maintained a certain order in creating, even if it was simultaneous. It is therefore correct to say, according to Augustine, that one creature is made before another, even though they were created simultaneously, because one creature is prior to another in order. [47] The creation could not have taken time to occur since time is a characteristic of the development of creatures and not of their creation. [48] This is the consequence of Augustine's view that time is basically motion from one state to another. Since motion or change of state must take place in time, then when creatures began to exist, time began. [49] Since creation took place outside of time, it was not a change from one state to another, such as from an

unformed chaos of matter to an ordered world. On the contrary, it was an order of causality. [50]

It should be noted though, that Diemer did not accept Augustine's views uncritically. For instance, he criticises Augustine's view that the order of creation has a realistic nature, since such a view can only arise from form-matter dualism. In such a dualism, the order of creation is seen to be real **apart from** the manifestation of that order in time. The ideas or laws which make up that order are considered to exist independently of the temporal order, in the decree of God. Thus creatures are a combination of both the eternal idea and the matter in which that idea comes to expression. It is this kind of dualism that Diemer constantly battles against, and which he largely overcame by means of the idea of individuality structures developed by Dooyeweerd. In neo-Platonic fashion Augustine saw the ideal forms of Plato as having an eternal existence in the mind of God. [51] God, contemplating the ideas, created all things *ex nihilo* by an act of his will as seminal reasons (which bring material things into being out of formless matter) in the likeness of these eternal ideas. [52] These seminal reasons, (seeds or causes of the nature of created things) have form only in so far as they are dependent on the ideas in the mind of God. These eternal ideas are the Wisdom of God or the word of God, [53] and not simply ideas similar in nature to Platonic forms.

For Augustine God works through the seminal reasons, but the conception of seminal reasons as the real order of nature gives this order an autonomy, which has a certain independence over against God. According to Diemer, nature is then cut off from its root, Christ the word. This realism is the origin of the scholastic nature-grace dualism, a Christianised version of the form-matter dualism of pagan thought, which perpetuated the influence of the unbiblical ideas of neo-Platonic philosophy. [54]

But despite his critique of Augustine on this point, Diemer follows Augustine in arguing that the "beginning" is the commencement of time, although it does not itself fall within time. Because of this Diemer argues that the act of creation is not accessible to scientific study, since this study is bound to the temporal order. Only in faith can we understand the meaning of the "days" of creation as they

are revealed to us in Scripture. Here Diemer is following Dooyeweerd in explaining his view of the faith-time character of creation. [55] The days of Genesis 1 are, like “the beginning,” not of a temporal order. They are days of “faith-time” and indicate sequence, order and hierarchy within the creation. They are not themselves temporal, but they *found* the temporal order.

Nevertheless, Diemer’s view of the creation taking place over six “days” differs from that of Dooyeweerd, who believes that the time of creation began after the seventh “day.” Dooyeweerd holds that to speak of the seventh day as occurring within time is to speak blasphemously. [56] God’s rest is not a temporal rest, and so Dooyeweerd sees time commencing after the *seventh* day. Yet Diemer’s conception is more consistent. If the creation took place over six “days” after which God rested from creating, then that rest continues until now. Diemer constantly stresses that God’s work of creation is complete, and that now creatures new in principle no longer will come into being. This implies that the seventh day is still with us, in that God is no longer creating but resting from the work of creation, just as the six days are still with us in that we see the creatures which were created in the six days now appearing in time. [57] Diemer’s conception of the nature of the seventh day is closer to that of Augustine than the view of Dooyeweerd.

Because we are bound to the temporal order, the revelation of the creation “in the beginning” follows a temporal order, too, and for this reason the creation events are arranged in the form of a number of “days,” indicating sequence, order and other aspects of created reality. This enables our human faith-function to grasp the things of the supra-temporal even though it is temporal itself.

6. Creation and Providence

For Diemer miracle is inseparable from the work of God in creation on which it is founded. The miracles of re-creation are those which reassert control over a creation distorted by sin, and restores it to the kingdom of God.

Dualistic form-matter views will always see a miracle as an intervention by God in an autonomous material world, while monistic views will tend to emphasise that God's creative will cannot be contradicted by a later decision by God to perform miracles. The result of this is either to identify nature with the miraculous, or to deny the miraculous altogether. The rejection of the idea of miracle frequently hinges on the assumption of an autonomous nature functioning according to laws which cannot be violated by a miracle. But it is not recognised that this assumption is unbiblical, and thus does not compel rejection of the biblical view of miracles.

The rejection of dualism is dominant in Diemer's view of miracle, just as it is dominant in his view of creation. Diemer argues that the idea of supernatural intervention in the natural order arises only when that order is conceived of as independent from God, with an autonomous character which must be superseded if a miracle is to occur. This results in the dualism of nature and grace. But he goes on to say that the "grace" so conceived is something totally different from the grace revealed in the Scriptures. [58]

The miracle of creation is manifest in the appearance of new things - "new structures, which cannot be reduced to what came earlier." [59] Thus the creation in the beginning is the miracle *par excellence* - it is something totally new in every respect. Consistent with his view of God's intimate relationship to the creation, the appearance of these new things is not the result of an intervention in autonomous nature, but the work of God in leading the unfolding of the hidden potential of the creation formed at the beginning.

The unfolding of the structures hidden in the central miracle of creation, "the beginning," is the work of God's providence. [60] For Diemer the work of creation precedes the opening process, and creation prepared as a totality "in the beginning" then comes into being in time through God's work of providence. [61] Diemer, following Augustine, distinguishes creation outside of time from providence, the coming into being of creatures within time.

