

Man as a Living Soul

[**De mensch als levende ziel.** 1st Edition Culemborg, 1934. 2nd Edition. Amsterdam: Uitgeversmij Holland, 1937.]

Preface

This is the first lengthy treatment by Janse on anthropology (if 42 pages can be called lengthy!) But in contrast to the relatively brief articles already published, this was a significant step forward. While it draws on those works already published (and indeed Janse references these in his text), it is not simply a compilation of the content of those articles, but a fairly comprehensive independently written treatment of his subject.

This translation uses the 2nd Edition of 1937, which had additional material added at the end of the first chapter, giving more examples of Biblical passages illustrating his points, and also some examples of where the Marginal Commentators continued the Greek and Scholastic views he was combating.

Man as a “Living Soul”

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Preface

The most current popular meaning of the word “experiential” is this, that the Christian experiences something in the “soul,” which was seen as a separate pious part of a human being.

“Soul” is then a more pious word than foot and hand.

The Biblical meaning of “experience” is this, that a child of God in the whole of his life as a whole person, as a whole “living soul” from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet and in all things of life, experiences the blessings or the threats of the God of the Covenant. So, there is no morsel of the terrain of life in or round him that would stand outside the Covenant with God.

So as to be able to understand this point of the Holy Scriptures the Lord must also open our eyes for the language of the Holy Scriptures, where they speak of the “soul.”

Up until now the Greek philosophers have supplied us with the foundational concepts for Christian anthropology.

This book is an attempt to restore the terms of the Holy Scriptures to a place of honour, so that every Bible reader knows what the Scripture says about human beings as living souls and so that the popular misconceptions concerning a number of texts were debated.

I give therefore first a more historically oriented chapter about the concept “soul,” and after that a more systematic overview of “the living soul.”

The Author

Biggekerke, February 1934.

Preface to the Second Impression

Now the series of brochures by Prof. Dr. V Hepp, called “Dreigende Deformatie,” has discussed this book about “the living soul” for the “reading public,” through using a number of citations from it, the same public has the right to know where and in which connection these have arisen. The book was, however, completely sold out. Therefore they must now for the second time in the sea and then preferably, on any trifles after, unaltered, because the reader knows precisely what has been said since 1934.

There should be something before the whole to work, and what broader to set, here and there to elucidate and to improve, but that can better happen in subsequent publications.

You can see above all not something else in this book, than an attempt to do justice to the language of the Scriptures, a “taste” of a Scriptural conception of

the word "soul." Over everything what there through to the point Biblically faithful criticism to be improved, I shall be encouraged.

The Author

Biggekerke, 10 March 1937.

Chapter 1. The “Soul”

“Spiritual” and “Worldly” in the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages the priests and the monks were called “spiritual” men. That was the pious attitude. They lived in an area consecrated to the church. Over against them stood then the ordinary people of the farms and cities and the nobility. These were people who lived in the world, natural people, worldly people, who must be provided with the means of grace by the church.

The preachers of the Reformation had above all much to suffer from the “spiritual” people. No wonder, for they disturbed the aura of extraordinary piety and sanctity, that should surround the priests by virtue of their office, just as the Lord Jesus did for the Pharisees.

The Reformation has broken with this magic of office. This particular conception of “spiritual” and “natural” people was rejected as unscriptural.

So it happened that the simple “worldly” people with the Word of God in their hand came to stand over against the clever “spiritual” ones.

In 1551 two simple “worldly people” found themselves in the prison in Antwerp, Jeronimus Seghersz and his wife Lysken.

Seghersz was burnt at the stake on 1 September 1551, yet the execution of his wife was postponed by the “spiritual” people until after the birth of her child. Then on 19 February 1552 she was “stuck in a sack and drowned.”¹

Read now what this “layman” wrote to his wife:

“Therefore my dearly beloved, do not look to men, for those who trust in man, he is cursed, says the Prophet (Jeremiah 17:5). Yes, looking to men brings a fall, says the wise man (Proverbs 29:25).

And do not consider the flesh and pure pains, for that is to be burnt by the sun (the sun on the seed on the stoney ground, whoever believes only “for a time” will wither). Matthew 13:6.

Yes, these are the storms, through which the work of God is tested (Matthew 7:24). Therefore if we confess Christ in this present time, he will also confess us before His heavenly Father (Matthew 10:32) for he will prove that third part with fire, as gold in the furnace (Zechariah 13:9), and everything which remains, will be found to be pure gold, and you have passed one part /8/ of the testing, in which testing (1 Peter 1:7) you who remain content, the Lord has eternal praise, prize and honour, and the gracious Lord will confirm you, as you have begun, also shall be found before God and before all his congregation as pure gold.”

¹ Cramer and Pijper. *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica* II, pp. 126-176.

This tribulation of this simple, natural, worldly wife consists in this, that the spiritual ones have done their uttermost to convince her that the church and the offices were clothed with absolute divine authority over her “bare natural” existence.

Lysken has then thus answered to “two Papists” who had come “to instruct her,” when they professed “that they were sitting in Moses’ seat.”

Then I answered them, that they then **de weën toequamen, die verhaelt staan** Matthew 23. They asked me whether I wished to say that he who had taught me these things, was sent from God. I said: Yes, he was, that I know firmly, that he was sent from God.

Then he had asked, whether I knew for certain how he had become a teacher. I answered: A teacher must be married to one wife, not given to fighting, who has obedient children, not a drunkard, winedrinker, nor consorting with prostitutes.

Then he answered: If we act wickedly, it shall fall on our heads, the Lord is merciful.

Then I asked if he would sin against the merciful God, and said, that it is written, that we should not sin in doing this, and that we then should not say: the Lord is merciful (Ecclesiastes 5:5).

Finally he made the sign of the cross, and said, that I should certainly know because I would stand before the judgement!

That will certainly be true (I said), we shall be placed before judges (Matthew 19:28) to be judged by that disobedient adulterous generation. And with that he departed.

In such a manner a woman, on the basis of God’s Word, dared to speak against the “holy” priesthood. A woman “of the world,” who sits with all the saints in the judgement seat, to judge the “spiritual ones”!

“World” for the Anabaptists

But now it often happens that these people still maintain the Roman Catholic separation between grace and nature. They were taught from childhood, that the religious life belongs to grace and the rest of life belongs to nature. Nature is then called the “world,” the worldly.

