

## 2. Op den Uitkijk – Series, 1933

### Preface

In this second series of articles, Janse explicitly develops his rejection of scholastic dualism, and shows how this has detrimentally influenced the church so that the Christian hope is diverted from trust in Christ and the hope of resurrection into trusting in the fact of the inherent immortality of the soul.

His article on “Alien time” is especially important for later developments within Calvinistic philosophy and for Janse’s own anthropology.

Here we see in these articles the themes and perspectives of the Calvinistic philosophy emerging more explicitly, and indeed some of these same themes are reflected in Vollenhoven’s book published the same year, **Calvinism and the Reformation of Philosophy**.

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## Death and Mourning

[Sterven en rouwgevoel. *Op den Uitzicht* 9 (1933) 702.]

... And he died. Genesis 5:5

The Hebrew words in the Old Testament for "life" and "death" are genuine examples of the concrete life view of the ancient Semites.

"Life" means in Hebrew literally "to contract." Also for us, the most striking feature of the living being is its movement. And the whole of life-movement is characterized by the contraction of muscles.

The "living-ness" for the motorcyclist is that co-ordination of hand muscles and maintaining balance, of spine, heart, eyes and feet – it is that "being-present" from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. But also the "living" in its finest form is to be noted on the face of people, every day.

The person himself is seen in the depths of his soul through the muscle contractions of his face. If he is happy, then a number of facial muscles draw up - the mouth curls up, the eyebrows too ... the whole face brightens up. If he is sad, the mouth corners pull down and the whole musculature of the face is different from what we see in happiness.

And this can work so finely that in a social gathering an observant friend sometimes sees a barely perceptible muscle flicker from a painful memory like the shadow of a cloud on the face of his friend.

But the Hebrews have formed the word "life" from this contraction of the muscles of the living soul.

**"Dying"** is in the Hebrew idiom now the obverse of all that. That is the relinquishment of the central muscle tension. The dying person stretches out straight... the connection that tied together the organism, has been released... The bundle disintegrates into loose parts, which still lie next to each other for the time being.

This is not a materialistic conception of the word, as if death is but a matter of substance and nothing else.

No, that is precisely the most tragic aspect of death, that the fine mouth muscles no longer say kind words from the heart, that this forehead no longer shows the happy or sad experience of him whom the bystanders love. The last emotion on the face is fixed in the muscles - the last thought is expressed. But now there is no more communication and communal life.

He "lives" no more ... He lies down in the sleep of death.

That lying down stretched out, which the Hebrew word *die* expresses so concretely, that begets for everyone who is present a very intense feeling of mourning. That feeling of abandonment, of the lack of social life with the loved

one, finds its real occasion in the sight of that "stretching out" for the sleep of death.

Because they are not "muscle bundles" and it is not a "physical body" which the crowd loses from sight, but the **whole man**, with whom we lived and for whom we cared, has now let go of us and has travelled to the realm of the dead.

In their mourning, the Semites were extremely expressive. The whole man mourned. They tore the clothes away from the breast to expose it to the air, crying and wailing, they wrung their hands and convulsively moved the whole body, they threw dust and ashes on their heads that they otherwise cared for so well with scented oil.

Our separation: external - internal, they did not know. That was all one for them.

Their mourning was not the strong emotional and intimate expression of feeling, which we prefer to hide from strangers. For them it was a living folk custom, which had content and which they conducted with music and even with professional mourning singers.

The emotional and intimate with them was not the be all and end all, so that wailing in mourning, which was awoken by music and singing, was not really its characteristic... no, crying as a public act of supporting the mourners was as such real and also **brought** time and again the moments of heartfelt emotion. We often require that mourning must be emotional from moment to moment to be called genuine.

But it is psychologically abnormal, if an emotion lasts for days continuously. Constant feelings of emotion diminish in force or they become perverse, they then turn into pleasurable feelings. A continuously held emotion of grief can bring a state in which they enjoy the sense of mourning.

It is not pain any more, but a feeling of pleasure. The deepest and... most real emotions are real mourning in short successive waves of grief. Then mourning remains as sorrow.

The more uniform, nevertheless also genuine and deep mourning is that of the diffuse continuous troubled feeling, then we are in a sad mood. Everything seems heavy. And minor setbacks arouse greater depression than is necessary... then the mourning is decent and certainly very heavy. But the grieving person suffers more than God requires of grieving Christians, then it gives relief, when the emotion is set free and the grieving one breaks out in tears.

Our **reasoning** grieving visitors are so impoverished, especially for such cases. Loudly weeping, really emotional, spontaneous people can help here.

The Semites would not understand us if we spoke of one who is mourning internally, but externally and in tone and appearance and behavior continues as usual. They would find their grief real, aroused by singers and musicians –

so that the **whole man** at **times** could express his whole grief. And they would not find genuine the man who for days on end wanted continuous emotion, nor the people who held their emotion "inside."

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## Falling asleep

[Ontslapen. *Op den Uitzicht* 9 (1933) 729.]

...and he slept with his fathers. 1 Kings 14:20

When someone is going to sleep, then he lies down and lets his tired muscles relax, he closes his eyes and does not listen to the sounds that reach his ear. He also no longer pays attention to the life around him, he sinks further and further into drowsiness. A feeling of calm after exertion, a sense of peace with what he leaves behind in the world, overcomes the sleeper. He then has the intention to get up and then return to what he had left behind - but for a time he withdraws himself entirely. He lives a while in inactivity - or rather, he lives only as a sleeping, as a resting man.

There is in this sleeping a good deal that reminds us of death. Traditionally death has been called the twin brother of sleep.

In death we find also that stretching out, that cessation of mobility, that going away from the surroundings, that letting go of the world and coming to rest from everything else that happens afterwards.

Yet there is a great difference between these twin brothers. Sleep gives us benefits, but death brings horror, because it comes as a punishment for sin. So there is a sharp sting in death, for it brings us to God, before Whom we are afraid. And not without reason!

"Death is the last enemy," says Paul. And only when the enemy is brought to nothing, is death then good.

Nevertheless the "sting" is now already taken away for those, who may come "without terror before God's judgment throne" in so far as they stand in faith.

That sleep and death are **similar** twin brothers is the view of the heathen, who thereby try to conceal the sting of death.

But they are very dissimilar "twins".

Yet we also find in the Holy Scriptures a strong parallel between sleep and death. It was said both of wicked kings such as Ahaz, and of pious princes, "He slept with his fathers".

And in Daniel 12:2 it is said that many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, "these for eternal life and those to shame."

When it states that Abraham died "old and full of days," then it signified here the decay of vitality in this ancestral father. He was old, he could not go on living; the care and work for his large herds, impaired walking and thinking, memory weakened, eyes darkened, hearing diminished, the vitality and energy sunken low... and so the whole concrete person was fatigued... it was

too much for him... he was "full of days," tired of life, he longed for sleep, to stretch himself out just as a weary worker lays himself down to sleep.

He could particularly desire that, because he had no rest and peace in this world, but had sought that from God, and because he was eager for a better "homeland" than Ur and a better dwelling place than the land of Canaan, where he was a stranger (Hebrews 11:13-17).

Job also yearned for that rest in falling asleep in his bitter sufferings which made him dejected.

Hear how the tired sufferer sang of rest as a desired good:

"Now I would be lying down and quiet; I would be asleep; then I would be at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth... There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners are at ease together; they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. The small and great are there, and the slaves are free from their masters." (Job 3:13-20)

If Job could stretch out his weary legs forever, then he would call that "rest" a "benefit." Even more than Abraham was he full of days.

And now at the end of the book, Job was certainly chastised, because he had suspected God of injustice - that he had wanted to judge God before the judges' seat - but not because he had yearned for the peace of the grave.

So it was with Elijah. When Elijah prayed: "It is enough, now please, Lord, take my soul," then he was not chastised, but comforted and strengthened by an angel who woke him up from sleep, and gave him water and a cake baked on coals.

There is something reasonable in this, that the weary lays himself down to sleep, and that the man who is dog-tired of life, longs for the moment when he can sleep and no longer needs to go on living.

In this respect the Holy Scriptures are also somewhat merciful. The Holy Scripture can appreciate there, that a man because of old age (Abraham) or through misery (Job), or by failure of his life's work (Elijah), longs for the rest of sleep.

But it is the sin of suicide, if a person does not pray to the Lord of life to be allowed to sleep, but instead commits murder, in that he sheds blood so that in this way, he finds the peace of the grave through a means forbidden by God.

The rest with respect to life was certainly found, the person committing suicide has stripped himself from the cares of his family and from the burdens of the body and from the pain in this life - he rests... with respect to this life. But how will he have rest in the realm of the dead? It is not fitting for us to judge him. All those who trusted in Christ come before Him without terror in life and

death. That is the decisive question. Not: whether our last act on earth might have been a sin.

But certainly it is the rule that those who know Christ as their king, **do not take** their **own** lives because of serious issues, but take recourse to Him and acknowledge Him as their sovereign.

And then the world-weary Christian will ask like Elijah: "Lord, take away my life..."

That is not a sinful prayer... on the contrary... then it comes out of faith in even the most depressing moments in life.

And then they bow before His decisions.

It may be that God – as with Abraham – takes away the old in his mercy. It may also be that His children – such as Job – still greatly and gloriously taste the luxuries of life as gifts from God. It may be – as with Elijah – that God still has need of His servants. In his time the weary man may go to sleep, that is, to let go of life here on earth, even more than a sleeper, and pass over into the realm of the dead.

The Scripture never says that it is better "in itself" to journey out of this life.

