

HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL

Publication series no 60

POLISHED LENSES

A philosophy that proclaims the sovereignty of God over creation and also every area and aspect
of human activity

By

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1976

PRO REGE PRESS - POTCHEFSTROOM

This e-version 2010

Bristol: allofliferedeemed

www.allofliferedeemed.co.uk

Publisher Pro Rege Press Ltd., P.O. Box 343,
Potchefstroom 2520.

ISBN 0 949988 936

“The financial assistance of the Human Sciences Research Council in connection with the publication of this work, is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed in this work or conclusions reached, are those of the author and must in no instance be regarded as a reflection of the opinions and conclusions of the Human Sciences Research Council.”

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FOREWORD

The title

Polished Lenses was chosen as the title of this book, a book which deals with *Philosophy*. Certain reasons contributed to this choice, and I should like to try and explain them.

It is my contention that all man's activities, even his scientific activities, flow from his heart, as is implied by Proverbs 4:12, "Guard your heart more than any treasure, for it is the source of all life". But this heart is the product of the nourishment of all previous years. It is, therefore, a heart which has a specific pre-scientific vision of reality; it is a heart provided with a specific pair of spectacles with tenses of a peculiar colour. The colour of the tenses affects the activities of the heart. In point of fact these activities flow through and take on the colour of the tenses. And this is true of every human being since the creation of man up to the fulfilment of this era in which we live: the time during the fall into sin. It is therefore of the utmost importance to know the colour of our lenses in order to understand the world in and outside ourselves in all our activities. It is of the same importance to know the colour of the lenses through which everyone else whom we meet on our way – our scientific way as well – looks at the world and by means of which his or her activities are or were coloured. Only then is it possible to try and give a correct interpretation of their vision of reality – which is the object of philosophy.

But what is this pre-scientific vision of reality I am talking about? It is the all-embracing knowledge with which man confronts his world, through which he lives his life and which in current terminology is called world and life view, a concept which is unacceptable to me because the whole of reality is not indicated by it. It includes neither God, nor the law which is valid for the world and for life. When we speak of a world and life view we naturally narrow reality down to created reality only, and in this way usually only to the earthly part of creation. The coining of the term "world and life view" depends upon a certain philosophical conception which excludes God from philosophical justification and which places God outside the philosophical field of investigation, although it is an historical fact that no philosopher ever excluded God in his philosophy. In speaking of a pre-scientific vision of reality, therefore, we try to avoid the mistakes made by our predecessors. Chapter 3 of this book gives attention to reality in mutual coherence which is proof enough, I trust, that it includes considerably more and directs our attention to beyond that which is included in the term "world and life view". By reality in mutual coherence I wish to indicate God, the ontic law as well as the whole of creation, i.e. heaven and earth, and the three realities must be seen in their mutual coherence.

The most prominent South African philosopher, Professor H. G. Stoker, stresses the all-embracing character of the knowledge contained in the world and life view¹ in his book on principles and methods in science. He then analyses a world and life view according to certain outstanding characteristics. Showing that it is fundamental, universal and integral, he stresses the point that every human activity is coloured by the world and life view.²

*Professor J. P. A. Mekkes, an eminent philosopher in the Netherlands, emphasises in his book, *Radix, tijd en Kennen*,³ the overwhelming place this type of knowledge – the pre-scientific knowledge – has in the life of a human being. For him also, all human activities originate from the heart, as Scripture teaches.*

*How does man attain his own vision of reality which plays such an important part in his life? He acquires it, as it were, with his mother's milk, i.e. from his parents, brothers and sisters. Ever since he is born, the milieu in which he lives, as well as the school and university he attends, his church, sporting club, etc., play an important role in the formation of the so-called world and life view. In short, everything he encounters helps to build up this encompassing vision or pre-scientific knowledge of reality in mutual coherence. And this knowledge differs from group to group and from individual to individual. Of course there are certain aspects which are common to certain groups, such as the Calvinistic, **Roman** Catholic, Liberalistic, etc. world and life views. These supply us with a set of principles with which we venture forth in life and which colour the tenses of the spectacles worn by our hearts and thus the activities emerging there from in the world in which we live.*

This pre-scientific vision of reality in mutual coherence, this pair of spectacles, needs polishing. This is done by means of philosophy, for philosophy as far as ontology is concerned, is nothing less than a scientific research of reality. This scientific work, however, is also an activity of the heart, an activity scientifically focused on the spectacles of the heart with the intention of "polishing its tenses". Reality, however, includes God, the ontic law and creation, all of them in mutual coherence. Looking through polished lenses at the world around us, and also at the scientific world, implies that the philosophical conception of our predecessors and contemporaries should be interpreted with a scientifically justified knowledge of reality in mutual coherence. As far as I can see, this is a philosophical ontology which is constructed in the light of the Word of God, which can stand the test of Scripture without being biblicistic. A philosophical conception in which the Word of God plays no part and in which the God of Scripture does not function correctly cannot be used by Christians to polish their own spectacles. It is therefore our task as Christians to polish our tenses with a philosophy that proclaims the sovereignty of God over the whole of creation and over every aspect of human activity; a philosophy, therefore, which tries to give to the Word of God the place in scientific activity to which it is entitled. This philosophy will do its best to include the whole of reality within its scope or field of investigation. It is therefore a serious task