/9/

In the Holy Scriptures this distinction is not made. In the Covenant of God with Israel, the whole of life was included, both the religious sacrifices (slaughter of animals) in the temple and the profane slaughter in the gate. (Deuteronomy 12:13-15 and 20-23).

The Lord busied Himself with all areas of life in Israel. We find laws of an ethical nature, of social and juridical nature, and also laws concerning

physical purity (Deuteronomy 23:12-14). Of the “natural;” in this Roman Catholic sense we read nothing in the Holy Scriptures. The earth belongs to Yahweh, to our Covenant God.

This confession and the thereby appropriate prayer: Lord, what will You that we shall do with our purse, in our business, with our house and with our workers and with our body, what do You will that we shall do in politics and in the church government? That is been for the Calvinists the holding on to the Covenant, also on everything outside the religious area. The whole of life and the whole person are in the Holy Scriptures “of the Lord.”

So the Christian also has a cultural task.

Also.

For as it happens that if the Christians must be able to abandon the cultural task of the father and mother with respect to their family, or else deny Christ, then let the Christians in obedience to the Word lose their cultural task and become “slachtscaepken Christi.” [sacrificial lambs for Christ?]

In such times it is to be understood, that these “sacrificial lambs” abandon the earth and see their life’s task in martyrdom, in the suffering and dying for Him. And the Lord has indeed promised great rewards for these martyrs. He has truly considered them (“condescended”) to be to the great honour of blood-witnesses for His Name. And then they know that it was an honour.

How lightly could then now the people, who individually lost “Rome” and who now were pursued through the whole “world,” by both government and church, how lightly could they now the old contrast priest-layman, church-world so throw out, that the “little **hoopken** sacrificial lambs for Christ” were seen as the only “possession of Christ” in this evil and transitory world. And that possession of Christ then dies after Him. And there in the Anabaptists the institution of the church according to God’s Word is left behind (the circumstances were therefore also bitterly difficult!) there stood finally the pious apart as individuals next to individuals, each dead to “the world” and also to “the church institution.” So were the “spiritual areas” of the priesthood confused with the converted individual. Everything outside of that was the “world.”

Those enlightened by God were “the church.”

Soon the tendencies of the Mediaeval mystics (Tauler) worked through here strongly.

Also under the strong influence of the book the “German Theology” [Theologia deutsch]² was /10/ Thomas Müntzer, the prophet, “spiritual” man, who fiercely testified against the Papists and the Princes; against Charles V and the Lutheran Princes as consistently as against the Pope and the bishops. An altogether depraved “world,” which must be renewed by the Spirit.

² See: Böhmer-Kirn. **Briefwechsel Thomas Müntzers** 1931. And: Annmarie Lohman. **Geistige Entwicklung**. Müntzers 1931.

Jan of Leiden spoke also in this spiritual sphere and established the new “Zion” (Munster) in the middle of the “world.” All that was “worldly” should then be banished, and what was “worldly,” that the Spirit determined for Jan of Leiden.³

Menno Simons was averse to violence, but he also was a “spiritual” man, “special” man, who was honoured as a sanctified personality. Also he considered the earthly as the “world” and must therefore deny the Government.

With this separation between “spiritual” and “worldly” – behind which also sat the separation between spirit and matter as holy and unholy areas – with this separation stood also in that connection the resistance of the Anabaptists against the doctrine of the Holy Scripture, that Jesus was born of Mary according to the flesh. Flesh signified for them the “world” and Christ can not be of the “world.” Therefore they have reasoned in all sorts of ways so as to be able to maintain their prejudice. The differences, which they thereby mutually get, later caused their opponents to speak of the Babylonian confusion of tongues of the “Anabaptists.”

Now it is a fact, that there is a practical distinction between the first “Anabaptists” in our country, who according to the words of Calvin about Luther “they did not see the midday sun” because they still lived in the period of the dawning of the Reformation – and the later Anabaptists who set themselves against the “midday sun” and also rather preferred the darkness to the light.

When Dr Cramer says,

“Of the approximately 2,000 martyr men and women in the united Netherlands no less than three quarters of them were Baptists,”⁴ then were these “Baptists” according to him in so far true, that these people first were executed for their “old-Mennonite opinions” about the incarnation of Christ and about baptism and communion and church, as they were therefore compelled in the dispute with their judges and inquisitors. But so little was there this “system” in their life, that they there in their letters otherwise reported nothing of this.⁵

As Cramer says, “The circles of these letter-writers were still far from the time, wherein but all too many questions about the excommunication,⁶ the congregational ordinances and the incarnation should seize the hearts and at least the head.”⁷

³ [See A Janse. **De Verhouding van Christelijke Politiek tot de Wereldsche**. Aalten: N.V. de Graafschap, 1933, pp. 32-34.]

⁴ Cramer and Pijper. **Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica** II, p. xi.

⁵ Cramer and Pijper. **Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica** II, p. 36.

⁶ How can the one “saintly person” now excommunicate the other without quarrelling among the “brethren”?

⁷ Cramer and Pijper. **Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica** II, p. 37.

When everywhere the Gereformeerde Teachers with regard to this teach /11/ the people in the Word – and when the Gereformeerde churches were instituted, the broad stream of Biblically-obedience Anabaptists flowed out of the Gereformeerde churches.

None the less some “Baptistic leaven” remains in the people’s lives. The preachers had in their congregations thereabouts to exercise continual correction and admonition.

Right up to the present day there also runs in the Gereformeerde churches an “undercurrent” of Baptistic origin – despite the clear official confession. The Baptistic leaven appears above all in the above-named distinction of the religious and the common life as the heavenly and the worldly. The common life, wherein according to the Holy Scriptures the goodness of God’s sovereignty shines, is then called “merely worldly,” – and should anyone wish to serve the Lord that must per se be through “special” devotion, as if the Lord is not also the King over His people in their common everyday things. This Baptistic error has totally reached so infected, that it has become a heavy conflict among God’s people to make it hot for the confession of God’s ordinances for politics and the education of the young.

This error also makes people ripe for the propagandists of the doctrine that the rule of the Kingdom of Heaven (the Sermon on the Mount) is the same as God’s ordinances for the earthly Government. They are very lightly inclined to Jesus’ Kingdom, that is not of this world, to place in the place of Pilate’s “Kingdom” that by the grace of God certainly was of this world. This latter is surely “worldly,” sinful, and must there not be real.

It is not by chance that Ds. Kertsen’s **Staatkunde** has its greatest following in exactly those regions with the Baptistic leaven.