The Lord Jesus said to the Jews, to those "church people" who did not hold onto the Covenant of God in reconciliation and law, about the fire which is not quenched. And he allowed the wealthy son of Abraham in pain to say: "I suffer pains in this flame..."

But this was true... he no longer cared for his goods, nor for his going to the temple, nor for decency and moral life, nor for matters of justice as an elder at the gate. Compared to this life he is at rest – compared to his former surroundings he sleeps in the dust of the earth until the day of resurrection.

But what a great mercy it is to be allowed to live "in the Lord" (Jesus) and to be able to die "in the Lord", that is, as purchased property of Jesus.

A slave who had a good master, need not be concerned for his maintenance, when he is travelling with his master. The master cared for and protected him as well as a farmer now cares well for and protects his expensive horses. The slave had only to obey his master's orders and attend to his commands.

So now those who are the Lord's may travel to the land of the dead. Oh certainly, it is different than here - but Christ has all power there also. In this respect, it is virtually the same, whether I make a trip to India or whether I go to the land of the dead.

Therefore, the faithful can go there **peacefully**. And because the Lord says in His Word, that the dead who die in the Lord, will be equal in seeing the glory that the Lord Jesus now has with the Father, therefore they often fall asleep **gladly**.

And therefore they also long, just like Paul, to be with the Lord – even though their life holds them here with bonds – which also are from God.

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## The great journey of humankind.

[De groote afreis van de mensch. *Op den Uitkijk* 9 (1933) 761.]

... and after that they must join the dead.

Ecclesiastes 9:3

You see someone speaking about something with fire in him, which goes very much from the heart. Then he focuses on it, he is certainly eloquent. His eyes, his hands, everything speaks. His intelligence is sharper, the thoughts are just in it ... Look, that's "spirit". Fervent in spirit, passionate, witty, not a great spirit - all these expressions from our practical life are understood by anyone.<sup>1</sup> Spirit is something that is found everywhere in experience. Only we see the "spirit" even less than the winds. We see the effect. The Greek word for spirit is the same as for wind. And our word spirit is connected with the word "yeast".<sup>2</sup> Yeast also works from within outwards and makes the dough to rise, as if it were alive.

When the spirit is missing or not active, we see that too. The man with "contrite spirit" sits down as a weary person. His head is hanging down, his activity ceases. And anyone who meets with such a surprise that she does not know what to do, acts like the Queen of Sheba, when she met Solomon - she claps her hands in amazement and then let the breath out sighing involuntarily... as if the spirit left her. Whoever wants to see the proof, clap your hands together raised up once as if in amazement.

This is how the Queen of Sheba acted.

There was "no more spirit in her" – she stood there as prostrate – with hands struck together, as someone who does not know, in which she no longer has her presence of spirit because of her surprise.

Man has so much more than the spirit.

He also has breath and a physical organism, he has parents and homeland, he has strength of muscle and weight, he has thinking and intuition, he has a time and place – he has money and nice things, he has rights and moral life, he has religion, he has such a lot.

There is great **difference** in all these things.

One is more than another. Our breath is more than our bread, our religious life is more than our social life (who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of me, says the Lord). But in his time the lower instead of the higher fall into step alternately in our lives. If there is a fire on Sunday, then we save our home and do not go to church. And if there is rumour of war in a region, then we close the schools.

<sup>1</sup> [All these expressions use the Dutch word for "spirit."]

<sup>2</sup> [See reference in **Idols** to spirit and yeast.]

We should therefore not make an absolute separation between the higher and the lower in humans, as though we could actually do without the lower. And especially we should not try to squeeze the multiplicity into two concepts, as though by this we could understand everything. Then we do injustice to the richness of God's Creation.

The Greek philosophy has following Plato brought everything under the scheme: **spirit - matter**.

We saw what spirit is. But a man also has matter. What someone leaves behind, is what we consider his "matter". And then **his** matter (usually including clothes) weighs as much as the amount of iron in the other side of the scales. But spirit and matter is not everything!

This **dualism** of spirit-matter also penetrated the philosophy of Christians. The more Christians sought for a synthesis with the ancient pagan philosophers, the worse it became. There are many examples able to be related from throughout church history.

And finally this Christian synthesis philosophy also came to be that of the people.

And so in the tradition of Christians this dualism has become **popular**. They say: There is spirit and matter. And everything comes under one or other, one thinks. And because spiritual being is more than material being, because being fervent in spirit stands higher than lithe body, the spirit has been seen as superior. But then they have made the difference between high and low, more and less (within the circle of human unity as "living soul") into a separation of the **two** halves of men.

Man consisted of **two** parts, of which the first part was high and noble and even divine or was seen as closest to God – while the other part was far away from God, matter, something that can easily be missed.

What we can say about a man who is "fervent in spirit" who was then God-worthy.

And what can one take away from a person, who was unworthy of God, far from God. As if God was further away from our hands than from our spirits. God "sustains" our weight as well as our spiritual life.

Dying is now in that dualistic scheme: the disintegration of the higher and lower, spirit and matter. Then the "spirit" is capable of ascending to heaven and the matter was hidden in the earth.

Dying is then nothing but (... as lofty and noble spirit) laying aside its matter. This is the popular conception of the Stoics, not that of Scripture. This schema do not fit at all with the richness of what God has created.

There is a whole lot more to dying than just spirit and matter.

There is a lot more abandoned than that which we ourselves can weigh.

Dying is not abandoning "matter."

And "continued existence" is not becoming "pure spirit."

The **whole man** dies and leaves all spheres of life here under the sun.

And in the realm of the dead he, that is again the man, comes into wholly new relationships, just like someone who moves from here to Indonesia,<sup>3</sup> and not only his home here but also his office and profession and position, and local civil rights and membership of the church must be abandoned.

The man who dies, loses not only his substance as the **so-called** material remains, but he is separated from the whole of his life here on earth.

Our **time** with day and night, summer and winter, with hours and minutes does not apply to him. He does not grow any older and he no longer participates in the times.

The space, which he took up, wherever he was moving "under the sun," is exchanged for the length of the grave - and there "he," as we still call him as a corpse, changes into dust, which we can not call "him" any more.

The weight that he carried everywhere with him, because he was made of matter, he left behind for the pall-bearers, who carry him towards the grave.

His eye sees nothing – the whole body with nutrition and growth and reproduction, the beating heart and the strong feeling in the muscles... it goes away.

Even love and hatred and envy have perished.

They also no longer know about anything that happens under the sun (Ecclesiastes 9:5-7, read also the advice of vs. 7-11).

They do not live anymore in the history of mankind. They no longer speak their own language among our people. They no longer receive or pay any reward – they leave behind their business and ledgers and cash.

Their marriage has ended, their fatherly care is over.

Their enjoyment of art is gone and their artistic talent in singing or art or music can bring nothing further.

Their place in the family and their acquaintances is empty.

Their moral life is demolished. The thief does not steal any more – the "discussions" of the way of life remain "undiscussed."

Their religious life here under the sun is at an end. They do not go to church on Sundays. They no longer sing psalms with the church. They do not pray

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<sup>3</sup> [Known as the Dutch East Indies at the time.]

any more and no longer read in God's Word. They preach no more, if they had been pastors. Their term of office is over.

Who will praise you in the grave?

The grave will not praise you, the dead will not extoll you; those who descend into the pit will not hope for your truth, it is the living, the living, who will praise you, said Hezekiah (Isaiah 39:18,19).

Thus, even the mouth of the man, who praises God on this earth in the midst of the church becomes dumb. Thus, even the office of the Lord in the church is taken away. Certainly those who "go to the dead" must abandon a very great deal.

The notion that the dead go forth "naked and destitute" to the realm of the dead with respect to this life, here under the sun, is very true. They may be "asleep" – but there is no awakening the next day. When awakening comes, it is for the great day of judgement, then everything is so different from what we were accustomed.

It is not "the good death" of modern poets. The Scripture does not speak so romantically about it, but more like death is in reality – as an enemy. It is the wages of sin, that is, recompense for our evildoing as Adam's children, which which thrives according to our father.

Jesus called that moment the man journeyed to the death: the time "when it fails you" (Luke 16:9).

And he advised his disciples to make friends on earth by doing good here, so that in the realm of the dead they might be received by friends into the "eternal dwellings."

Indeed, if we have to let go of everything here, we may look for things that can soon compensate us for what is missing. These are for God's people the angels, who carry them to Abraham's bosom, the friends from the past who receive us, the fathers to whom we are gathered, that whole world of those who predeceased us, including many famous and loved ones - and ... /7/ because that alone will be able to comfort and calm the Christian in the world of the dead - **to be with the Lord**. His glory may be seen by sight, which they now had seen only in faith.

And if then here already the face of Christ can give such wonderful comfort – what must it be like there in that foreign country where the prospect is **peace**.

Yes - then that strange land of the dead is all at once revealed as the heavenly homeland, the **better** homeland, because He is there.

With this consolation (compensation for suffering) in mind, it is possible to be happy - even in this great journey, which all men must make.

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## **Alien Time.**

[Vreemde tijd. *Op den Uitzicht* 9 (1933) 857.]

Because my days have been cut short I will  
go down to the gates of death. (Hezekiah)  
Isaiah 38:10

From our first moment of life we experience that short span of time during which we are here "under the sun" second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour. In this way we experience days and nights, summers and winters. We experience that regular alternation of work and rest, of love and sorrow, of life's growth and of life's decline... and always through this the seconds of our lifetime are strung together, just as in the loom, thread after thread is added.