*to know the answer to the question: what is reality? This answer cannot be given by any human being without the aid of Word Revelation. In Word Revelation God himself supplies us with the correct answer because the Word of God is the truth, the only real truth which we possess on this earth. God, through his revelation in the Bible, supplies us with the answer about the existents or realities. This answer, which will be analysed in the Prolegomena, will I hope, Supply all Christians with polished lenses thus enabling them to **view** reality in a new light and to act accordingly, that is in such a way that their every action will prove that they accept the proclamation of God's sovereignty over their lives, and their future **life** will be one of worship.*

To live a life of worship is only possible when the sovereignty of God is proclaimed over creation in its totality, and over every aspect of human activity. And this must be a New Right answer to the secularization which entered the world with the fall into sin by man in paradise and which received a tremendous stimulus from early Christian philosophers and is today the real enemy of radical biblical thinking. But today its enmity reaches out further than only Christianity. The New Left movement rejects it in its totality. To them the revolution is a religious answer to secularization. In their religious rejection of secularization the New Left has something in common with the New Right; the difference lies within the left and the right. The New Right tends towards a life of worship – worshipping the God who revealed himself in the Bible, proclaiming his sovereignty over the whole of creation, including man. The New Left with its accompanying religion, on the other hand, leans towards a complete humanism in which man is totally deified. For both of them life is worship, but they differ in the direction taken by their hearts – whether for or against the God of Scripture. The New Right thinkers should be very careful not to become reactionary thinkers; they should not build their vision as a reaction to the New Left. It is a fact that all reactionary thinking is determined in full by what one reacts against. Reactionary thinking can never develop into real radical biblical thinking.

It is therefore a sine qua non that the lenses of our spectacles should be polished – polished with a Scriptural philosophy, a scientifically gained and accounted knowledge of reality in mutual coherence with all possible implications. In this way Christian thinkers can be united in a world which has gone astray, and thus we ought to be able to supply the world in which we live with answers to contemporary problems concerning every aspect of human life. In this way we can work in the direction of the coming Kingdom, the Kingdom seen as everything over which God proclaimed his sovereignty.

The intention

*In the following pages it is my intention to develop a conception of reality in mutual coherence as seen in the light of the **Word** of God, giving the Word of God the place in my philosophy to which it is entitled, without becoming biblicistic. avoiding in **the** process, the pitfalls of*

fundamentalism as well. This is only possible if the child of God studies his field of investigation **under** the guidance of the *Holy Spirit*, with the light of Scripture enlightening the specific field. In this way we are empirically bound but we are still giving Scripture its authorized place in our scientific work.

Throughout the past ages of Western civilization every philosopher has tried to give answers to the question of existence. In my own systematic answer I cannot ignore these answers. Reference will be made to them without any intention of writing a history of philosophy. This study remains in the first instance a systematic analysis of reality in mutual coherence as enlightened by the **Word**

of God. It hopes to throw some new light on the three radically different existents and their mutual relationship. I may however, stress a few points more explicitly than others. Attention will be given to more or less contemporary problems; e.g. the problems concerning man and human relationships in differentiated social bodies. I hope to cover more or less the entire field of systematic ontology, including anthropology, forms of communal life and the theory of knowledge. The special branches of philosophy are excluded.

I fully realize that I am not the man to give the last word on the subject. I hope, however, that I may be instrumental in assisting many a Christian throughout the world to build the **Kingdom of Christ** in a truly biblical sense. This is a tremendous task, a task which will continue until the last day; a task which began centuries ago and which can never be put aside by the children of God. It is a glorious task because it worships the Lord God and the Son and the *Holy Spirit*, proclaiming their sovereignty over creation in its totality, including man and the activities emerging from his heart.

Indebtedness

I wish to thank everyone who has had anything to do with providing me with a pre-scientific view of reality in mutual coherence: my parents and grandparents, my brothers and sisters, schools, universities, church, state and many other forms of communal life.

I wish to thank all those who helped me to polish my lenses. Two names must be mentioned; Professor H. G. Stoker of the University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education and Professor D. H. Th. Vollenhoven of the Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands. What I owe to them cannot be expressed in words.

A word of thanks must be extended to my **New Right** friends in the Netherlands, the U.S.A., Canada and South Africa. I hope that we will be able to co-operate more intimately in the future – our aims are exactly the same – and that the glory of God will always be the one and all in our united efforts.

My thanks are due to the many people who helped me with this manuscript. In the first place,

my wife and children who endured so much during my seclusion in the Bushveld of Transvaal while I was writing these pages. Thanks for your help and inspiration. Thank you Dr Koos van Ocenter, for placing your farm at my disposal, enabling me to write this book in the wonderful atmosphere of "Fides" near Koedoeskop. Thanks to Paul and Martha who tended to my needs on the farm.

A word of thanks must be conveyed to my students who inspired me to a great extent in trying to put into words what was discussed and elaborated upon in class and in private.

I wish to thank Johan Snyman and Bennie van der Walt in particular, for critically reading the manuscript and for well-intended remarks and advice.

My appreciation and thanks to Mr R. C. Jansen van Rensburg and Mrs Janet Smith for reading and editing the manuscript and the language, and to Marietjie Aucamp and Mrs Scheepers for their invaluable help in typing the manuscript, cannot be sufficiently stressed. Thank you for assisting me in bringing to light this book which intends the glory of the Lord, our God.

Most of all I wish to thank God for grace received every moment of my life and during the period of writing this book. May it help to glorify him, the Alpha and the Omega of Christian life.

Dedication

With due respect this book is dedicated to him who paved the way to radical biblical thinking as far as philosophy is concerned in a way no predecessor or partisan could be equalized: Professor D. H. Th. Voltenhoven.

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Potchefstroom

January 1976