It is also not by chance, that the two-fold conclusion which the Baptists have drawn – whether to claim the “world” for Jesus’ Kingdom, or to withdraw themselves from the world – that the two-fold conclusion also is drawn by the Baptistic undercurrent in our churchly life. Whether they withdraw themselves from the world in the companies and leave church and state and society to Evil – it was still altogether “external” and worldly – or whether people draw there with “Article 36” separate from the Government with placing the sword in the service of Christ’s Church.⁸

“My Kingdom is not of this world, otherwise should my servants have fought,” said the Lord Jesus before Pilate. When a King of this world was attacked by the evil, then is the calling-of-God’s way of his Servants to battle for their King, so as to maintain with the sword the “lawful authority.”

That is not “fall into sin of Christendom,” in the politics, but obedience to God’s Word. That is practically separated from the Roman Catholic-Baptistic dualism: “spiritual” – “worldly.”

⁸ [See A Janse. **De Verhouding van Christelijke Politiek tot de Wereldsche**. Aalten: N.V. de Graafschap, 1933, p. 48 ff. and passim.]

It was fortunate, that the Lord just in the 19th Century, through the work of men such as Groen van Prinsterer and Dr Kuyper, among others, have opened many eyes here for their calling. That which Dr Kuyper called /12/ “common grace,” was observed all the more in every area of life by God’s people. And they no longer dared to name that “worldly things,” although they knew from the Holy Scriptures that these things – and earthly kingdoms – shall all perish and that we have here no abiding city. Also although they knew that the earthly house of this tabernacle must be broken, they knew also that the Lord shall judge – and reward – that which is done by us in the body.

And they complain, in the face of their remaining sin, I miserable man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death – yet they do not mean: who shall save me from my body that is merely worldly? But, who shall save me from the whole system of sin, which is woven through my whole concrete existence? And then death is not their liberator, but Christ. Death is in fact the last enemy, which shall become nothing in the resurrection.

“Soul”

Yet there are still also often difficulties among them, who have been freed from the Mediaeval dualism. They can themselves often not break away from the representation, that the Scriptural contrast: Spiritual (driven by the Holy Spirit) and fleshly (driven by the sinful nature received from Adam), should correspond with a separation in the creation, whereby then the higher part of nature should be “spiritual” and a lower part by nature should be fleshly, standing over against the Holy Spirit.

Many have certainly seen the “earthly life” in a Scriptural way, yet they hold firmly to a line of separation in human nature. And certainly thus, that the field of the “spiritual” then lies in the “soul” and that our body is then fleshly.

If the catchword for the “Baptistic leaven” was “world,” worldly – here it is “soul.”

Human beings, whom their earthly calling in every area of life no more dare to name as mere “worldly things,” can still with difficulty become free from the Baptistic consequences in the anthropology, in the knowledge of the person.

The “soul” should then be Spiritual and our body “fleshly.” The Scriptural contrast: “Spiritual” (that is led by the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:14-15) and “fleshly” (that is, wholly belonging to the sinful person of flesh and blood, Romans 6:6, see Marginal Comments and Colossians 2:11-14), people then read as: spiritual and material, as soul and body, as the interior of the person over against the exterior.

The interior was then the temple of the Holy Spirit and the exterior was the inferior in religion. In this way, however, people came into conflict with the Holy Scriptures, which obviously say, that our body (our exterior appearance) is a temple of the Holy Spirit – and that our body belongs to God, expensively purchased by the blood of Christ. 1 Corinthians 6:20.

And that is so concrete, that Paul reproached the Christian whoremonger that he takes his body, that is “the member of Christ,” and makes it of one flesh with the members of the prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:15, 19).

“Soul Religion”

When people then thus put the place of religion in the “soul” and then consider the soul as the regenerate part of the person and thus limit the regeneration to the interior life, and the religion to the “soul-experience” and religion to “works of the soul” and the Service of the Word to “care of the soul” – then over against this “soul” comes to stand everything else which is “merely exterior,” as of the earth, as merely worldly.

And here we have the precursor for another direction, which would break completely the power of Calvinism in the Gereformeerde Churches in the Netherlands (Pious Humanism).

Alas, we must point out that the Gereformeerden – also in the time when it flourished – have admitted the Greek conception of the soul and the Mediaeval evaluation of the soul as “Christian by nature.”

They have allowed these “Canaanites” in the conflict of spirits to continue to live in the church! Just as Joshua and the children of Israel allowed them to remain in the land. They had no trouble with them there.

But they had become a trap for the following generations, just as for Israel. Or rather: this soul religion was as the “high places” in Israel, which already served as intermediate forms for general service of the Baals. The modern apostasy was prepared by this soul religion.

The Scriptures speak differently about the “soul”

“Living soul,” that is the person, as he runs there – also the animals are called “living souls.” And this soul hungers and thirsts and dies.

The living soul is characterised as living by the breath, and through its blood.

The soul which goes out is then the breath which was breathed out - or the blood that flows away with the life – or the whole person internally. That is much more than consciousness or spirit, it is his life.

Losing your soul stands synonymously with losing your life, Jesus gave his soul (live) as a ransom.

Overall this is very common-sense, practical indications of things, which we know from life. This usage of “soul” in the whole of Scripture comes in many points in agreement with the practical usage among the older folk – and also among the common Greek – which language also Homer wrote in.⁹

⁹ Numbers of images, which strongly remind us of the Biblical practical usage, are to be found in J Böhme. **Die Seele und das Ich im Homerischen Epos**. Leipzig, 1929.

But there is no mention of the Greek philosophical conception of the soul in the Holy Scriptures. /14/ Also “body” is something else. The words soul and body in the definitive: the person consists of soul plus body, spirit plus matter, have in the definitive a wholly different significance than in the practical life and in the Bible. They are Greek philosophical concepts.¹⁰

The Scripture speaks of a soul which dies – and the philosophical concept “soul” is “immortal soul,” which expression the Holy Scripture never knows.

The Scripture speaks of “dead bodies” – but how can the philosophical concept “body,” that is merely dead matter, still be killed?

Calvin over the Greek concept of the soul

If anyone stands far off from the Baptist separation between religious and worldly, and if anyone was impervious to “spiritual” fathers, then certainly Calvin has been with his broad Scriptural vision on the whole of life and his humble respect for the Word and for the Holy Spirit.

When Calvin expounded the Scriptures, then is he also far from the Baptist separation, so for example in the commentary on the Psalms, where he says time and again: soul, that is, the whole person. And the psalms describe for him not merely things which happen in the soul, not merely interior soul conditions and soul enemies, but they stand for him in the middle of life.