Augustine developed his distinction between creation “in the beginning” and God’s providence in time in an attempt to reconcile the idea that God has finished his work of creation on the sixth day and rested on the seventh, (and is still resting from this work of creation) with the concept that God is still working to sustain and administer the creation which he had brought into being. [62] There is a not inconsiderable Stoic influence on his thought which encouraged this distinction. [63]

Augustine’s definition of a miracle is that which is contrary to our usual experience of the course of nature. [64] Similarly, Diemer argues that a miracle is the opening up of potential in conditions other than those which are ordinary, well-known to us. This can be done only when God gives permission. [65] Diemer sees miracles to be such only for us. For God a miracle is not a wondrous thing, it is only the working of his will in nature. [66]

This is identical to Augustine’s view on this point. Both Diemer and Augustine hold that a believer will recognise that from a human perspective miracles are extraordinary, but from God’s perspective they appear to be a part of the natural order. [67] Through revelation, according to Augustine, we are given an insight into God’s perspective, and we learn that everything that happens is through the will of God. If a miracle then is the result of the will of God, then for God it cannot be extra-ordinary. As our faith and understanding increases through reading Scripture, we will increasingly recognise the will of God, and consequently our wonder at miracles will diminish. [68] They are not contrary to the order of nature, since what we know of the order of nature is merely our experience of that order, and because the germ or seed of the miracle is laid in nature.

For Augustine miracle was the manifestation of the potential of the seminal reasons (*rationes seminales*) in the created order, bringing to light hitherto unknown effects. In some instances miracles were simply speeded up natural developments, such as the changing of Moses’ staff into a serpent, or the appearance of lice from dust, [69] although some miracles arise from unknown causes hidden in God, which could be activated only by God. For Augustine, miracles do not conflict with the creation-order, since both usual and unusual events in nature are the expression of God’s will. This is

an indication of a monist position in both Diemer and Augustine. Augustine's neo-Platonic realist conception of nature, in which matter was given form by rational causes, resulted in the theory of an autonomous natural order. This dualistic tension in Augustine's thought would give rise to later unbiblical conceptions of creation and miracle.

7. Sign and Miracle

An extraordinary event, such as answered prayer, is a sign to the believing Christian of God's providential world government. Through the guidance of faith, events are led into channels they would not have taken without prayer and faith. [70] There is no intrusion of a supernatural activity. Prayers can in fact be answered on the basis of strong faith, regardless of the possibly idolatrous nature of that in which faith is placed. Diemer does say that prayers are answered only if they serve the coming of God's kingdom, but for him even the prayers and the signs worked by unbelievers serve God's kingdom. [71] Diemer identifies God's power with the forces within creation which can be controlled and directed by human action. This leads to an over-emphasis on God's immanence to the neglect of his transcendence.

Diemer's philosophic position prevents him from seeing that true prayers and signs depend on a power **outside** of creation, namely the power of God. This power of God is not an intrusion into the creation order, since all events happen by God's providential power. It means that the creation is **dependent** on God's redemptive power, which is not to be found within the creation order.

The distinction Diemer draws between a sign and a miracle is based on his temporal/supratemporal distinction. While a sign takes place in time for our instruction, the miracle it points to takes place above time in the root of creation. Diemer stresses that miracles are not to be separated from signs, since a "sign is always a **miracle-sign**." [72]

A sign is merely the temporal event which indicates to us that a miracle has taken place. Such signs are subject to the ordinances laid down for the creation; they are not

supernatural or contrary to nature in any way. By contrast, a miracle is above the temporal order and in a sense determines that order. [73]

Diemer is rejecting the basis on which various theologians distinguish between the laws of creation and a supernatural intervention by which miracles come about. In his view, the signs are the external revelation of the internal act of God, the relative indicator within time of an absolute supra-temporal reality. Signs reveal the presence of a miracle, by pointing to the miracle of creation, providence and recreation. They are not important in themselves.

Diemer refers to the “absolute character” of the central miracles of creation, providence and recreation. They establish the order and possibility of every temporal event and therefore are not themselves temporal. These miracles include the structures of creation and the “beginning” of the creation.

The “signs and wonders” of Christ and the disciples are of a “relative” character because they are temporal events subject to the absolute order placed above them. By “relative” Diemer means that these signs and wonders are individual forms, structures and acts of various creatures and are thus of a temporary nature. Only that which abides can be called absolute. [74]

Since the “absolute” aspects of reality are above time and do not enter into time, they can be revealed only through subjective realisations. Signs are “relative” because they are subject to the variations of time and place, and are transitory. They do point to the absolute miracles which make them possible. Without signs, therefore, the order of creation would remain unknown. [75]

8. Faith and Miracle

According to Diemer, in the original creation mankind was able to exercise dominion over nature and to direct natural processes meaningfully to a higher goal, through faith in the Word and the law of God.. Nature was working to serve mankind, and man’s dominion was exercised in the service of God’s kingdom. [76] This original ability,

lost through disobedience, was restored in Christ. Through the renewal of faith in Christ the strong faith necessary to work miracles is again available to mankind. [77]

Since for Diemer a miracle is a re-directing of a creation structure by faith, scientific analysis will not be able to find any traces of a miracle, just as it cannot find any traces of the miracle of the original creation “in the beginning.” Scientific study can only accept the existence of unexplainable phenomena; it can never explain away those phenomena because they are not amenable to scientific research. They can be recognised only by faith. [78] Any explanation of miracles by means of natural laws must still acknowledge that such miracles are manifestations of God’s power. [79] The limits to scientific study mean that an explanation of an event on the basis of a law does not exhaust the event.