But just as the weaver gets up and makes an end to the fabric by cutting it off – so will the Lord of our lives soon make an end to our days. Then our days and nights cease. Then we no longer celebrate our birthdays.

Then we go through the gates of the realm of the dead.

Also there is there still progress of time in succession, according to the Holy Scriptures. There is a wait for the final judgement for those in heaven (Revelation 6:9-11) and for those in the place of darkness (Jude 6).

Holy Scripture sees the whole creature "sighing" and expectantly looking out for that end. The heaven also will be renewed. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and a judgement of all dead and all living. And that is expected equally in the realm of the dead as here on earth.

There is thus time in the realm of the dead.

But what a difference in **time perception, time divisions** and **experience of time** must that be. How alien that time should be to those whose days were cut off here.

It would be as strange as for us who travel in the summer to South Africa and then celebrate Christmas in December under the blazing African sun.

It is stranger yet for polar explorers, when they first experience endless polar day... for months on end they see the sun shine in the middle of the night. It must be uncomfortable for many people when they go into their first polar night, when for a few months day no longer seems to shine, and at midday everything is still shrouded in the darkness of night.

It is strange for us when our time-divisions, to which we are accustomed, undergo such big changes.

Also the way in which we experience our time gives big differences. As a small child at home - or as schoolchildren, as a young man in his first job, or

as an aged parent, who lives on a pension... how differently we experience our days.

But this different perception of time usually only happens to us in transitions: the first day of school was strange, the first day at the office, the first day that the elderly go strolling in the park instead of going to work - then one always feels strange and uncomfortable.

Also our awareness of time often exhibits big changes. An hour of wakefulness at night for a sick patient can be very long. A half-hour wait in great tension can creep painfully slowly.

But also, the years can fly by so fast that we almost lose count. If you suddenly ask a person who is engaged in a busy and hectic life how old he is, he must think for a moment.

For Jacob the seven years he had to serve for Rachel were as days, because he loved Rachel.

Fear and very great excitement and joy can in our experience of time make hours seem like days or to shrink into quarter-hours. It is known that people who were locked accidentally in a vault for half an hour, thought that they had stayed in it for days and nights and came out like an old man.

In that darkness orientation by day and night was missing. If these people had thought about it, the only measure of time they had was their pulse.

Their life was "cut off" for a half hour from under the sun...

And on each occasion something strange often happens. Then it appears that the life impressions which our psychic life has received and which we have long forgotten, can be reactivated. What is experienced by us in our childhood and throughout our lives as a sequence of time, then unfolds like a panorama before us with full clarity and certainty. We are like someone who walks along a mountain road - and now suddenly all the farm houses and villages, to which he was travelling, he sees at once.

What was experienced as separated in time is now seen in a moment.

How strange it would be for those whose life-fabric is cut off, his days continue no more and he enters through the gates of the realm of the dead with his life's panorama before his eyes.

How strange that must be for a child of God. No more day and night - but being in the halls of light in the Lord Jesus.

No longer going to work - but rest from his effort and work and care and suffering.

No more going to church on Sundays, but always sitting at the wedding feast of the Lamb with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the faithful.

No more birthdays - but rejoicing in the coming Day of the Lord when He will be glorified.

No more summer and winter - but always the glow of His heavenly glory. John had previously served with Him daily at the table, but when he saw Him on Patmos, he fell as if "dead" fearfully at His feet. Revelation 1:17.

Why should it not be surprising if those who have lived here by faith from day to day, now can see what they up to now believed from the Scripture, because God has promised it.

What a strange time will prevail there – the time of the expectation of the second coming of Jesus, when He will raise the dead.

What shall be those moments in the life-panorama of the faithful, which they already looked for here towards that Day of which they have learned and of which they have heard preached in the church – what shall be those moments in the "life time under the sun" that still will be of current interest in that time.

If our days are cut off and we open our eyes in this completely alien time, then there shall still be much in the life-panorama of the Christian which here again is in force.

For those who have confessed here that they were strangers and pilgrims, because they left this life behind for the things of the new heavenly kingdom that is to come, that is, to be with the king himself in heaven - for them the new "time," because of the contemplation of Christ, is finally less strange than their life time here, because they feel perfectly at home there.

When John feared, he was told: fear not.

If the King says that to us that as we go through the gates of death into the (king's) realm of the dead, then the fear of His Majesty shall certainly change /9/ into songs of praise, You have redeemed us to God. You have made us kings and priests of our God - we shall also reign as kings on the earth. Revelation 5:9 and 10.

Because of the great love for Him the time of waiting will certainly not be long. Moreover, there is also the element of rest on which Scripture places all emphasis. And the hours that we sleep are not long for our consciousness.

However, how strange shall time be in the realm of the dead for those who do not belong to Christ, for those who are their own lord and master. They had found their "treasure" here on earth – and God gave this to them in His goodness in great measure. He made the sun to rise over them, and gave summer and winter, birthday after birthday... until He cuts off their days and they enter through the gloomy gates into the darkness where the sun never shines and the birthday cease. Also there is the remembrance of the past life now cut off. And especially for those who have known God's word, many moments of admonition and warning of that time, will certainly be very topical.

That strange time-succession in the realm of the dead, which rushes toward the great Day of Judgement for the dead, will be oppressive.

At holy baptism the congregation prays that this child may appear one day without terror before God's judgement seat; that the Lord also may confirm his covenant with that child; that it may in growing up also increase in the fear of the Lord.

When our children are growing up they are taught about that Covenant (Old and New Testaments).

Christian education has perspectives into and about the realm of the dead.

/825/

**Do not practice any vain crafts.**

[Geen ijdele kunsten navolgen. *Op den Uitzicht* 9 (1933) 825.]

Whoever calls up the dead... is an  
abomination to the Lord. Deuteronomy 18:11,  
12.

When someone has departed to the realm of the dead, then no branch of true science is able to "research" and study him any more.

Those who see university as the school where the entire universe must be investigated and where human thought will come to rule over **everything** – those who think this, mistake what is meant in the name university. And they are wrong also – and this is much worse – about the task that God gave science.

If they then come to understand that science can not study the angelic world or the world of evil spirits or the realm of the dead, then they find that on the face of it a lack in science. And they probably feel sympathy for the person, who also wishes to capture this terrain through science, as the spiritualists purport to do. But anyone who does not go along with this veneration of science as king over all, understands very well that science has by no means been diminished, but rather enhanced, if it keeps strictly to its task.

Is a shoemaker any less, if he keeps to his "last" and does not try to investigate the "foot-wear" of spiritual apparitions?

Is geometry any less, if it adheres to the measurement and calculation of "earthly" space constructions, of length, width and depth? What would it have to "measure" in a spiritualistic "space"?

The deception by the spirit world and the uncontrollable errors in that "mysterious" darkness make it impossible for genuine science to operate here.

Genuine science considers its mission thus: it examines all of God's great works "under the sun", and speaks of them in solid, purely-considered definitions, and through logical reasoning it comes to the conclusions /10/ that are to be the controls for practitioners of that field. But the quasi-science has still been the means of propaganda for all kinds of erroneous philosophies. Thus, the adherents of the so-called spiritualistic worldview announce their error as "spiritualistic science."

Genuine scientific workers certainly know that they can not descend into the realm of the dead, nor ascend to the world of the angels nor can presume to approach God with "scientific" intentions. The Christians also know that such a thing is sin.

Science has indeed in its genuine God-given task gained an enormous amount to do – each subject of science is further divided into components for specialists – there is no need to transgress the boundaries imposed and also to go "investigating" the various "worlds" named above.

Whatever we know about a dead person, we know from God's Word, whose eyes see not only the whole world under the sun, but for Whom also the realm of the dead lies naked and open – and Who also has the world of the angels in His domain – God has revealed some things to us through his prophets and apostles. And he did so in connection with some vague, practical knowledge of the people which is found among all nations.

When the prophets spoke of **Sheol**, the Old Testament word for the realm of the dead, then the Jews, but also the Gentiles, knew immediately what they meant by that. All nations have "knowledge" of the existence of the realm of the dead and there are many phenomena through mediums and similar persons which point to this occult (hidden) world.

Much of this widespread practical knowledge may well have come from Noah – and through him from Adam – and so by tradition handed on from child to child. Of course, fantasy had a free hand and the story gradually became more beautiful and more creepy.

It is certainly curious that the Holy Scriptures accept as a given the general basis – the belief in a Sheol and familiar spirits and demon exorcism and sorcery – on which it was built, but that it does not know of the fantastic and creepy features.

The "river of the dead," of which Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" speaks, nor the ferryman on the river, nor the watchdog of Hell, nor the dragon, nor the bridge which is as narrow as the edge of a knife, over which the dead must pass safely<sup>4</sup> – all these things are not in Holy Scripture, but are the teachings of the pagans.

In the Holy Scriptures there is nothing ghostly, nothing mysterious, nothing creepy to be found in its speaking about Sheol. The romanticism of the shadowy realm of death is alien to her.

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<sup>4</sup> [This appears to be originally a Zoroastrian belief, in which the bridge is either a wide pathway for the upright, by which they can reach heaven, or a narrow razor-edge for the wicked, who thus fall off the bridge into hell. The image of a bridge appears in Patristic writings, for instance, Gregory the Great. In his *Dialogues* he reports visions by various people, including one who "saw a bridge, under which a black and smoky river did run, that had a filthy and intolerable smell: but upon the farther side thereof there were pleasant green meadows full of sweet flowers... Now those that desired to pass over the foresaid bridge, were subject to this manner of trial: if any that was wicked attempted to go over, down he fell into that dark and stinking river; but those that were just and not hindered by sin, securely and easily passed over to those pleasant and delicate places." *Dialogues* 4.36. There is no mention of the width of the bridge being an issue, although this may be implied in that the just passed over "securely and easily." Sourced from [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/gregory\\_04\\_dialogues\\_book4.htm](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/gregory_04_dialogues_book4.htm).]