Also therefore we can not go through these commentaries for “edifying” readings in the sense that the word “edifying” is given later.

In the Scripture is Calvin very remote from the Greek concept of the soul. The Scriptures know nothing of the Platonic soul.

In the **Institutes** I,15 Calvin speaks in detail about “the soul of human beings.” There he is not so closely bound to the Scriptures as in his commentaries. And here he goes then also in detail into the Greek scholastic concept of the “soul.”

It has not been given to Calvin to speak also in this respect from Scripture about psychology. Calvin was also in the first place a theologian and it is no wonder, that also he has not seen everything at once.

It was in Calvin also relatively innocent – the Scholastic psychology did not make him “Baptist” and did not bring him to a religion, which merely should concern the “immortal soul,” and which should stand in “soul-activity.”

When Calvin laid emphasis in the **Institutes** on the “immortal soul,” over against “body” then is it him to do with the life after this life to witness against the Sadducees of his time. **Institutes** I,15,2.

¹⁰ See H Bavinck. **Biblische en Religieuze Psychologie**, p. 22.

Therefore he also joins himself with Plato, “who rightly affirmed that the soul is an immortal substance. **Institutes** I,15,6. For the rest the philosophers matter little to him.

As Calvin, however, speaks of “the soul, which is freed from the prison house of the body,” /15/ **Institutes** I,15,2, then is here in any case a connection with the Greek philosophy and not with the Scriptures, although it is then merely in terminology. And that is – retrospectively, a pity. As it was also a pity that Joshua has not driven all Canaanites out of the land.

“Edifying writers”

What in Calvin is almost innocent, that is in the later history of the church become a calamity. The religion which rotated around the “immortal soul” – and the examination of what was happening in the “sanctity” of the “soul” – has the religion been pushed out of the whole full life – also even out of the church life – to the inner chambers and hence to the “interior life.”

The Bible was then a book for the “interior life,” an edifying book for the “soul.” And because the Bible, for example in the genealogical tables and the historical narratives (and actually overall) was therefore unsuited, people grasped for “edification” according to a description of what happened in the “soul” in the life of faith.

And men no longer felt, that what our feet do on Sunday (going to the church) for the Lord just as well was noted in His books as what there had to do with our psychical life in thoughts and aspirations. The Lord wrote down just as well our coming in and our going out as our feelings for our neighbour and our tears in the church and our prayers in the inner chamber.

Had the Gereformeerde only held on to the Holy Scriptures, had they but made the most of Biblical knowledge, which Calvin had handed down to them, then the dangers still would have been banished in a timely manner.

The Bible Translators¹¹

In the heyday of Calvinism there were numbers of men, who stood totally close to Calvin in deep respect for God's Word and who still were not unsound through respect for "scholarship" which led away from the Scriptures.

The Marginal Commentators of the **Statenvertaling** often gave again common sense, genuine Scriptural explanations, which people later removed.

Also at present it is highly necessary, also for the most principal Gereformeerde people and for the fieriest Calvinists, that they again learn to read the Bible, just as these Bible Translators did.

A rich source of Scriptural exegesis is there given over against the traditional conceptions, of which the spirit of the age even in due course had opportunity to push into the church. And it is remarkable how far these Bible Translators thereby stood away from the Baptist separation, described above, in the created world and in the human being himself, and how clearly they also approached the Scriptural, practical word for "soul," that had nothing to do with the Greek concept "immortal soul."

/16/

"Soul" more pious than the whole person?

On first sight the Greek conception appears far from pious. "Soul" has now only a pious sound. And the un-Scriptural opinion, that the "soul" is closer to God than our body, that "soul" is a more pious word than arm or foot or head – that sits so well in, that we involuntarily find the Marginal Commentators extremely common-sensical or certainly "Old Testament-like, unspiritual"!

And yet the Marginal Commentators have Scriptural exegesis. For the Scriptures speak nowhere of the salvation of "souls," of "spiritual substances," which sit imprisoned in dungeons of material substance – (that is the Greek philosophy which has intruded itself into the church) but of the salvation of people.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians that flesh and blood could not inherit the Kingdom of God, then he did not oppose the promise, that the whole person was redeemed by Christ – but then he warned the congregation that they must not think so but, as he there now runs, to be able to cross over into the Kingdom of God that is to come. They must first be changed according to the image of Christ: Spiritual, filled with the Holy Spirit, and renewed according to the exact likeness of His resurrection body, they must put off the mortal and the corruptible – as in Christ's body. The Heidelberg Catechism says in Lord's Day 1 this scriptural matter so beautifully: That I with body and soul both in life and death am Christ's possession... Here is the whole person, according to his interior and his exterior life purchased by Christ.

¹¹ [The reference is to those who made the **Statenvertaling**, the translation of the Bible into Dutch, equivalent to the place which the **King James Version** holds in English.]

You have saved my soul: my soul, that is, me, and not only my consciousness, or my inner life, not only my religious sphere of thought.

“Tell what God has done for your soul...”

The Psalm, in which the poet relates, “what God has done for his soul,” relates according to the Greek conception: what occurred in the mind of the poet as in his regeneration or his consciousness and the conversion of his religious thoughts and in the combats with that and in the living impressions in his inner life. And this Psalm verse was often used as urging the “converted” to tell in detail everything which happened... because it was examined whether it was a genuine work. But the Bible Translators say in the caption: The prophet exhorts everybody to offer God praise... the deliverance of his church out of every distress (read Psalm 66:5, 6, 12, 16, 17). The pious individual – and then still the innermost of these people – stands in the whole not on the foreground in the Psalm.

And read then further: How did God encounter him? I called to Him (because the distress of God’s people mentioned in the preceding verses). And He heard.

That is Scriptural narration of Christian experience:

I called and He heard.

/17/

Much has happened in David’s heart. But he does not describe that: he does not go into that. He goes into God’s hearing of his supplication.

Claes de Praet over his “experience”

Such an abandoning of more detailed soul-description people also find in the martyr’s letters. Seldom do people find there something mentioned of what “takes place in the soul” such as the beloved term of the conversion histories reads. And where it actually was touched upon, there the letter writer steps hastily away again, just as the Scripture also does. Claes de Praet wrote in the prison of Ghent in 1556:

At first, after I had been imprisoned on the sixth day, I had sat very distressed, and melancholy, and heavy hearted, that flesh was very timid; now must **icker aen**, and many more other **strijts** to wife, and children, and the Satan who also came to devour me with many wonderful temptations, that would be too lengthy to relate.