Diemer argues that science itself, and the use of medicine depends on faith. Medicine cannot work any cure where there is no faith in the central miracle of re-creation. However, he is of the opinion that an idolatrous faith in the efficacy of medicine to heal in itself, or in the treatments of physicians, is also able to work cures since it is faith that cures and not medical science. Nevertheless, Diemer stresses that such faith may be deceptive - often treatments and medicines are impotent in the face of disease. [80]

It is not only Christians to are able to work miracles by faith, but all those are able to exercise strong faith. All it requires is faith and trust that the actions to be performed will indeed bring the results sought. To demonstrate his point that only faith is necessary for those wish to perform miracles, whether believer or unbeliever, Diemer quotes the words of Jesus: “To him who believes nothing is impossible.” [81]

The difference is that those who see signs happening through a faith which is not directed towards God will not recognise the miracle of recreation and the operation of the hand of God. But even where faith is exercised in a false god, or a human being’s ability to help, even there faith brings into operation the re-creating power of Christ. It is the working out in time of the central miracle of recreation in the root of creation. [82]

Any cure, whether as a result of a faith in medical means, or a faith in God, which results in miracles, or by faith that God will heal through the means of medical science, depends for its efficacy on the “activating of the Divine recreating power which exists in the root of humanity.” In Diemer’s view, a healing by means of medicine is just as much a sign of God’s recreating miracle power as one by the Spirit of God through the “word spoken with power.” [83]

This can be so in Diemer’s conception since he works with the view of created powers and abilities by which all events take place. In a miracle of healing only different powers come into action compared to a healing by medical means. They are both equally a part of the created order. Christ did not work some kind of magic, but “worked radical recreation in human organisms via the autonomous sympathetic nervous system that regulates and manages many important life-functions.” [84]

In faith, we are open to the recreating work of God’s Spirit, which can unlock the abilities placed in human nature through the recreation of human nature. The conversion of a sinner and his increasing sanctification will manifest the spiritual reality of God’s kingdom by the sign of his new life, and by his redirecting the possibilities of creation under his control. [85]

For Diemer, the principal miracle of creation “in the beginning” is knowable only through faith, as it took place outside of time. Only through God’s revelation to us in Scripture can we know anything of this creation act. But we can recognise this act only in faith; without it, we can know nothing of the origin of things. [86]

In a sinless world the recognition of God’s power would be the normal way of life for human beings. Due to our fall, however, we do not recognise God’s power in the ordinary events of daily life. The most that we do is acknowledge what we see to be the intervention of God in what are for us inexplicable events. [87]

The estrangement from God of fallen human nature in Adam results in the development of creation - a condition for human existence being directed away from

God, and not towards him in obedience. Thereby the creation as a whole suffers from the effects of sin. The various powers in creation, and especially in the human body, are no longer directed towards the service of the Creator. Diemer realises that the various powers in creation cannot themselves be called sinful, because they are operating in terms of their own laws. Rather, the principle of sin means that these powers are not directed by the Word of God. They are no longer instruments of the Spirit. [88]

No single event in nature can be free from the effect of the fall - the disintegrating power of sin. Under the guidance of Adam all of nature fell. The law of sin works itself out in everything in nature and holds nature in rebellion against the law of God. And so, the effects of sin become predominant in the creation. [89]

Thanks to God, the preserving power of Christ prevails against the law of sin and keeps the structures of creation intact. [90] The subject-side of creation has fallen, but not its law side.[91] The disintegration, purposelessness and disorder we see alongside of integration, purpose and order illustrates that the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God are in conflict. [92]

This train of thought leads to Diemer's belief that miracles are not contrary to nature, but rather to sin and its results. They destroy in fact the negative consequences of a sinful process. [93] The Fall does not distort the created powers or potentials in the root of nature, because they are governed by the Law of God. But under the influence of sin these powers are led astray and no longer serve as instruments of the Spirit but as tools of Satan. [94] Diemer is working here with the distinction developed by Vollenhoven between structure (created possibilities which are unaffected by sin) and spiritual direction (the development of those possibilities in the service of either God or an idol.) Diemer also uses the distinction between law-side and subject-side when talking about the creation order, as mentioned above. Both distinctions imply that created powers and potentials, while able to be used to build the kingdom of Satan, are not themselves distorted by sin.

9. Redemption: the Miracle of Recreation

Because of his view of sin and the effects of the fall Diemer stresses that redemption in Christ is a redirecting of the powers of creation to the service of God. Redemption is the correlation of the fall: misdirection and loss of control is countered by redirection and recovery of control. [95]

Because Christ is the root of creation, the root of re-creation is also Christ. Therefore miracles are worked in Christ, the root, since miracles are always tied to re-creation, in that they make manifest the new root of creation. The recreation of the cosmos by God in Christ as the new religious root restores the original order of the kingdom of God and once more makes it visible to mankind, through Christ the new root becoming flesh. [96]

The principle of direction of the lower by the higher means that Diemer sees the kingdom of darkness in terms of the misdirection of the creation to serve the law of sin. Creation powers are thereby directed against the kingdom of God. The nature of spiritual warfare is a struggle to gain control over the powers inherent in the creation. In Christ control over these powers is regained, so that they are again directed towards the service of the kingdom of God. This kingdom is realised by the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of a continual struggle against sin and its results. Through the coming of this kingdom the opening up of the potential of all the powers and possibilities of the creation is once again restored to the service of God. This kingdom comes only where there is faith in Christ. Where there is unbelief the results of sin cannot be taken away. [97]

According to Diemer, Jesus performed his signs and wonders in the power of his divine nature as Creator. But he stresses that Christ's nature, God and man in one, is the root from which all his miraculous deeds come. [98] Christ, as a man subject to the law of God in perfect faith, "allows himself to be directed in all his works by the Word." This means that Christ's human nature is directed by His higher divine nature, the Eternal Word, to which he is subject as man. [99] This is what Diemer means when he says that as man Christ is subject to the Law of God.