It speaks as pleasantly about Lazarus in Abraham's bosom as if Abraham were still sitting in his tent, with Lazarus at his table beside him. "In his bosom," that is, lying beside him on his right. That was the best place for a guest, close to his host.

Neither was there any ghostly movements nor witchcraft of sorcerers nor "mysterious materialisations" of luminous matter in which the spirits could reveal themselves. Lazarus and the rich man know each other just as if they had encountered one another during their lives.

It is precisely this mystery, the uncanny, that always entices people to spiritualism, witchcraft and divination. It is sin against God – it is wanting to know more than God reveals to us, it is contrary to His commandments (prohibited) and will draw aside the curtain, that He has drawn over that world in order to hide from us any further investigation. It is the inclination of sinful man to transgress arrogantly the limits specified by God for the task of science and to do more than God wishes from it – thus immediately failing to do justice to its own task.

Whenever we enter into the "creepy" and the "interesting" and the mysterious of the forbidden domain, which attracts our curiosity, and we quite soberly take up the communications obtained from the other side by spiritualist séances, then the result is very poor.

If an old still living friend of my late grandfather relates to me that at 10 o'clock in the morning of April 30, 1899 my grandfather purchased a cow at the market, that old man's story interests me very little and I do not even bother to ensure that I remember it. But if I obtain this communication at a séance through a medium, then the mysterious and creepy appearance of this simple communication makes it interesting, and I would probably try to check whether really happened ... and if it turned out that it was true... what would I have then gained, speaking to the point?

Scripture calls all these things "vain crafts" (Acts 19:19). When people of Ephesus, who had studied these interesting mysteries, believed the Word of God, then they would have nothing more to do with this useless empty "science." They threw their books to a value of 50,000 drachmas (which was 50,000 daily wages of agricultural workers in Palestine, cf. Matthew 20:2) into the fire.

That there is a hidden world of the dead, they did not need these books to tell them.

What it is like there and what we need to know about it, that they found in the Holy Scriptures in plain language, without that vagueness and uncertainty, without nerve-racking, that made their hairs stand on end.

Moreover, they knew now that it was sin; and the preaching of Paul taught them that God had said to his people: "There will not be found among you... anyone dealing with divinations, a hypocrite or anyone who pays attention to the cries of birds, or a sorcerer or a charmer, or a medium, or who consults a

spirit, or a wizard, or anyone who calls up the dead; for all that do these things is an abomination to the Lord (God of the covenant) (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

The Ephesians have understood that and therefore they have broken radically with the so-called "science" that was sin and of no use.

The Christian Church has also adopted this attitude. In the form of the Lord's Supper, the magicians and soothsayers are told they have no part in Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Anyone who believes that he may perpetrate these things scientifically, should be careful what he does and ask whether science has been given a task there from God.

What we will write in the remaining articles about the afterlife is not a result of scientific research, but simple practical discussion of what God has revealed to us with respect to the realm of the dead (Sheol).

This revealed knowledge can be "science" only in a very specific sense, as part of theology. If theology is theoretical reflection upon what God has revealed of Himself and His creation in the Scripture, then the doctrine about the afterlife is a key section of theology.

But again, even theology can not go on a search into the realm of the dead, and even less so for heaven.

Science is the work of men of science, and this may again relate to practical life and the intuition of ordinary knowledge.

Science began to flourish only when they examined nature itself, the same nature, about which everyone talks.

The ordinary understanding of nature out of practical life continues. And the theoretical treatment in number and size and law followed.

So with respect to the realm of the dead, the ordinary practical language of Holy Scripture and the ordinary knowing on that basis applies for the Christian theological scientific activity.

And that is what I want to give in the following articles, not a "science" of the realm of the dead, nor a theological reflection on scientific data from Scripture either, but only discussion of the practical business matters of practical business-like language of Holy Scripture on this point.

We know nothing more of that than what the Scripture says about it.

As long as someone is alive here "under the sun," he may be the subject of investigation for each branch of science.

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<sup>5</sup> [See **Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper** (1). Those admonished not to partake include "all who resort to or confide in sorcery, fortune-telling, charms, or other forms of superstition." Liturgy of the Christian Reformed Church. **Psalter Hymnal**, p. 92.]

But if he has gone down to the dead, then science has no instrument and no light to study him further.

/45/

### **The grave and the cosmic place of Sheol.**

[Het graf en de kosmische plaats van den Sahel. *Op den Uitzicht* 10 (1934) 45.]

The earth opened its mouth and carry them down... alive into Sheol, and the earth closed upon them...

Numbers 16:33

Only a very small part of the immense universe is practically considered by us. That space-image has become familiar to us. We are thus at home in it. We can orient ourselves in this. We distinguish easily above and below, left and right, East and West.

Our space-image of the room is so familiar that we can find things by touch. Even in our sleep we hold it closely so that when we wake up, without even opening our eyes, we know where the door is. Occasionally, we have during sleep not "paid attention" – we returned to our room without holding that space-image closely and then in the morning we have the sensation that the room has apparently changed.

We improve then in the morning our sense of space in itself according to the things that we know as fixed points in our perspective-picture. We firmly anchor as it were our space image with those things. Thus we can live peacefully in our space within our horizon without becoming dizzy from the abysses of space, created by the Lord of heaven and earth.

Let us be careful, however, that we do not elevate these fixed points within our experience of space, for instance our bedroom door, to an absolute fixed point in the universe. In 24 hours that so-called fixed point has rotated with the globe and in a year it moves through the universe revolving around the sun.

It is not permissible to posit fixed points of our perceptual world for fixed points for example with respect to the sun.

Exactly so with our above and beneath. If I make a trip around the world, then I hold firmly to my practical world (space) observation, that the earth is "below" and heaven is "above." That is correct.

But in reality if I go to Australia I am in precisely the opposite of my position in Europe.

There are many people who never could understand how people in Australia can walk around "with the feet against the ground and with the head down". When these people get to Australia, they think again, that people in Europe think so incomprehensibly.

What is their error?

They have **extended to all to earth** the **beneath** of their experienced space, well beyond their horizon, and so they come to the "stupidity" that people "actually" walk around in Australia with their heads "down." We may not apply our "beneath," which is correct within our space within our horizon, to the whole earth, yet be silent about the world space.

It is equally not the case with East and West in our experience picture. When someone goes from here to the East – and another to the West, we see them go away from each other in the opposite horizontal direction. Whoever holds firmly to that perception image may argue that if they continue like this they will never meet.

And yet they come together again somewhere in Japan. This proves that our East and West in our experiential world does not extend to the entire globe. While we think that it is impossible for them to come together, it appears geographically that they certainly will meet each other.

This must surely make us careful that we do not apply our perception of space to the whole universe.

Our fixed points appear in the universe anything but fixed. Our "above" and "beneath" does not even apply to the whole earth, and even less our East and West.

Our perception image of our space is not false or defective, but we should not require it to function in ways that can not fulfil.

We must not mix up our practical world-picture, which extends to our horizon, and our thinking and calculating about the earth and the further immense universe.

The Holy Scriptures speak practical language – they do not give theoretical scientific statements. Therefore we do not find any description of the spherical shape of the earth, the orbits of celestial bodies, or of chemical formulas, or the circulation of the blood, even though all these really are God's great creation works.

This also applies to the language of Scripture concerning Sheol.

Sheol was repeatedly spoken of as a place somewhere in the cosmos.

That there is a specific spatial perception there in Sheol is certain.<sup>6</sup> But the spatial perception there and our spatial picture here, are not brought into a cosmic spatial connection with each other. We can not draw a line in the direction of Sheol.

Just as someone here in Europe points downward and someone in Australia does exactly does the same from his experience, without taking any notice, that the cosmic-dimensional system points in the opposite direction – so the

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<sup>6</sup> [Janse does not specify why he thinks this, but presumably it is evident from the "abyss" between Lazarus and Abraham on one side, and the rich man on the other, as well as the notion that the dead "descend" into Sheol.]

Holy Scriptures speaks of the place and the depths of Sheol, **without forming a notion of any cosmic spatial relation we must think of with our space perception.** Those two stand **unrelated** next to each other just as the observation space of Australia and Europe are **practically not** cosmic connected.

Now science has made us acquainted with the sphericity of the earth and representations of this. So we can think of both points again in connection. But there is no science that can calculate and construct for us the cosmic spatial connection between our present location and Sheol.

Whoever hears the Scriptures as a practical and credible language on this point, will not seek for such a link. Not because it does not exist in the space of the cosmos, but because it is not revealed.

When a man from Amsterdam sees his children off to make a trip to Indonesia<sup>7</sup> and he gazes after the boat from IJmuiden, he sees it disappear from view in the West. A more or less vague sense of space will always remain with him that they are now there "behind" IJmuiden.

So it is good. For his observation of space it is true.

When the man now, however, wants to calculate the cosmic location of his family more precisely, using a map and an instrument, then he must look not towards IJmuiden, but rather in the direction of Naarden. And not horizontally, but seemingly almost vertically, into the floor.



Our family under the floor! This reality is really scary for our spatial perception. The image of the people walking about on their heads comes back into our space image.