“Too lengthy to relate,” that says writers of conversion-histories first, when they have related almost a book full of these, and this Claes de Praet says it when he still has not even begun. And then again he goes further to relate his interrogation. And when the jailer calls, “Claes, come down here, follow me...”

when he must after his trial... then was he so glad, says he, because "all my pressure and oppression was driven from me, as the dust of the streets struck with force."

Praying, he went to the judges, prepared to witness to his faith.

But the judges asked only trifles about his place of residence and trade and friends.

And I was very melancholy, that they had not questioned me about my faith... and two servants who had stood listening at the door, came up to me, and tormented me with many things and said: "Poor bloet as you are, who will therefore leave your life, and leave your wife and children in need, then you have not done well that you break up your marriage?" Then I sat there alone and the Satan came to tempt me internally; Poor man, will you sit here because of your faith? The lords do not ask you about your faith...

Then I thought, O you evil tempter, you murderer, I certainly feel that you are the same who tormented Peter, about which he has also warned us. And I fled to God, and lifted up a spiritual song and sang with fruitfulness, and was merry and glad, that I had weathered this storm.

I was there about ten weeks.

He was then sent for again.

/18/

By this description of intimate life Dr Cramer, the publisher of the Bibliotheca, signifies on p. 241:

"Here is one of the few places in these letters, where in the martyrs the fearful conflict of soul, which certainly had fought in them many times, was exposed by them."

Here the conflict of soul was still not "remarkable" or "edifying" and the conflict was certainly not looked at for "the way to blessedness," as would be later.

Therefore is this soul-experience so genuine and so short. What a difference with the later soul-admirers. They come too brief words to detail from week to week to follow the chronological soul-melancholia so as to be able to come the "way" to blessedness. The saddest book of this genre is perhaps certainly: "The saddest state of a Christian by Guiljelmys Saldenus." Intended as advice and comfort for souls who were preoccupied with themselves, who as earlier the women mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:7 were always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth.

In the literature of Mediaeval mystics, in the correspondence of pious monks and nuns, the same “deadness of the soul” comes up for discussion.¹²

What is then the genuinely human soul-experience of Claes de Praet, entirely without psychopathological strains of melancholy, but real human love for wife and children - true human disappointment since it expects a grand trial and there are only official questions about trifles.

And what is more, the manner of relating experience is precisely the same as that of the children of God in the Holy Scripture.

And this is still the most “experiential” of the Letters.

Calvin was not interested in the history of his conversion - it was certainly “too long to relate,” when there was so much work to confess God’s Word in every sphere of life in Geneva and across the whole of Europe through his correspondence. Calvin’s letters fill thick volumes. In the **Corpus Reformatorum** 12 parts are filled with his correspondence – in there we find about 1250 letters from Calvin printed - but again “experiential letters” are no more to be found than in the Bible.

The letters of the martyrs and those of Calvin agree marvellously with the description of Psalm 66: I cried out... and the Lord heard.

Indeed the Lord found me, and I want to tell all who fear the Lord: He saves his church! We shall also now tell all those who fear Jehovah, the God of the Covenant! That can also strengthen them in the conflict against false religion.

Marginal comments on popular texts

I give below from the **Statenvertaling** some examples of the surprising Scriptural vision of the Marginal Commentators on certain texts. First I give the popular “Greek” misconception.

/19/

Ps. 119:25. My soul clings to the dust.

“Greek” misconception: My thoughts, my consciousness (soul) are too pre-occupied with the worldly. It is occupied with business and family and politics and all kinds of work - but if my soul sticks to the “visible and sensory,” to the material – it must repent of itself – it must live in the invisible spiritual realm of religious thoughts and meditation.

Marginal commentators: That is, I’m almost dead and buried in the dust of the earth. In that respect, the prophet knows very heavy and careworn sufferings, see Psalm 44:26.

¹² See Dr. W. Oehlen, **Deutsche Mystikerbriefe des Mittelalters 1100-1550**. Munich 1931, pp. 254, 257, 214, 211, etc.

(My soul clings to the dust; that is then: I am lying in the dust, I descend into the grave, and then there follows: make me live according to your Word.)¹³

Another example:

Ps. 116:4. Oh, Lord, free my soul

“Greek” conception: Save my “immortal soul” from hell when I die.

Marginal commentators: Save my life from the bands of death with which Saul threatens me. (On David’s life hung the life of his Great Son, our Saviour. Saul’s sword immediately threatened the salvation of the whole of mankind.)

vs. 8. You, Lord, have saved my soul.

“Greek” conception: My “immortal” soul is saved.

Marginal commentators: My soul, that is, “me”.

Ps. 3:2 Many say about my soul: He has no salvation from God.

“Greek” conception: Of my experiential life, they say no good.

Marginal commentators: That is: about my person.

Ps. 16:10. You will not leave my soul in hell.

“Greek” conception: You shall not let my immortal soul go into hell.

Marginal commentators: That is my person, just as often elsewhere, and by which further the dead body of our Lord Jesus Christ is meant. (Here “soul” is already “dead body”). The Marginal commentators then refer to Lev. 19:28 where we read: You shall not make any cuts in your flesh because of a dead soul Cf. Lev. 21:1, 11 and 22:4. Also Num. 9:6.

Ps. 106:15. He sent leanness to their souls.

“Greek” conception: They had lean “experience,” lean, dead inner life.

Marginal commentators: “That is to their persons, actually to their bodies. Thus there stands soul for person, (cf. Ps. 105:19, where Joseph says: His soul was in irons, see the Marginal commentators in that place).

Ps. 142:5. Nobody cared for my soul.

“Greek” conception: It was hopeless for my immortal soul in my experience.

Marginal commentators: Nobody cared for me, or for my life.

Vs. 8. Release my soul from prison.

Greek: Give my soul a wonderful experiential life.

¹³ [See also: A Janse. **De heerlijkheid der Psalmen**, p. 85]

Marginal commentators: That is, save me, my person.

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Yet some more surprising examples from the New Testament.

Rom. 6:6. In order for the body of sin to be destroyed.

“Greek” conception: my soul is better, but my body is a body of sin that should be disposed of.

Marginal commentators: “body”, that is the whole mass or aggregation of this depravity, which is as an impure body, with many impure members; Col. 2:11 and 3:5.