These miracles of Christ witness to the restoration of the whole of creation at the end. But they are more than merely signs of this future event; they are signs that this restoration has already begun! The miracles of healing are not only signs of the eschatological healing of all things, but are the present healing of those who are ill.

Diemer's view does not develop the full eschatological extent of the restoration of the creation. In his later works he does not make any explicit mention of an eschatology which gives significance to creation; his concept of restoration is one of a restoration "in principle," that is, in Christ the new root of creation. But the restoration of the creation has an eschatological focus. That is, there will be a time when the restoration of the creation will be complete and it will then be returned to the Father. In an early article Diemer includes eschatology as part of the philosophy of history, [100] but this view is no longer present ten years later. The Eschaton has by then become a part of the supra-temporal; it is no longer historical. It is remarkable that Diemer never once discusses the possibility of resurrection. This may be explained as a consequence of his temporal/supra-temporal scheme. By emphasising the supra-temporal the way he does, the significance of bodily resurrection in the eschaton is obscured.

If the "beginning" is not a temporal moment, then the "ending" will not be either. Both beginning and end seen as Christ will mean that a true temporal beginning and ending become impossible. Thus Diemer has neither a temporal "beginning" at the beginning (it is in Christ and appears later in time, so the temporal beginning commences after the creation) nor discusses a temporal ending or "culmination." He does not have an eschatology but a continuing growth and development. [101] This should be compared to Bavinck's views, which are very similar. [102]

Nonetheless Diemer's view of the unfolding of the creation implies an eschatology. Since whatever is brought forth must first have existed as potential in the root, the creation is completed as soon as all potential hidden in the root has come to light. The creation will have been brought to completion: this is the task of the Holy Spirit in the providence of God. This completion is the goal to which the whole creation is being carried. "Everything points beyond itself and is directed to a coming completion from

which the processes receive their meaning and purpose.” [103] The kingdom of darkness which resists the unfolding of the creation into a kingdom of God will be destroyed “at the end of time.” [104] This view that time comes to an end indicates that Diemer sees the eschaton as a non-temporal state; one in which the present order has passed away and has been replaced with a totally new order. Again, if the “beginning” is outside of time rather than the commencement of time, then time will cease when the “end” is attained. The non-temporal beginning, that is, Christ, is also the end, and the end will therefore also be non-temporal. [105]

10. True and False Miracle

Miracles, like all other events in the creation order, share both a creational structure and a spiritual direction in Diemer’s view. A miracle is the subjective realisation of a possibility laid down in the order of creation (its structure), the opening up of the various powers and possibilities hidden in creation through the exercise of faith. As a result, it is possible not only for Christ and his servants to work miracles, but also for the enemies of the coming of the kingdom of God. [106]

In fact, Diemer goes so far as to say that even Christ used supernormal powers in working his miracles; powers such as telepathy, hypnosis, clairvoyance and so on. Christ, however, used these abilities free from the contamination of sin, which usually accompanies them. This is closely linked to his view that Christ performed his miracles as a man subject to the Law. Since Christ was in all things directed by the creation order, being perfectly obedient to God, then his actions were indeed all using creation abilities. As a consequence of his views on this subject, Diemer stresses the need for distinguishing creational structure and spiritual direction. “What is true of all natural abilities is, true here: nothing is unclean of itself and for believers all things work together for good.” [107] After the fall into sin, these powers and possibilities in the creation can be opened up either in obedience to God or in rebellion against him and his good order for life (spiritual direction). [108] The miracles of Christ redirect the opening up of the creation possibilities to the service of the kingdom of God, whereas the miracles of the Antichrist continue the apostate direction established by the fall. [109]

Those miracles which are not centrally directed by the Word of God are the “signs and wonders” of the Antichrist. Such “signs and wonders” arise from Satan’s power and are signs of the fall. They lie under the curse. [110] Those who work false miracles by the power of Satan are serving the kingdom of darkness and are consciously making themselves a tool of sin. By this means demonic powers are able to invade the bodies of those who allow themselves to be used as tools of sin, thereby ruining their own health. [111]

Notwithstanding this awful possibility, Diemer emphasises that nothing lies outside the rule of Christ. Christ is withdrawing these powers from the grip of Satan and thereby destroying Satan’s apostate kingdom. [112] Even the signs and wonders of the Antichrist are based on the creation order, indeed dependent on it, just as they are dependent on the miracle of recreation worked by Christ. [113] They too serve the coming of the kingdom of God [114], although unconsciously. [115] Clearly, this dependence is of a parasitical nature. Satan cannot create or originate new things, he can only corrupt and distort the good creation for his own nefarious ends. [116]

Through the working of the law of sin in the service of the kingdom of darkness there is increasing disorder and meaninglessness in creation, and in Diemer’s suggestive phrase, “the spirit of darkness strives to turn the miracle of creation into a disorderly rubbish heap.” Such works of sin and of Satan hinder the of the Kingdom of God but cannot ultimately prevent it. The order of creation is restored in Christ and its outworking is destroying the kingdom of darkness. [117]

11. Critique of Diemer’s Views

In Diemer’s view of creation we find a number of truly Biblical insights as well as important points of weakness. Diemer’s rejection of the dualism of form and matter is commendable. His emphasis on reality as a rich diversity of created things, an idea he adopted from Dooyeweerd, is one of the most fruitful insights he has put to use in his work. By using this idea he has been able to overcome the scholastic dualism of form and matter.