<sup>7</sup> [Janse refers to Indië, which in this context means the territory then known as the Dutch East Indies, now known as Indonesia. While it is somewhat anachronistic to refer to them as Indonesia, this does not affect the image Janse is seeking to make.]

We feel that it does not fit, though it is actually cosmically this way. And we accept it but prefer the practical idea that they are found "beyond" IJmuiden on the surface of the earth. That is the right of our space image.

And the idea that they find similar floors, is also more correct than... under the floor.

Only if we determine the cosmic place, is it then under the floor. But we would not do so in practice, if we viewed the globe of the earth from the moon. There is undoubtedly a "view" of the earth from the moon and that is definitely a "broader" view than ours here, which for astronomers is certainly sometimes pleasant and instructive.



But practically it is better for us to "look on" space within our own horizon.

Where do we see our dead go in our view of space?

Downward, into the earth, in the grave.

This is the last glimpse of them for us.

The Holy Scripture is connected is to this view.

The dead descend into the grave, and behind the tomb is Sheol.

Compare: behind IJmuiden is Indonesia.

And as the father does not desire to point out with the globe and instruments the cosmic location of his children in Indonesia under the floor – so we do not desire to determine the cosmic location of Sheol. Moreover, it is possible for science to indicate to us the geographical location of Indonesia, but it possesses no instrument for determining the location of Sheol.

So as the father points to IJmuiden and rightly can say: there they went – so we must say of our loved ones: there we have borne them and then we point to the cemetery, not so as to examine this with curiosity, where then somewhere in the great universe God has placed them. The Holy Scripture also does not attempt this.

As is mentioned in Numbers 16, these people descended alive into Sheol in the earth, then that is the last observation given from our practical experience

of space. Whoever builds constructions on this observation, for example, that Sheol is found in the earth, runs the danger of the man that imposes the view that Australians are "below." If he is consistent, he will consider that heaven, where Christ is, is just above his head. That is very true if we do that in the manner of the father in Ijmuiden: that our Lord has gone above. But it is completely foolish and arrogant for someone to want to find the actual cosmic place of Christ by speculation about what is over his head.

The dead who died in the Lord, are with the Lord in heaven. There must be then communion between the place of the realm of the dead and the place where the Lord is.

Our "beneath" in the grave and "above" in the heaven from our perception of space will never be together, but that also does not need to. Our East and West also diverge from each other and only the examination of the spherical shape of the earth enables us to understand that they meet up with each other anyway.

That someone can be in the realm of the dead and at the same time also be with the Lord cannot be explained by any scientific statement. That we accept simply as certain and sure, because the Lord, before whom Sheol lies naked and open, has spoken about this in His Word.

Therefore, we continue to gaze towards our dead in the grave, just as the father sees his children "beyond" IJmuiden in Indonesia.

Therefore we remain gazing after our Lord Jesus Christ towards heaven, to which He has gone.

And we believe Him, that He has taken His children to Himself, until He comes again.

Just think again of the father after some years in IJmuiden gazing at the sea. His children are coming back from Indonesia.

And his image of space appears not to have been so very wrong, since they left in that direction – and then they come back that way.

Thus, the simple Christians, who kept their simple image of space, will really see their Lord coming on the clouds.

And they will then see their loved ones, whom they imagined to be **in and behind the grave**, actually come up from the grave.

If Sheol must open its gates, they will come ... "out of the graves" back into our perception of space again.

Therefore, again the idea of the Holy Scriptures of the realm of the dead behind the grave appears to be normal practice, to be exact, which also is very practical, nevertheless it reveals for our curiosity no information about the cosmic location.

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## How do the dead 'exist'?

[How 'bestaan' de dooden? *Op den Uitkijk* 10 (1934) 103.]

The Son of God is the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by the word of his power.

Hebrews 1:3

A very widespread popular cosmology is this:

"In the entire cosmos there are only two entities, two substances, out of which everything must exist. Something must be either matter or spirit. There is no third entity, third substance. The Deity and angels exist as spirit substance. Man consists of both matter and spirit. The rocks consist only of material substance. Concerning the animals there are disagreements whether their animal soul has a physical or a spiritual basis. When the man dies – so people argue further – then he will abandon one bearer (the material substance). If he then continues to exist, he must necessarily use his spirit substance as a bearer.

So... man in the realm of the dead is there in spirit substance. If spirit also fell away, there would be no entity, no bearer for his existence."

This summarises the popular view.

I want to raise some objections to these popular "scientific" statements, which through the medieval synthesis of Christian and pagan elements in philosophy have penetrated our practical perspective on life.

1. Science can not make absolute statements about the entire cosmos, for scientific research about the world of the angels and about the realm of the dead is impossible. Silence then any scientific research on... the "substance" (?) of the Supreme Being Himself! Science can not claim that there are only two possibilities for existence, either in spirit – or in material substance.

2. If science accepts two bearers of existence, and then allocates God to the "spirit" substance, then that makes it something that creation as creature knows, to be the substantial bearer of God's existence. However, Scripture teaches us that it is God, who bears the creatures. For the other view, however, people rely on only one text. In John 4:24 it says **God is Spirit**.

If you read the text as if this gave a **definition of the "substance" in which God exists**, then you simply let the Scriptures say, what scholasticism using the Greek pagan philosophy has rationalized.

If you read the text Scripturally, in context, as the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman, it will be different. Then it reads there: the Samaritan woman was impressed with Jesus' words and sees now that He is a prophet. But now she shyly asks whether it is right that they must actually go to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray to the Almighty. For her as a Samaritan woman it is doubly difficult. The middle wall of partition between Jews and Samaritans prevents this.

How did this come about, that she should now believe in that prophet? Jesus consoles her now **that there is a change coming**: we know what change that was. The middle wall of partition would be broken - the operation of the law, the shadow service would cease, because the "truth" (reality) of the shadows had come. And now Jews and Gentiles together in the Christian church would receive the Holy Spirit and serve Christ. Less than three years later, Philip came to Samaria preaching Christ, and when Peter laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit fell on the Samaritans. And then they did not need any more to go to the temple in Jerusalem as proselytes.

Well, Jesus said in this particular case of the conversation with the woman: Woman, take it from me, we will soon be done with the Temple of Jerusalem and of Gerizim. Not that the service of God in Jerusalem was not good – the Jews were right against the Samaritans – but still, the hour comes, and now is, that the true worshipers – that is, those who believed in Christ – will worship the Father through the Holy Spirit, Who will be given to the church and through Him, Who is the "Truth" of all the Jewish shadow service. Then the Samaritans will also be present, because God is also seeking them, so that they will worship Him in truth and through the Spirit. For God is a Spirit. God is revealed to all such people as the Holy Spirit (compare, God was manifest in the flesh). The Lord Jesus refers the woman to the ministry of the Spirit, which is very close to her country. That is why the Lord says soon after, when she comes with her neighbours, that the fields are white for harvest. Many Samaritans (John 4:30 and Acts 8:7,8,25.) learned to worship God through the Holy Spirit and in Him, who said: I am the truth (reality) of what was promised and given in shadows. See the Marginal Commentators in the **Statenvertaling** on John 14:6 and 1:7<sup>8</sup> and compare Hebrews 9:24 (the temple is the counterpart of the true sanctuary).

Whoever now reads this practical reference here to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament church, as if the woman was embarrassed by a definition of the "substance" from which God must exist, sins very much against the very first principles of practical Scripture reading and exegesis.

<sup>8</sup> [John 14:6: "**Christus** noemt zichzelf **den weg**, omdat niemand ten hemel kan komen, dan door Zijne verdiensten en kracht; Hand. 4:21; **de waarheid**, omdat al de beloften Gods en de schaduwen des Ouden Testaments, die den weg tot de zaligheid afbeelden, in Hem vervuld zijn, 2 Cor. 1:20; Joh. 1:17; en **het leven**, omdat Hij de oorsprong en geveer des eeuwigen levens is; Joh. 11:25; Hebr. 5:9." "Christ called Himself **the way**, because nobody is able to come to heaven except through His merits and power (Acts 4:21), **the truth**, because all the promises of God and the shadows of the Old Testament, which illustrated the way to salvation, are fulfilled in Him (2 Corinthians 1:20, John 1:17), and **the life**, because He is the origin and giver of eternal life (John 11:25, Hebrews 5:9)." John 1:7: "Dat is, van dat eeuwige Woord, waardoor de mensen ook ter zaligheid verlicht worden." John 1:7: "That is, of the eternal Word, by whom also mankind was enlightened for salvation."]

3. If we read the Scriptures about the angels, then we see that even there we find no mention of a spirit substance in the sense mentioned above.

The Scripture says that the angels are spirits. But now to conclude for these finely-organised servants of God, who speak, hear, and sing and go quickly through the cosmos: they are spirits, so they must consist of spirit substance, is as foolish for me to say, a cat is an animal, so there must also be an animal substance. Scripture certainly knows the specific distinction between a spirit and a man of "flesh and bone". When the Lord Jesus had risen, he said: touch me and be convinced, that it is I, and that you do not see a spirit, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have (Luke 24:32 ). But the Scripture says nowhere that a spirit consists of "spirit substance."

4. From experience we know from our lives about spirit. Scripture speaks of the spirit in man very clearly. A spirit that is bowed down, is to see the whole man. Being fervent in spirit, is also evident. While the force of the wind is seen, the wind itself is not perceptible. So it is with our spirit. We have spirit. Scripture says that everywhere. But that this, our spirit which we have, is the bearer for our existence, so we can safely assume that we, abandoning our physical basis, will continue to exist through our spiritual substance –the Scripture says this nowhere.