Eph. 4:23. And you would be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

“Greek” conception: there in the inner sanctuaries of the soul is a place of renewal, There it is, all the rest is merely external.

Marginal commentators: “That is, Renewed in the inner and wisest part of your soul, like Rom. 12:2.”

And then comes the comment: “If then the same is renewed and born again to serve God, so are therefore the will and affection naturally not better, unless they were renewed by the same power.

Eph. 4:22. “The old man passing”

“Greek” conception: the old man, that is, the concrete empirical man over against the inner man of mind, the regenerate within us.

Marginal commentators: Old man, as is called the whole depravity and anger, which is in man by nature, Rom. 6:6, which is also called flesh, Rom. 8:5, Gal. 5:19.

Gal. 2:20. “But Christ lives in me”

“Greek” conception: Christ accomplishes psychic impressions in my soul, I think, feel and choose this and that.

Marginal commentators: Christ lives in me, namely by His Holy Spirit, by which He leads me in the ways of God and makes me productive in good works.

“And what I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.”

“Greek” conception: My empirical human lives wholly from the abovementioned psychological process... I am a “special” man, a spiritual man.

Marginal commentators: That is, although I have my weaknesses in the same flesh, so I trust and believe that the Son of God has met them previously by his Death, who in my opinion, also by His Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 5:16. We no longer know Christ after the flesh.

“Greek” conception: as historical man.¹⁴

Marginal commentators: that is, to boast concerning that (that he had seen Jesus) or therefore to seek our esteem as some do. (Here “flesh” is understood as sinful glory).

/21/

2 Cor. 4:18. Because we do not consider the things seen, but the things which we do not see, for the things which are seen are temporary, but things not seen are eternal.

Greek Philosophy: The Invisible (the idea, the *Ding an Sich*, the concept, the inner, the “soul”) is eternal, but the visible (The concrete given, the exterior, the appearance, the body) that is temporary, that decays.

But Marginal commentators say: The things which people see: that is the worldly honour and dishonour and the conveniences and inconveniences of life, we daily see with our eyes the things that are not seen: that is the spiritual and heavenly joy, which is promised.

Paul was careful not to draw attention to his temporary distress (see vs. 8-11) but to the things which he is promised after his light affliction, which soon will pass (vs 17). And he expects a very excellent weight of glory.

The Greek distinction between idea and appearance, with soul as the real and eternal, and body as the unreal and temporal surely has nothing to do this text (2 Corinthians. 4:18).

1 Cor. 15:50. Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God, and the corrupt cannot inherit incorruption.

“Greek” conception: The Kingdom of God is not for our bodies, but our “sou1.”

Marginal commentators: This is such bodies who are corruptible, so our corruption, our mortality does not enter the kingdom of God. In eternal life, our bodies are immortal (see note 56).

See also vs. 44 spiritual body that is not in respect of the essence (it was not a body made out of heavenly matter, note 46, no more than the second Adam, Christ, was heavenly substance) but only in the qualities.

Rom. 6:12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, for her to obey the lusts of that same body.

¹⁴ That view again plays a role in Karl Barth.

“Greek” conception: desires come from the body.

Marginal commentators: “not because the evil desires are only in the body, or have its origin only from the body and not from the soul (because that is fighting against what Christ says, Matt. 15:18, 19 and Paul, Gal. 5:19, 20), but because these evil lusts must reveal themselves in the body and be worked out by the body.

This is enough to see that for the Marginal commentators the body does not stand over against the soul as the worldly flesh over against the soul which is Christian by nature.

“Keep your souls”

For the Scriptures religion includes the body as well as and as seriously as the soul. As the Lord equally threatened Israel with abandonment /21/ of their army if they did not keep it pure from human excrement (Deuteronomy 23:12-14) than when they stole from their neighbour desired their property.

It would have seemed strange to the pious Israelite if someone had admonished him that his fields and homes and children were merely “worldly” things – that had nothing to do with the soul.

The Lord had warned them:

keep your soul diligently, for the LORD your God loves you, and you will not be allied in marriage with the people. Joshua 23:11.

That is: cling to the Lord for your life, for He would destroy you, keep watch therefore for your souls (Deuteronomy 4:15).

That was obvious: It will cost you your life. I shall drive you out of the land, if you do not listen to me.

How completely different has this text become for Willem Teellinck, who begins the preface of his book “The Contented Christian” in this way:

“Beloved Reader, the children of men are bothered about many things, and often neglect that which is most needed, the things of God, the soul and salvation, that is all the point, they were **daerhenen gheleyt**, while the people wear out their strength and abilities, concerning trivial and paltry things of this world which perishes with use: nevertheless we are taught in the Word of the Lord, that we should take care for our souls in the **alder-neerstichste**, Joshua 23:11.

How different: Children of the Covenant, the Lord loves you and do not serve the idols, because it would cost you your life! Forever the destruction would overcome you as a whole person according to “body and soul.” Or: men, take care of your immortal souls and be concerned about the salvation of your soul.

In the first case children stand before their father, who exhorts them seriously: take care, because I will severely punish you and cast you out from before my face.

In the second case people are the custodians of their "soul." In the first place the children fear, when they do evil, but they do not fear if they have found reconciliation in Christ and may bear fruits of repentance.

In the second case the custodians of the soul never rest, and certainly whether they have adequately represented eternal importance – there was still something missing.

Here is a totally different attitude towards the Lord, which is no longer the consequence of the Greek notion of soul that the Reformers left standing – but to which the dangerous movement of Gnosticism has contributed the most.

Aberrant Marginal Comments

We must still trace here how the Greek concept of soul also comes into the open quite a few times without warrant in the Marginal commentators. From this it appears how they too allowed these Canaanites /23/ to live. Like Calvin and Joshua the remaining Canaanites before them were rather harmless!

Deuteronomy 4:15-16. Take heed for your souls... so that you do not act corruptly and make yourselves some graven image.

Here the Marginal commentators indicate: This is the best for your souls! Take good care for your souls, and they refer to the identical text in Jeremiah 17:21 where the note states: "So if you love your souls salvation."

The inversion of meaning "Take care for your souls" in: "Take care of your soul" is the same as when someone threatens: "Woe betide you!" if you do not do what I say! and the threat is rather to note the commandment, "concerns" for his bones.

Where God's covenant and the keeping of God's covenant must stand in the attention of the Christians, there is instead in its place ... "The soul" for which all care must be taken.