Yet Diemer has not been able to free himself entirely from scholastic theories, as is evident in his dependence on the logos-theory, even though his use of the logos-theme diminishes between 1935 and 1945. This is no doubt related to the debates of the late 1930's between Dutch reformational thinkers and some of the Free University theologians (notably V Hepp and H Steen) when Dooyeweerd subjected the logos theory, as developed by Woltjer and used by Kuyper and Bavinck, to a detailed critique. [118] At this time Diemer also criticised the use of form-matter dualism by Woltjer, Kuyper and Bavinck. [119] However, even though Diemer stopped using the term logos, in many ways it was replaced by the term "Word" which continued to bear the same content as the scholastic term. The creation "in the Word" is a creation in God, a breach of the Creator-creature distinction similar to that of logos speculation. In fact it could be said with justice that Diemer never managed to completely break out of the system of thought he absorbed from Woltjer. [120] Consequently, there is a conflict between the scholastic remnants in his thought and his struggle for a Biblical perspective on creation.

One result of this is his view that the law-order for the creation is found in Christ. The creation originally came into being as a "fulness of ordinances" in Christ, and then was manifested in time. As these ordinances are the decrees or thoughts of God concerning the creation order, the creation order is a logical order. By implication then true knowledge of that order will be strictly logical. Knowledge is reduced from its rich grasp of the diversity of creation to a focus on one particular type of knowing - that which is purely analytical. Inescapably, faith becomes distorted in a scientific manner and this mars Diemer's view of miracle significantly.

Nonetheless, this view did break with the idea that the law-order was a scientifically determined analysis of reality. The law-order is not just a description of the order of creation, but is an order to which the creation is continually subject. His view of the law-order points towards a fruitful approach to the problem of universals. The unity of the diversity in creation is found in the subjection of the creation to the one law-order, encompassing all of created reality, established by God for the creation. Unfortunately

his realist cast to this view and his logicistic emphasis makes it less useful than it could otherwise have been.

Diemer's view of the "beginning" effectively removes any possibility of seeing it as a temporal event. His identification of the "beginning" with Christ, and with a non-temporal origin of all things in the Divine Word, means that time is deprecated, it being a secondary product of creation (allowing the appearance of what was already perfectly created) and also that the eschatological aspect is lost sight of. Viewing the "beginning" as a non-temporal event he cannot but deny the true temporal character of the "days" of Genesis 1. Augustine, who had the same view of the beginning, fell into the same trap. This wrong starting point gets Diemer into difficulties when he interprets Genesis 1 as meaning that the creation of everything takes place "in the beginning." He then subsumes the "six days" under this beginning, making them all supra-temporal.

But the Scripture speaks only of the creation of the unadorned cosmos in the beginning (Genesis 1:1). This cosmos was then prepared to be a home for living things during the six days through the creative acts of God. It is only after the sixth day that the creation is said to be complete (Genesis 2:1). Diemer rejects the view that God's creation could have taken place during a period of six days (whatever we take "day" to mean - it is on any solid exegetical basis a temporal reference) because God acts only supra-temporally in an eternal "now." By entertaining this scholastic notion, Diemer trespassed against the basic tenet of Christian philosophy, that we should not philosophise about our Creator God.

There can be no doubt that the days of Genesis 1 are meant to be considered as temporal. On this basis it is impossible to see them as a supra-temporal framework which falls only within faith-time. Apart from that, both Diemer and Dooyeweerd neglect the fact that even faith-time is still time, and therefore the acts of creation take place over "days," which have a temporal character and occur within history.

The good point of Diemer's idea is that the "days" reveal a certain order in creation, and that therefore these "days" are still present, as the order is present. He derived this

from the insight that the Word which called all things into existence in the beginning is the same Word which even now sustains them. But this valuable insight is blunted by his insistence on the non-temporal character of creation, and by his use of the distinction, following Augustine, between creation and providence. The Word which called all things into being in time continues to be spoken forth in time. By not identifying the “order” with the “days” as Diemer does, we can maintain both the continual uninterrupted speaking of the Word which gives that law-order and sustains it in being, and the temporal character of the days of Genesis 1.

His insistence that everything came into being “in the beginning” can also be maintained in this way, since the law-order has not been added to, and thus everything that is, is subject to the law-order for the creation as it was, is, and always will be (Psalm 119:89-91). His rejection, following Bavinck, of the contention that the idea of development is inconsistent with creation, points to some important features of his thought. All development is on the basis of creation. It is the unfolding of the potential contained in the law-order for creation. Development is not without direction or order, neither is creation static and unchanging. Diemer goes astray, however, when he argues that this potential in creation is a real potential, one in which creatures already exist waiting to be given actuality. The potential contained within the law-order is just that: potential, not “potencies” or “seeds” (Augustine’s view) but possibilities of subjective realisation under the formative influence of higher subjects. Clay can be shaped into a vase, not because it has a “potential vase” hidden within its nature, but because God made it with properties which under the hand of a potter, permit it to be moulded into a vase. The difference is between a potential **a priori** (in which a vase is inherent in the clay) and a potential **a posteriori** (recognition of the properties of the clay that allowed a vase to be formed from it). [121]

Diemer’s views do not deal adequately with the biblical account of God’s creation acts

during the six days. The identification of the origin of the origin of the cosmos in the beginning with the work of the six days means that all creation acts are subsumed under the “beginning,” which strictly speaking is only the origin of the unadorned cosmos. Those things created during the six days came into being as the result of the

establishment of the law-order (law-side) for these things after time has been established. It is only with the end of the six days that the creation acts of God cease. He was still creating new things within time prior to the end of the sixth day. Time itself was created along with the first creature, as all creatures are temporal and only God is outside of time.