Nowhere are the dead called spirit-substance, and the spirit which we have, was not changed for ourselves, what we are or of which we exist.

5. The word "substance" in the sense mentioned above is good for nothing at all. It was an evil time when it came from Greek philosophy into scholastic theology, which sought for a synthesis between the pagan and Christian thought patterns and worked out Christian truths in pagan terms.

So it was that the doctrine of Scripture, that God bears everything, because He is the true self-existent, the only independent bearer – was exchanged for the doctrine that matter and spirit were the bearers of all existence and that God exists as spirit substance. Thus, the creature was made self-existent, and God was borne by that creature.

6. This error was felt very painfully, when people began to speak of a stone in this way: the stone here is exclusively matter substance, and then the stone was seen independently of spirit. And therefore we have had for centuries the debate over whether and how "spirit" could act on "matter" and vice versa.

In practice this is not difficult. We see it every day in our body. We also believe according to God's Word, that God alone has independent existence and that He is the bearer of all things. He bears the stone, the plant, the animal, the man. He bears number and measure, electricity and heat. He bears angels, devils and death and the realm of the dead. And a stone is no more autonomous and independent as "matter" than a human mind is as "spirit." Whoever calls the material substance the

independent bearer of the stone, sees problems coming on all sides. How could God, who is then spirit substance, have anything to do with the stone, with the whole of "nature"? How can an angel strike Peter on the side [Acts 12:7]? How can angels intervene if we fall because of gravity, how can the angels roll away the grave stone?

For the Scripture, there are no such questions, because they know of no substance as self-sustaining-means of existence.

7. Also for the so-called material things, this definition does not appear. My body for example gives the biologists many issues which have not much to do with "substance" in the narrower sense. So for example the question of form, and the continuity of the body. I have still this same body which I had when I was 5 years old. And yet there is no more of the same "matter". And also, the study on the composition of a silly pebble leads to the greatest miracles: molecules, atoms, forces, magnetic influences, energy... until the instruments remain powerless for the world of things which are no longer perceptible. For this common phrase: "the stone exists out of material substance" is deficient. It actually says nothing.

8. There are many more things in the world than substances and spirits. There are very many types of existence for creatures. Think of the existence of our thoughts. Do my thoughts exist as substance or as spirit? No, they exist as thought. So the forces exist as forces, and animals as animals, man as man, and the angels as angels. And it is through God who has independence and who upholds all of this.

In humans there is much more than body and spirit. He has consciousness – life, heart, kidneys, he has life, powers, gifts, which can be divided into neither "substance" nor "spirit".

9. What does the Scripture say about the dying man?

It says that he commends the spirit that he has and which we have seen active from experience, into the hands of God, that he gives up the spirit - and that spirit returns again to God, Who has given this to that man.

Scripture says that when man dies he was unclothed (2 Corinthians 5:2-4), his body is taken away from him – he returns to the dust (earth), from which he was taken – he descends into the grave. He is away from our sight.

And then it says that he – that is the man of spiritual powers denuded of the body – is carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom - and there is the place of rest.

There the man, whose flesh rests in the grave – in the hope of the blessed resurrection (Acts 2:26), is now already as a naked man (2 Corinthians 5:3) with the Lord. There he sees the Lord Jesus, who is there with his glorious body, which certainly has flesh and bone: He is our flesh and bone (Hebrews 2:14), we have our flesh in heaven

(Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 18).<sup>9</sup> Seeing that pledge of our blessed resurrection must certainly be a very sweet consolation to us.

Those who know that there is much more on earth and in heaven than flesh and bone and spirit – those who know that no independent bearer of the creature exists – those who know that God maintains the person even when he is stripped of matter and spirit, and through His divine power upholds him just as he had during in his life in "substance" and "spirit" – they have no difficulty with the presentation of the Scripture on this point.

That we are dust, the Scripture says very clearly, and also that we have spirit. But if matter and spirit were to be the bearers of our existence, so that without both we would fall into nothingness, that elevates the creature to independence.

It is God, who now upholds us in our material organization– we do not exist at the sufferance of matter, but through Him. And it is true that He Himself upholds the substance, with which he has clothed us. He also upholds the spirit that He has given us and which He can take back from us. He also knows our hearts and proves our kidneys. His hand maintains the whole of existence on all sides.

So he upholds our existence there in the grave.

We do not live there by the grace of spirit substance, which then as our remaining substance, acts as our bearer, but only because the Almighty sustains us in existence there.

The pagans have represented the deceased as soul-matter substance (animists) or spirit substance (spiritualists). And these ghosts manifest themselves again in the mysterious "materialization-filaments." Creepy... if a person loses his point of support in "firm" independent matter and must float in one half of his certainties, in his spirit.

We can stay sober and reject this horror. God bears me now with flesh and bone, heart and kidneys, with powers and abilities. He bears me also still as my Creator – equally firmly – when my dust has returned to the earth and my spirit has been commended into His hands. There is still a lot to me that is neither matter nor spirit. He will uphold me there, with the body stripped from me and resting from spiritual powers, and I will be with my Lord – and I will see Him, the Man of "flesh and bone" – the Son, the expression of God's independence (hypostasia, substance), Who is also my bearer, and Who promised me that He will also awaken me to eternal life. Thus, our flesh then can rest in hope and so we can then in peace commend our spirits into God's hands when we fall asleep.

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<sup>9</sup> ["Question. Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension into heaven? Answer: First, that He is our Advocate in the presence of His Father in heaven; second, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He, as the Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself; third, that He sends us His Spirit as an earnest, by whose power we *seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God, and not the things that are upon the earth.*" Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 18, Question and Answer 49. **Psalter Hymnal**, p. 30.]



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### **The shape of the dead in Sheol.**

[De gedaante der dooden in den Scheool. *Op den Uitzicht* 10 (1934) 147.]

And when he was in Hades, he lifted up his eyes...

Luke 16:23

In the story of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus the Lord Jesus says of the rich man, that he **lifted up his eyes** in Hades. Did this man still have eyes?

Furthermore, he sees Abraham. Did Abraham then have a shape? Moreover, he also sees the beggar, who once sat at the gates of his house. Then the rich man asked whether Lazarus might come with water on his finger to cool the tongue of the rich man, because the painful flames.

The question then arises: what is Lazarus' finger, what is then the tongue and the pain of the rich man, and what is that water and fire?

The Marginal Commentators of the *StatenVertaling* add this note to this text: lifted up his eyes: "These words, like some which follow, should not be understood strictly, because the soul, being a spiritual essence, has neither eye, nor tongue nor finger, but in the parable it expresses with that the greatness of the pains of hell and the immutability of the state of souls after this life, both those in heaven as well as in hell."

However, this explanation does not satisfy.

It is certainly said: – you must not understand it "strictly" – but how should we understand it instead? The remainder of the explanation seems to indicate symbolic speech, as if the eyes, tongue, finger, pain, fire and water are spoken of only in a **figurative sense**, "to express..."

Yet it is not explained frankly, that Scripture is speaking only figuratively.

It would also go against the whole content of the Holy Scripture in this area.

Holy Scripture takes the afterlife to be as real as life here.

And the world of spirits, angels and devils, is also represented to be just as real as people. They are also creatures.

And they always appear in a specific shape.

They have hands and feet (Revelation 10:1-2). They speak and hear. They also often have wings. They move from place to place. An angel "struck" Peter on the side to wake him (Acts 12:7). It still does not understand all this metaphorically, "figuratively," symbolically. Is an angel's hand still not something like a thought-hand in our spiritual life?

Also in the practical knowledge which the nations have of the realm of the dead, we always find that people continue to exist there in other ways, but nevertheless not in the same shape as when they lived here, so that mutual recognition is possible.

What difficulties have the Marginal Commentators had here?

Why could they not accept the practical wisdom of all peoples about the realm of the dead and the practical declarations of the Holy Scripture, which were so simple that a child can understand them?

They got into difficulties through their **spirit-matter dualism**. They accept the definition: man is composed of body (matter) and soul (spirit). And then they thought that these substances were the bearers of human existence. In our previous article we brought criticism against this concept of substance. We saw that the existence of the creatures is upheld by God, and that matter and spirit are not independent substances.

Well, difficulties were brought by this misconceived question: Was the "finger" of Lazarus now matter or spirit?

Finger belongs to the body and body is matter, said the translators. So finger could not be understood "strictly" because it was believed that a spirit has no fingers. And fire, water and pain in this story are not substances, while they can not exist as "spirit." And there is no third option for "existence."

Thus they got into great difficulties.

All these difficulties disappear, however, if we abandon the definitions of the spirit-matter dualism. There is certainly matter, and there is spiritual life in us - but there is much more in the creation. The finely structured spirits which are called angels, are certainly not amorphous spirit-substances in the Holy Scriptures, but creatures with their own existence, which also have, just like us, hands, feet, eyes, ears and minds.

The whole practical presentation of the Holy Scriptures speaks of this shape of the angels and of their emotional and volitional life and of their thoughts and desires as though they are as real for them as for us.

Thus, we also simply take what the Scripture says, the dead really have hands, feet and tongues in their other non-material existence in the realm of the dead.

They really have their own form, by which they can be recognized.

They speak and hear, they think and feel pain, they even deal with fire and water, with an abyss which separates, and they are equally real, as **really** existing as we are.

But this world is for us here, now, not able to be grasped, not tangible, not visible.

They are equally real, that is really existing - but not concrete, not tangible for our existence.

Also, pain is not spiritual or symbolical, or metaphorical, but very real in the Holy Scriptures.