1 Peter 1:9. Obtain the end of your faith, even the salvation of souls.¹⁵

Marginal Commentators: "Although this salvation, that we acquire through Christ, applies to the whole man, it was nevertheless said "of the souls," because in this life and after this life that salvation begins *in the soul*, after the resurrection of the dead the body will also be made like that, Philippians 3:21, 20.

Prof. Greydanus says of this word "souls": "soul here indicates *the whole person*, but he is named according to his principal part, his spiritual being, *the*

¹⁵ This and the following texts did not appear in the first edition.

life, which if it is lost then all is lost, if that is kept then everything is kept, Matthew 16:26. This word reminds us, that certainly the body still first, before the acquisition of full salvation, will be able to and must suffer and perish, and go into the ground, by persecution and death. But that is relatively minor in value, Matthew 10:28, there they must not be afraid of that.”

These views of Dr. Greydanus come from the “**Korte Verklaring.**”

The statement of Prof. Greydanus seems to me to be purely Scriptural, the Marginal Commentators not totally so. It is possible to lay the focus on the soul as a whole person because verse 5 speaks of the revelation of your whole person. You can then read about the salvation of your whole person. And that was certainly the strongest comfort for the persecuted.

At the dramatic contest of the Chambers of Rhetoric, held in Ghent in 1539, many Chambers gave an answer to the question: “*What is the greatest consolation for the dying man?*”

The Chamber of Antwerp received the first prize with the answer: “*The resurrection of the flesh.*” This is how they thought about it in the /24/ time of the martyrs when more than ever since Jesus the flesh was crucified.

They do not deny that the soul is with the Lord immediately after death, but people held firmly to the promise of God for the whole living solid, as the Scripture does in each page.

Peter 2:25. But you are now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

Marginal commentators: “That is guardian or supervisor who is responsible for the salvation of your souls, even if it happens that your bodies are often mistreated here.”

(Here soul and body are again seen more or less in Greek fashion.)

Prof. Greydanus also gives here again a more Scriptural interpretation of “soul,” when he says: your souls, that is “of your life, of yourselves wholly and completely” cf. 1:9 and 2:11.

“Suffer harm to his soul”

Possibly the Marginal commentators have in Jeremiah 17:21 felt something of the restriction of ‘the word’ soul in the Greek meaning – because they have added a second explanation, which is more appropriate for the use of words in Scripture: “Or, watch yourselves, or give consideration for your people, watch for yourselves.”

This statement is true also in the New Testament word usage. In the familiar text:

Luke 9:25. What does it profit a man, if he would win the whole world and lose himself or suffer harm to himself.

In Matthew it reads: suffer harm to his soul (Matthew 16:26).

It is usually understood to mean: because of “injury to His immortal soul,” but it says “with harm to his soul,” as when in Acts 27:10 Paul exhorts: Men, I perceive that the voyage will be with loss of cargo and ship and our lives. It will be at the expense of the ship.”

Harm to his soul is: loses his life in the destruction, it will be at the expense of his soul, as Luke says: lose themselves, and then all possessions benefits the dead nothing.

Paul's conversion

Also in Galatians 1:16 there are two explanations given, in which the first tends towards the Greek soul and places revelation in that soul – and the second remains more in line with Scripture.

It has pleased God to reveal His Son in me.

Greek: This is what happened in my soul.

Marginal commentators: “That is to me, in my soul” And then the second explanation follows: “Or: to reveal through me, that is, to make known that I have recognized him as the Son of God and the Messiah and believe in him.”

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In the first view, something mystical, magical happened, a pantheistic idea of touching the Godhead in the sanctuary of the soul.

In the second view a miracle of God's grace happened, that a blind man sees and a deaf man hears and that God's Son was made known to Paul the persecutor of the church. But that psychical, that “hearing” and “seeing” and “observing,” that listening and questioning, had in itself just happened psychically. Just as in the voice of Paul: Whatever you want, Lord, that I will do, nothing divine spoke, so in that soul's event nothing mystical happened. But certainly it was everything: that seeing and hearing and questioning, work of the Holy Spirit; powerful revelation of Christ to the whole Saul of Tarsus, which was now revealed.

As the feet of churchgoers are ordinary feet, so are even their souls ordinary souls, but that those feet are directed to God's house and that also their “inner man” is from the heart busy with the things of God's Kingdom, that in their thoughts and aspirations and feeling the grace of Christ is very highly valued, that they “rightly acknowledge the only true God, trust in Him alone, submit to Him with all humility and patience, expect all good from Him only, and love, fear and honour Him with my whole heart; so that I leave and forsake all creatures rather than do the least thing against His will.” to do “(Heidelberg Catechism. Answer to Q. 94)¹⁶ – that is the work of the Holy Spirit. That is spiritual. That is the work of Christ in their whole person and that was

¹⁶ [The original text by Janse gives the reference as Answer to Q. 39.]

revealed. Yes, that revealed to them their psychical life also. Why that would stand outside? It is actually of great importance. Not as a “holy” area, but one of the many spheres in which the Holy Spirit brings His people to justice.

And then each sphere according to its nature.

As for our bodies, we are now still subject to corruption. Therefore Paul could write: That is:

the outer man (the man from the outside, Paul as a concrete historical person living in Ephesus) was corrupted (2 Corinthians 4:16, cf. vs 10 and 11).

Here there is absolutely no trace of Greek asceticism. Here is the patient acceptance of tribulation for Christ’s sake, which slowly undermines him and also of the general human fate which is given to sin. (Romans 8:10).

And over against that Paul praises his inner man – “the man-inside” – is renewed day by day.

He has diminution of visual acuity according to the body, but his spirit sees still clearer the coming of the kingdom of God. If deafness troubles him – so much louder does he hear the future trumpet blast of the Lord in the clouds. If he has no great future any more on earth, so much the closer he is to the day when he will be with the Lord... thus the internal Paul is refreshed and rejuvenated. That is the life that the enemy can not kill – that soon will pass through that death.

/26/

This distinction between soul and body – perceived as belonging to a “living soul,” which is entirely ruined and also needs complete renewal by the Holy Spirit, is basically something entirely different, than the distinction between “soul” as religious given and all-the-rest as “worldly” external things.

Opposition to dualism

For us the objections come from two sides to dualism soul-body as if these were two things, two substances, which were merged into a two-fold unity under the sovereignty of the Self or of the spirit; which would then be sought in the best part.

On the part of experience, because in our experience man only ever occurs as a unit.

And on the part of Holy Scripture, which equally also sees the man always as a unit and knows of no sovereign part in man as former or bearer or king in the centre.