Diemer's use of Dooyeweerd's "faith-time" theory does bring out the idea that the time of the creation is to be seen in terms of our faith confession, and not as a scientific concept of time. We cannot locate the creation within time, neither can we quantify the duration of the creation events. Dooyeweerd and Diemer misconstrue the nature of faith-time, and fail to see that it is still *time*. They actually make it into only a temporal metaphor. By faith-time we mean that certain periods or moments of time are characterised by their significance for our faith, and that our faith has expressions which are of a temporal character. Thus creation took place along with (the beginning) time and in (the days) time, that is, in time contiguous with our present history, but can be fully expressed only in a faith confession regarding that time.

The history of Christian treatment of creation and miracle shows the dominance of dualistic approaches to these subjects. These dualistic views of creation always result in a view of miracle as a supernatural intervention into the course of nature, which is considered virtually independent of God. The monistic position emphasises the primacy of God's will, and on this basis either denies miracle altogether, or else makes everything a miracle. The latter position is the one adopted by Diemer, following the lead of Augustine. In this way he develops the view that everything, including creation itself, is a miraculous work of God. The special miracles of grace are part of the order of creation, and participate in God's work of providence in unfolding the potential hidden in creation. This providence is distinct from the work of creation, as the one is temporal while the other takes place outside of time. This means that there is a radical distinction between creation and providence, rather than the continuity of the creating Word, which sustains all things in being. It results in forced exegesis of Scripture, as is evident from Augustine's treatment of John 5:17. [122]

By faith, creation potential is led into specific directions it would not have otherwise taken, thus resulting in a miracle. Because of this view, Diemer is able to see miracles as the work not only of believing Christians, but of anyone who has faith strong enough to direct the powers of creation. So Diemer identifies the power of God with the forces within creation which can be directed by faith. This is a result of his monist viewpoint, in which miracle arises from the order of creation. Diemer's emphasis on this point has prevented him from recognising that true miracles are worked only through the power of the Spirit. Diemer's view that miracle is the opening up of created potential under the guidance of faith does not permit insight into the fact that a true miracle is worked by a power *other than* that which is available to us within the creation order. By separating creation from providence in an Augustinian manner he perceives miracle as part of providence, that is, something *other than* creation, but fails to see that the otherness is God's work of *redemption*. Diemer does recognise that miracle is based on creation - it is not an intervention which disrupts the creation order. But because he fails to see that miracles are redemptive, he must replace the "old root" of creation (Adam) with the "new root" (Christ) so as to maintain the relation of miracle to the (new) creation order, while recognising its redemptive significance.

Diemer's view of faith is intellectualistic, in that faith to open up the hidden powers of creation is based on *knowledge* of the order of creation. This knowledge has a scientific bent to it, so that the advance of science in discovering more of the secrets of creation cannot disqualify faith, but in fact strengthens faith by enabling more of the powers of creation to be unfolded. Faith is seen as a conviction of the truth or efficacy of a particular mode of action, as is seen in his view that medicine cannot cure where there is no faith in its curative properties. Medicine and miracle-faith both depend on the recreating power of God in the creation order for their efficacy. His view of faith applies equally to Christian and non-Christian, and so does not permit him to adequately distinguish between true and false miracles, even though he makes a valiant attempt. Diemer's view sees miracle as a development from creation, rather than from the work of redemption, even though he struggles to see it in the light of the latter. His attempt is not successful, apart from his insistence that miracle is contrary not to nature but to sin and its results.

This basic perspective has prevented Diemer from giving due weight to the miracle power of Christ. However, it seems to me that his emphasis on the miracles of Christ as a manifestation of his human nature is the Biblical one. Christ did not perform miracles *as God*, since this would lead directly to a docetic Christology in which Christ only *appears* (from Greek δοκεω "dokeo") to act as a man, but is in fact God in disguise. The promise of Christ to the disciples that they would work the same miracles (John 14:12-14) would be empty words, unless they too were somehow to become semi-divine. Christ worked his miracles as a man full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) and this same Spirit through whose power Christ did his mighty works has been given also to us (1 Cor 12:4-11).

Diemer's approach to the cosmic redemption of Christ does not permit him insight into the eschatological renewal of all things except as a supra-temporal event. His view effectively cuts off any appreciation of the "this-worldly" character of the new creation; he never discusses or even mentions the new heavens and the new earth (Revelation 21-22). His view obscures the significance of the resurrection of all believers. The supra-natural eschaton he anticipates effectively deprecates the bodily presence in the new earth. However, both the Scriptures and the early church Fathers speak of resurrection in terms of creation - a new creation as wonderful, indeed more wonderful, than the present creation (1 Corinthians 15). The new creation of the resurrection body is described in terms of the creation of Adam from the dust, just as the body will be raised from the dust to resurrection life.

Conclusion

Diemer's view of creation and miracle, and also that of Dooyeweerd, is influenced principally by Augustine's approach, thus resulting in many of the unsatisfactory elements of their thought in this area. The extent of the influence of Augustine in the reformational movement is still largely unexamined, and it is evident from what we have seen in Diemer that many of the problem in Dooyeweerd's conceptions possibly have their root here. The way in which Dooyeweerd and Diemer have developed their view of creation is still influential in reformational circles, and until further study

clarifies more of both the problems and the helpful insights, the unbiblical elements of Augustine's thought will continue to hinder the development of a truly Biblical perspective on reality.