That does scare us, when it becomes real for us. God's judgement on sin is also terrible. What terrible scenes take place on earth *in concreto* which are tangible for us! Why would the Holy Scripture then not be credible, when it speaks of a real fire there in that other world of creatures who have sinned against Him, and who in a self-righteous life have despised His great grace of the Covenant, just like the rich Jew?

And similarly many will be comforted when they see the consolation which Lazarus received after his miserable life, which was can be seen to be as real as his former life.

That God now has taken sufferers to Himself to sit with Abraham at the wedding of the Lamb, and that these children of God who have gone before us to that country, where people exist in a different way, that these children of God are just as real with their whole existence, with heart and soul, able to speak and hear, yes, with hands and feet and ears and eyes, may be with Jesus, that consolation is still so strong.

What the Holy Scripture teaches us consistently, is not something vague, something improper, something unreal, not just figuratively, no, it is the reality of the existing realm of the dead, who certainly are asleep - and are unclothed - and who do rest with respect to the earth, and who also rest with respect to the full human life on the new earth, which awaits them - but who actually exist here and in the form and shape which we have here on earth.

There is no ground in my opinion in either the Scriptures or practical knowledge of the nations, which argues against this view.

The difficulties come only when we introduce the spirit-matter dualism of Greek philosophy into practical thinking while reading the Holy Scripture.

Simple Scripture readers would not be affected by Greek philosophy, if medieval theology had not made a synthesis between pagan philosophy and the teachings of Scripture. Through this theology it has become widespread and so the popular opinions arose, which are causing the difficulty.

When the Scripture speaks of the eyes of the Lord, of God's hand, of his arm, of his ear and of his anger and joy, of his "friendly countenance" and his "back parts" (Exodus 33:23) and of his throne and of his servants around the throne (Revelation 4:2), then there is even less any reason to speak here of this as "improper," as if this were merely symbolic or spiritual.

Over against the heretical view that God was material, we must not put the view that the substance of God is spirit-substance – because that would only shift the heresy from "substance" to "spirit." We can not think of the Creator as "existing" in creaturely substance. If the Church confessed the spirituality of

God, the "*spiritualitas Dei*," against the heretics, then they do this with the intention, that **God has his own manner of existence, distinct from the existence of the world.**

This is immaterial and does not belong to the visible creatures, which we are.

So the church turned sharply against any mingling of God and the visible world, against all theosophical speculations. The defence of the Church, however, was less strong against the notion that God existed in a spiritual substance.

Dr. H. Bavinck certainly said in his **Reformed Dogmatics**, that the *spiritualitas Dei* is of **a completely different species of its own**, and thus "totally different from our mind and the soul" - but he still sees in our "soul" an analogy with God - and not in our body.<sup>10</sup>

From the point of view of a simple reading of the Scriptures - and separately from any spirit-matter dualism - there is in my opinion no objection to saying that God is absolutely **different from** the creature - but man is **as a creature** created according to His image and likeness, and now the man bears **in his whole** the image of God. Therefore, we really can speak of God's ear just like we do of our ears, as far as the form is concerned. Only we should not make of it an "image," not make a creaturely ear of it, neither physical nor spiritual.

The popular opinion that an angel should have no real form is contrary to Scripture. But also the assertion that God could have no form is against Scripture with its clear statements. God is not formless thought, but nor does he have any creaturely form. He has in a divine manner His ear with which he inclines to the cries of the righteous.

That our spiritual life does not have its own form (we cannot see our spirits) does not exclude the view that angels can not be seen, or that Moses, who could see the Lord in passing, just as we see a person from behind when they passed by (Ex. 33:23), would not really have seen Him in his divine form. When we see God face to face - that will really happen, he will look into our eyes and see into us to the innermost parts. His divine eye will look into ours.

Oh, how great will that be, when we, poor sinners, then will see a loving eye, a friendly countenance, covered as with a luminous sheen when he sees us. Is that blessing not said over us every Sunday: May He lift up His face on us. What will that be like, when we see Him, when he inclines His divine ear to hear what we say to Him.

And what will that be like when we "out of our flesh," with our physical eye renewed, can see Him when He lives with us?

No, those are not figurative modes of existence, likened to our spiritual life – a kind of existence, existing like our thoughts do (our thoughts also really exist,

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<sup>10</sup> H. Bavinck. **Reformed Dogmatics**, II p. 176. [See the English translation, **The Doctrine of God**, p. 179. "...although all knowledge of God is analogical, this analogy is more clearly evident in one group of creatures than in another, and more manifest in the universe of invisible reality than in the world of visible things."]

but are only real as thoughts). Scripture knows many more realities than those of substance and spiritual life. We need not choose between materialism or "geisteskultur [spiritual culture]" – also with respect to the dead we need not choose between spiritualistic, mysterious materialisation filaments, by which spirits would reveal themselves, and beings "existing" as threads of thought. We should calmly leave to God whatever way He upholds the existence of the spirits (angels and devils) and how He upholds the dead.

And we must believe the Scriptures, in that in this manner of existence tongue, ear, mouth, hand, foot, fire, water, pain, joy, questions and answers, really appear.

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### **The soul-life of those fallen asleep.**

[Het zieleleven der ontslapen. *Op den Uitkijk* 10 (1934) 345.]

To the martyrs in heaven, it was said, "That they should rest yet a little time"

Revelation 6:11

If someone gently opens the eyelids of someone sleeping, we see only the whites of the eyes. The pupil has turned up.

That upward turn is seen in people who are nodding and making desperate attempts to stay awake. The pupil of the eye then turns into the orbit and is thus more isolated from the light that otherwise still shines through /22/ your eyelids.

Anyone who goes to sleep, turns his whole body away from the outside world. Also his thoughts and his feelings, his will and energy abandon the outside world. The sleeping sentry does not see the enemy, but he also pays no attention to that with his thoughts and he no longer intends to pay attention.

The spirit - the revelation of his spirit - is not forthcoming from the sleeper. Witty people and "fine spirits", and those despondent in spirit or fiery of spirit are in a certain sense all the same in their sleep.

I always found it such a sad sight, when I saw a row of sleeping soldiers in the soldiers' dormitory at night.<sup>11</sup> That funny joker now lay rather quiet and dull. What did the pessimistic fathers see, who were separated in the mobilisation from wives and children, and did not thrive there until peace came – and the curser with his fierce rebellious spirit was silent now as if he were a child – how the proud boy lay pathetically with his mouth open... and how quiet it was in that room with so many men.

And yet - there was a lot going on in those sleeping children of men, in their soul. What had happened earlier in their childhood and in their later life – up to what was going on yesterday - yes to that which the future held, which they had feared or sought after... all that "rested" there in the heart.

This also often came in sleep into their minds, so they were "busy" with this in their dreams.

Yes, sometimes they had very intense inner emotion.

There was also in our soldiers' barracks one of our sea-captains, who had passed through many fears at sea. He was occupied with that in his dream life and that was sometimes so violent, that he suddenly began to strike out with

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<sup>11</sup> [Janse is referring to his time in military service from 1909 and during World War 1. The Netherlands were neutral but still had reserve forces. Janse was a member of the Bizondere Vrijwillige Landstorm (Special Volunteer Army Reserves). In World War 2 he served as an air raid warden. *Inventaris* 157, p. 6]

his hands and feet and woke the whole room with terrible cries. When the others teased him with it in the morning he said: You have not experienced what I experienced at sea.

But mostly it does not go so far that the body is also active. Sometimes the man who is dreaming has inner fears about a danger he wants to escape and he feels that he is powerless. The feet will not work. There is a certain "knowledge" of the fact that the body is still lying down. The dreaming person wants to flee ... and yet he remains in the place where he is.

The spirit - the presence of mind – was lacking in many a dream.

Throughout the centuries people have seen this inner activity in the dream – while the body rests and the mind is not active – as a parallel to the "life of the soul" of the dead in the realm of the dead.

There is certainly not more than one parallel here.

In our dreams, the connection with the body is still so close and the spirit can be active at any moment.

**There is also a big difference:** here he is a living man, who sleeps and then dreams, there he is a sleeper who knows of his past and present and future and that which he keeps within his "soul."

However, there is also an agreement.

In both cases, the man has turned away from the world of the living and in both cases there is still a lot in him, in his "soul."

I want to limit the point of comparison to that which in the man concerns the "life of the soul" in the psychical.

And we can say: when a sleeper "thinks" about his past in the dream – so too can the deceased "think" about his past, when he goes down into the realm of the dead.

We could suppose that in the latter his past is much clearer and deeper and more real in front of him, than in dreaming. Dreams are often – not always – confused muddling together of past experiences and /23/ thoughts. Great fatigue or an overfull stomach may for example disturb the depth of dreams.

"The dream comes through much activity." Ecclesiastes 5:2

A sleeping person also "thinks" about the present. The sleeping mother holds fast to what she "knows" about the baby. The infant cannot make any noise without the mother hearing. She is sleeping and yet she "knows" what now concerns her very much.

Similarly the deceased can be aware of his "present" around him in the realm of the dead. Not as a sleeper, but as one deceased.

There have been people who speculated about this and came up with the idea of the **soul-sleep** of the dead.

But that is an opinion which on many points conflicts with what Scripture says about the dead.<sup>12</sup>

Anyway – as we saw above - if a man sleeps here on earth, then his "soul-life" often does not sleep... he is busy with something. Previously, one could say his body is asleep and his spirit is out of action - but the psychological "has knowledge" and recall of past life experiences, so being "busy with something" frequently comes to the fore in the dream and as the soul-life of the living person here who really sleeps it is not itself asleep - why would one then have to assume that the spiritual life of the deceased would have to sleep?