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3. [Confessions 13.2.3. NPNF 1:2, p. 190] See H Dooyeweerd. **A New Critique of Theoretical Thought**. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958. Vol. II, p. 8. This view of individuality structures in Dooyeweerd has been compared with Aristotle's concept of immanent forms. Kent Zigterman. **Dooyeweerd's theory of individuality structure as an alternative to a substance position, especially that of Aristotle**. Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis. Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1970.
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7. J Klapwijk. "Honderd Jaar Filosofie aan de Vrije Universiteit." **Wetenschap en Rekenschap**. Kampen, J H Kok, 1980, p. 542; cf. H Dooyeweerd, "Kuyper's Wetenschapsleer." *Philosophia Reformata* 4 (1939) p. 208.
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9. Logos-speculation is the synthesis of the Biblical use of the “Logos” (word) for instance in John 1:1-3 and Revelation 19:13, which refer to Christ as the Word of God; the use of “logos” (among other terms) for the Word by which the creation was called into being, and by which it is constantly given order and structure; and the Stoic notion of a World Logos, the Platonic notion of an archetypal “idea,” and the Aristotelian notion of an immanent “form.” The end result is the identification of Christ with the world-order, which order is seen as a logical one. Therefore the deepest meaning of reality (and God’s being) is analytical in nature. A Wolters. “Theses on ‘Word of God.’” *Anakainosis* 6 (1984) no. 3, p. 1. See also Chris Gousmett. “Bavinck and Kuypers on creation and miracle,” *Anakainosis* 7 (1984) 1-2, pp. 1-19.
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20. E.g. H Dooyeweerd. **A New Critique**, Vol. 2, pp. 3-8. Cf. J H Diemer. "Het totaliteitsbegrip in de biologie en de psychologie." *Gereformeerde psychologische studievereniging*. Loosduinen, n.d., [1938], p. 28.
21. J H Diemer. **Nature and miracle**, p. 1.
22. P Steen, op. cit., p. 101, also n. 86.
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26. J H Diemer. "Het Totaliteitsbegrip," pp. 28-29.
27. Augustine. *The City of God* 11:32. NPNF [Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1] 1:2, p. 223.
28. Augustine. *The City of God* 11:32. NPNF 1:2, p. 223.
29. Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine* 1:34:38. NPNF 1:2, p. 532. *Confessions* 7:21:27. NPNF 1:1, p. 114; *On Faith and the Creed* 4:6. NPNF 1:3, p. 324. *On the Trinity* 1:6:10. NPNF 1:3, p. 22; *On the Trinity* 1:12:24. NPNF 1:3, p. 31. Cf. *The City of God* 17:20. NPNF 1:2, p. 357. Diemer identifies the Word by which the heavens and the earth were created with Christ, the power and wisdom of God, the same way Augustine did.
30. J H Diemer. "De 'dagen' in het Scheppingsverhaal." *Sola Fide*, jg. 7 (1953) 1, p. 9.
31. J H Diemer. "20 Stellingen over Natuur en Wonder," p. 19.
32. H Dooyeweerd. **A New Critique**, Vol. 1, p. 28.
33. *Ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 8.
34. J H Diemer. "20 Stellingen over Natuur en Wonder," p. 20.
35. *Ibid*.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.
37. J H Diemer. **Nature and miracle**, p. 3.
38. *Ibid*.

39. Ibid, p. 4.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid, p. 13.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid, p. 10.
44. Ibid, p. 4. “De ‘dagen’ in het scheppingsverhaal.” p. 9; “20 Stellingen over Natuur en Wonder,” p. 19.
45. M M Gorman. “The Unknown Augustine: A study of The Literal Interpretation of Genesis (*De Genesi ad litteram*).” Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1975, p. 2.
46. Ibid, p. 133. This Latin translation of Ecclesiasticus 18:1 reads “simul” for the LXX & ☐ ✕ ■ ❄️ ⚙️ 📖 “koine,” which should however be understood as “commonly, without exception.” A more accurate translation would be: “He who lives for ever created the whole universe.” **The Literal Meaning of Genesis.** Ancient Christian Writers. Translated and annotated by J H Taylor. 2 Vols. New York: Newman Press, 1982. Vol 1, p. 254, n.69.
47. Ibid, p. 133.
48. Augustine. *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 4:33:52. ACW 40, pp. 141-142.
49. Ibid, 5:5:12. ACW 40, pp. 153-154.
50. Ibid, 5:5:13. ACW 40, p. 154.
51. M J McKeough. **The Meaning of the Rationes Seminales in St Augustine.** Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1926, p. 23.
52. T Buford. “The Idea of Creation in Plato, Augustine and Emil Brunner.” Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Boston University, 1963, p. 182.
53. Ibid, p. 184.
54. H Dooyeweerd. “Het Tijdsprobleem in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee.” *Philosophia Reformata* 5 (1940) p.160. J H Diemer. “De ‘dagen’ in het scheppingsverhaal.” p. 8.

55. H Dooyeweerd. **In the Twilight of Western Thought**. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1960, p. 150.
56. Ibid.
57. J H Diemer. **Nature and miracle**, p. 4-5.
58. J H Diemer. **Natuur en Wonder**. Amsterdam: Buiten en Schipperheijn, 1963, p. 146.
59. J H Diemer. **Nature and miracle**, p. 7.
60. Ibid, p. 8.
61. J H Diemer. **Miracles Happen**, p. 5.
62. M J McKeough. **The meaning of the Rationes Seminales**, p.71. Augustine. *The literal meaning of Genesis 4:12:22-23*. ACW 40, pp. 117-118.
63. Augustine refers to Cicero's "nature" as God (Gorman, **The Unknown Augustine**, p. 160). However, there is a principial difference between the impersonal providence of neo-Platonism and the Stoics, and the personal providence of Augustine. S U Zuidema, "De Orde-idee in Augustinus' Dialoog De Ordine. Twee Werelden." *Philosophia Refonnata*, 28 (1963).
64. Augustine, *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon* 26.3. NPNF 1:4, pp. 321-322.
65. **Nature and miracle**, p. 16.
66. **Miracles Happen**, p. 4.
67. J Mourant, "Augustine on miracles." *Augustinian Studies* 4 (1973) p. 111.
68. Ibid, p. 126.
69. These "natural processes" are taken by Augustine from the natural science of his day. Snakes were believed to generate spontaneously from rotting wood, while lice similarly arose from dust. Thus for Augustine these two miracles would seem to be special instances of a natural process.
70. **Miracles Happen**, p. 8.
71. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 29.
72. "20 Stellingen over Natuur en Wonder," p. 22.

73. Ibid.
74. Ibid, p. 10.
75. Ibid; Cf. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 5.
76. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 11.
77. Ibid., p. 16.
78. Ibid., pp. 20, 28.
79. Ibid., p. 21.
80. “20 Stellingen over Natuur en Wonder,” p. 19.
81. Mark 9:23? Diemer’s Dutch reads “Zo gij gelooft zal niets u onmogelijk zijn.” **Natuur en Wonder**, p. 64. In the Staten Vertaling this verse reads “..alle dingen zijn mogelijk voor dengene die gelooft.”
82. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 29.
83. “20 Stellingen over Natuur en Wonder,” p. 18.
84. Ibid, pp. 18-19.
85. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 26.
86. Ibid., pp. 3, 8.
87. **Miracles Happen**, p. 11.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. **Nature and miracle**, p. 13.
91. **Natuur en Wonder**, p. 145.
92. **Nature and miracle**, p. 12.
93. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
94. Ibid., p. 11.
95. Ibid., p. 12.
96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.
98. **Nature and miracle**, p. 25.
99. **Miracles Happen**, p. 13.
100. J H Diemer. "Dynamisch pluralisme." I. *Libertas Ex Veritate*. Vol. 3, No. 5, January 1932, p. 106.
101. **Nature and miracle**, p. 3.
102. H Bavinck, **Gereformeerde Dogmatiek**, 4 Vols. Kampen: J H Bos, 1895-1901. Vol. 4, p. 667.
103. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 13. Diemer also says that "Christ is the goal and the driving force of historical developmnt." "Christus en de modeme natuurwetenschap." *Calvinistische Studenten Bladen*, Vol. 2, (1933) no 3; p. 64.
104. Ibid., p. 17.
105. **Miracles Happen**, pp. 4-5.
106. **Nature and miracle**, p. 16.
107. Ibid., p. 32.
108. Ibid., p. 16.
109. **Nature and Miracle**, pp. 31-32.
110. **Miracles Happen**, p. 13.
111. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 32.
112. **Miracles Happen**, p. 24.
113. Ibid., p. 10.
114. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 24.
115. Ibid., p. 10.
116. **Nature and Miracle**, p. 32.
117. Ibid., pp. 30-31. J H Molenaar points out (**De Doop met de Heilige Geest**. Kampen: J H Kok, 1973, p. 78, n. 12) that Dooyeweerd has the same view of

miracle as Diemer. since he says “The miracles which were described in the Holy Scripture are not magical, purely subjective phenomena. They are not in conflict, but rather in full agreement with God’s creation order, meaning that they are not counter natural but natural. However, sin has deformed human nature in its subject side. The grace of faith is the restoration and perfecting of this nature, on its historical analogy, but it is not in a scholastic sense supra-natural.” See H Dooyeweerd, “De Verhouding tussen Wijsbegeerte en Theologie en de Strijd der Faculteiten.” *Philosophia Reformata*, 23 (1958) p. 65. This is the only reference to miracles by Dooyeweerd that I have been able to find, apart from a passing comment that miracles were rejected by the Enlightenment. (**A New Critique**, Vol. 2, p. 352.)

118. “Wat de Wijsbegeerte der wetsidee aan Dr Kuyper te danken heeft,” *De Reformatie* (1937) 29 October, “Kuyper’s Wetenschapsleer.” *Philosophia Reformata* 4 (1939) p. 193.
119. “Wijsgerige biologie van Thomistisch en Calvinistisch standpunt.” *Geloof en Wetenschap*, jg. 1938, no. 1-2, p. 59.
120. See also Dooyeweerd’s comment, **Nature and miracle**, p. vii.
121. See E Klaaren, **The Religious Origins of Modern Science**. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977, p. 38, where he points out that this approach is inherent in a view of the contingent order (as opposed to necessary order) in creation.
122. Augustine is opposed to the idea that God is still creating new things, since this would contradict the statement of Genesis that on the sixth day God completed all his work. But not only is God resting, he is also working in his providential activity. To make this interpretation possible Augustine develops an unusual exegesis of John 5:17. “But a different meaning must be given to the words ‘even until now,’ because they indicate that God has worked from the moment in which he created everything.” God has continued to work. Augustine can maintain this distinction only because of the distinction he has made between the original act of creation and God’s subsequent activity. “Therefore we understand that God rested from all his works that he made in the sense that from then on he did not produce any other new nature, not that

he ceased to hold and govern what he had made. Hence it is true that God rested on the seventh day, and it is also true that he works even until now.” Augustine, *The literal meaning of Genesis* 4:12:23. ACW 40, pp. 117-118.