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<sup>12</sup> See the comments of Bavinck and Kuyper on "soul sleep." Abraham Kuyper. "This intermediate state may therefore, however, never be conceived as a soul-sleep, because the consciousness of the soul, that in its bodiless existence is shut off from all contact with the cosmos, therefore in no sense is isolated from the spiritual world, but in a spiritually hidden manner is engaged in communion with Christ and all the saints." **Dictaten Dogmatiek** Vol. 5. Locus de consummatione saeculi. §3, *De mortuis ante parousiam*, p. 25. "It sought its support in the comments of the Holy Scripture which give death as a **rest**, a **sleep**, and as **being gathered to his fathers**. And even though it now speaks for itself, that this scriptural expression cannot be explained in any other way than in agreement with what the same Scripture elsewhere so positively and so obviously teaches about the blessedness of the soul immediately after death, so it is still conceivable that people, through pointing to this **rest** and this **sleep**, gradually can adulterate the Confession. Yet there is more, and as we said, a portion of the truth is concealed in this heresy, which also all too often is overlooked. On earth **sleep** is a condition which is sharply distinguished from the **waking** condition in which we know what we do and what happens to us there. In sleep we are still there, we live, for the moment we know that we exist, but as long as we are asleep we appear dead to the outside world. We do not know or notice what happens around us, and awaking for the moment, we frequently have no memory of what happened even in a dream. From this it thus appears that there exist two forms of consciousness for us. One consciousness in **wakefulness**, and one consciousness in the **sleeping** form, and that we only seldom in waking can obviously relate what happened to us while we were asleep. And in so far as also our continued existence after death shall be a continued existence **without a body** and thus **not** in our wakeful consciousness, there exists very certainly between sleep and the existence of the soul after death /210/ a not to be misconceived agreement, to which we later shall return. And the other, as our soul separates from the body, people are still not to abandon that body. That body is and remains our body. One day we shall receive it again. And although it is now also that the body in the whole, which is again received, shall be different from the body that was laid in the grave, yet it shall not be a **new** body, but the **same** body, in a glorious state. So our soul thus remains related to the body, and therefore also it holds on to a relationship to our grave; and it is in this sense that the Scripture teaches us that Christ shall open the graves, and that those who hear the voice of the Son of Man shall come forth from their graves. Both the agreement between **death** and **sleep**, and the connection between the body that was prey to decomposition, and the body that rises up in glory, are thus Scriptural truths which in this absurd representation of a soul-sleep, offer support and only then shall the church completely overcome this error of soul-sleep, as it brings forth both these truths on the basis of the Scripture again, to their full justice in the confession." **Van de Voleinding**, Vol. 2, pp. 208-209. See also Herman Bavinck. **Gereformeerd Dogmatiek** 4, pp. 673, 677-680. Vollenhoven also criticised "soul sleep."

Where the Holy Scripture speaks of the dead in the realm of the dead, there it suggests they are not dormant "souls" - but are deceased people, resting from this earthly life in the grave and having given up the spirit, but are not aware of the past and present and the future - insofar as they have fallen asleep it is not their business. They may be "busy" with all that.

The rich man still remembered his brothers and he was worried for them – it does not say there that he sympathized with them and now wished to know all about what they were doing – but he remembered them from earlier.

A dead person does not know the fate of his children – but if he is still in the flesh then the father mourns over his children, said the tested Job, who had lost all his children one day. Job 14:21, 22.

In Isaiah 14:9-11, the journey of the king of Babylon into Sheol was prophesied in a satirical song.

When the king of Babylon descends into the grave then the shadows (the rephaim, the sleeping shadowy dead figures without flesh and bone<sup>13</sup>) wake up, and they stand up from their thrones.

Once they were kings in the land of the living, but now their glory is gone. Perhaps the king of Babylon had himself sent them to Sheol and had taken their kingdoms for himself.

And look: now he himself also comes here.

Also robbed of flesh and bone.

Also laid down in the grave with the worms.

Also an impotent shadow in the realm of darkness. That now affects them all!

Therefore the ghosts of kings are awake and now their dead souls are filled with malicious pleasure [schadenfreude].

There is in this Sheol people who passed on and who now sleep in the dust of the earth – there is still a lot to their dead-soul-life, which is parallel with our psychical life.

They sing to him:

You are also deprived of strength like us, you have taken on our likeness.

If we now hold firmly to the term "fallen asleep" which indicates how the dead have their eyes closed to this earthly life, and how they have entered a rest period as people, then we understand that scene of sleeping kings, of ghosts, who in their sleep are sitting on their thrones.

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<sup>13</sup> [Janse refers to the Hebrew rephaim, רִפְּאִים, the shades of the dead. See Proverbs 2:18, Isaiah 26:14, 19, Psalm 88:10, 11, Proverbs 9:18, Job 26:5, Proverbs 21:16.]

Also for the dead who died in the Lord, the Holy Scripture gives no evidence from which the representation would prove that they are in a state of engagement in great human activity.

However, by contrast, it repeatedly speaks of rest and sleep. John on Patmos heard a voice from heaven: Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, because they may rest from their labour. Revelation 14:13

And the souls of the martyrs, who impatiently are calling for God's righteous wrath - their blood had been shed on the earth by the wicked – were told that they should rest for a while. Revelation 6:11.

In Isaiah 57:2 it is said of the righteous: they shall rest in their sleep. And to Daniel it is said: but you, go on to the end, for you shall rest, and will rise up to receive your inheritance, in the end of days. Daniel 12:13.

In all these texts we can read about a rest with respect to this earthly human life. And this sense, everyone knows from experience. The dead close their eyes and no longer live here anymore.

But also all representations of the afterlife in the Scriptures breathe an atmosphere of calm.

I know of only one exception - the rich son of Abraham, who had had it good in this world and was not concerned about his poor brother, because he was a self-righteous son of Abraham. He was in pain, in sorrow.

But also the pagan kings in Isaiah 14 are represented as sleepy beings.

But with all this data of Scripture there is nothing which makes us think of soul sleep – to an absolute insensitivity and ignorance in the "psychical" (in the parallel of the soul-life here). There is remembrance of the brothers still at home.

There is a sad dreamy knowledge of this former power and glory by the kings. There knowledge is recalled about the great prince of Babylon. There is malicious pleasure, because he is now also one of the "rephaim."

There is peace for Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham. There is for him knowledge of past misery, but now he knows blissful comfort. This Israelite who feared God in his poverty, is forever one with God's people. His struggle is over.

The restless souls in Revelation 6 are clothed with long white robes and it is said that they should remain quiet for a while, until their brethren on earth whom God deigned to be given martyrdom, have also arrived.

Those martyrs in heaven hear that and they feel the clothing and they become calmer, knowing of their brothers on earth, who will also be slain on earth for the testimony of Jesus. That will make them quiet, who thought of the church militant. Thus, they have a time of rest.

And all that – all those human movements of the soul-life – that we notice there in the realm of the dead – both in darkness and in the light of heaven – all that testifies against the idea that the "soul" of the dead would sleep.

On the contrary, as we saw **time** pass by, and we accept a **place** for Sheol, just as we **exist** and saw the **shape** of the dead parallel with our lives here, so we must also see the psychical life, that we have here, parallel with a "soul-life" of the dead.

When the church of all ages has confessed an "immortal soul," then they have confessed: that our soul-life with Christ here on earth is not cancelled at death. It has thus condemned the idea that the dead no longer have any knowledge about it – hence the church believed the Scripture, that there is a soul-life after this life – also for those fallen asleep.

But because the term "immortal soul," that the Scripture nowhere mentions, is adopted from Greek philosophy, immediately the presentation of the Greek philosophers has crept into Christian thought, that namely that spiritual life is a "piece of spiritual substance" and that this is all that remains of a deceased person.

Scripture teaches us that it is not my "spirit" or "soul" which goes into the realm of the dead, but that I come there myself with my **existence and shape** and thoughts and thus also with my soul-life.

And for a Christian, this is the principal part, that the wonderful community of our thought life and inner life with Christ by faith may continue on, at rest there.

Being with the Lord Jesus Christ and to be able to see His glory there – albeit only as one fallen asleep, resting in the grave, and as humans existing as powerless shadows – that is by far the best.

But in this way – thinking in the Scriptural representation – we understand how the church looks towards the resurrection of the flesh.

The Greek notion that the "spirit" or the "soul," which then is naturally at home in heaven, is again clothed with matter, is not Scriptural. How can such a blessed soul really wish to have that "dungeon" of matter again?! So it is understood that the church was satisfied in many ways with the blessed soul and was no longer looking hopefully for the resurrection of the flesh. But in the train of thought of the Holy Scripture there is the hope that the last enemy, death, will be destroyed and that the dead will rise, and this is one reason for pleading: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon.

Therefore, the pious who have fallen asleep in their powerless existence without a body contemplate their Lord in great love, who is flesh and bone in heaven and who has power to deploy on earth. His holy body is their pledge for their blessed resurrection.

The "resurrection of the flesh" – that article of faith, which we often hear read in the church so thoughtlessly – is there in actual connection with seeing Him who bears our flesh in heaven.

Yes - that even quietens people in their shadowy existence, so that they, knowing that they have fallen asleep, still have peace – in their soul-life. Yes, then even martyrs, whose business with the enemies of the church should be settled by God (Revelation 18:20, 24. 19:2) can be quiet again, until it is God's time. Thus with their soul-life, that is with their thoughts and willing and emotional life, they can **still rest in hope for a little time.**