Yet the Christians are still reluctant to abandon the dualism for the men of experience, for they saw that along with the Greek “immortal soul” usually immortality for men was also denied. And so as to “maintain” that Scriptural given against the Materialists and the Positivists, they have clung onto the

“immortal soul,” even though Scripture says nothing about this. One should distinguish well “immortality” in the Greek sense as “natural survival” and the Scriptural sense: survival as dead persons as the kingdom of death, who still live with the Lord and one day will receive immortality as complete salvation from the power of death, 1 Corinthians 15:53. See 1 Timothy 6:16 and Romans 6:9. It is not a good method to try to “maintain” a promise of God in His Word on the basis of a heathen distinction and with a pagan “idol.” Scripture distinguishes these things better than the pagan philosophy,

However – it certainly happens to us that we listen too little to the Scriptures – because after we receive forgiveness we still stumble again, like Paul! Paul complained really about it. He found that miserable (Romans 7:21, 24). We often find that “nearly impossible in converted people.” That’s the difference between us and Paul: difference in understanding of the sin that surrounds us lightly (true knowledge of sin in practice), and also differences in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom Paul could boast so. We seek rather for a course to help us to become a “Personality.” It certainly happens more than once, that we want to maintain God’s Word on the basis of pagan terms and reasonings!

The intention is certainly good. But then it gleans not much practically and scientifically. Genuine researchers of the psychical, that genuinely see something of the work of God, could shrug their shoulders at the allegation that they practiced “Psychology ohne Seele [Psychology without a soul].”

Where was then the mystical “Seele” for science?

But the Christians saw here on the part of the Materialists the /27/ denial of a life after this life, and therefore they gave no hearing to the men of practice for fear of the materialists. And it was certainly better to stick with Plato’s concept of soul, than to sink into the coarse materialism of their time.

But still better than relying on Plato would be to ask the Scripture itself what it says.

They it teaches a life after this life is still firmly established. Who believes in me will live, even if he dies. Who believes in me has (already here) eternal life (in principle). But now it is remarkable that they never teach this on the basis of an “immortal soul.” It speaks nowhere of such a soul, as we have seen. And it also speaks of immortality only twice in a totally different sense than philosophy, so it is no wonder that many Bible readers noticed that the scholastic “Christian” psychology is totally inconsistent with what Scripture says about man.

Difficulties of Dr. Kuyper

So, Dr. Kuyper in his article in the Herald of 8 September 1895 “The new edition of the old Bible ,” the plan stated in the famous Kuyper-Bavinck Rutgers publication of the States-Bible to indicate the word “soul” twice.

Where Kuyper believed that the “higher” soul was intended, there he wrote the more or less “animal” word “Soul [ziele],” and anywhere where the soul was said to eat and drink and die, there he wrote “soul [ziel].”

This difference is completely arbitrary.

Firstly, the basic text has everywhere the same Hebrew and Greek words, so the difference between “ziele” and “ziel” in which Kuyper introduced in the translation does not exist in the underlying text.

Secondly, there are many borderline cases where both blood and life is intended. For example, Rachel as her soul departed. That can mean: as her life went out, but it can also mean as her life departed through a haemorrhage of her blood – and it can also mean: as she breathed out her breath.

And as we well see, in this case it may very well have been an all together concrete sad life-reality.

How could Dr. Kuyper here now translate: “Soul” or “soul”?

The whole possibility falls away when we realize that Scripture does not know that notion of the “soul” in the beloved sense. And further that the word soul has many meanings, but it is always something that is the “living soul” itself. “Living soul” is the basic concept for the whole Man.¹⁷

Difficulties of Dr. Bavinck

Dr. H. Bavinck also through study of Scripture escaped from /28/ Scholastic psychology. In his **Biblical and Religious Psychology**, it often shines through, how he observes the difference.

Some quotations:

“This word ‘soul’ (in the combination “living soul”) we must not think of the meaning which we these days connect to this, and which we derived actually much more from philosophy than from the Holy Scriptures. Living soul here simply indicates that man through the in-breathing of

¹⁷ Dr. Kuyper has also objected frequently to the use of the *term* “immortal soul” with the meaning contested by us. See **Dogmatics**, Volume V, p. 45 [Death is the *separatio animae a corpore*. The Holy Scriptures do not say to us, that the soul is immortal. “God, virtue and immortality” is no Gospel, but rationalistic philosophy.[?] “The soul is immortal,” that is to say, that the soul itself is of such a nature that it can not die. The soul is not immortal. The Holy Scripture teaches in 1 Tim. 1:17 that God is *aphthartos* (imperishable), and in 1 Tim 6:19 (16), that God is *ho monos echoon aphtharsian* (Who alone has immortality), a more precise explication, which is also exclusive. God is in himself indestructible. He alone is immortal. We may thus never speak of the “immortality of the soul,” that was never permitted in this sphere.] and the Brochure: **The doctrine of immortality and the State School**, 1870. [For example: “**Immortality of the soul**” is an expression which can not exist for the Gospel. The “immortal” is what does “not die,” and the Gospel teaches correctly that the soul is **dead**, and remains dead, so long as it has not been awoken to life through Christ. Therefore also the Apostolic Creed knows nothing of immortality.]

God became a living being, and therefore was also applied elsewhere to all living beings. Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30.

Also the distinction between man and animal lies in this, that in the former a “breath of life” is breathed in, because in Genesis 7:22 there is an even stronger mention of a breath of the spirit of life in all animals.” (pp. 16, 17)

The difference between man and animal lies also in this, therefore, that in distinction from the animal he received from above the breath of life by a special act of God, that he immediately bore His image...

Spirit and matter, soul and body in the H. Scripture are certainly substantially different, but they never stand dualistically beside or opposite each other. Rather they are most closely united. (pp. 21)

Usually we express ourselves in this way: that man consists of soul and body. The Israelite “thought of that not as an immortal soul and a mortal body, but as something that was in man from below and something that was in him from above.”

After having given a number of texts Dr. Bavinck goes on: “In all these places it does not appear in the foreground as it does for us, the mention of soul and body as a contrast between the spiritual and the material, but it is mainly expressed, that in the man there is an inner and an outer side.” (Comment: Think of the “inside” not as the kernel point and centre of strength, or as a Self in the person, but as someone like he is totally from the inside, from head to toe in all spheres, as he is his actions, in his expenditure and his income, in his eating and praying, and doing his duty and thinking, then you do exactly as the Scriptures do. A.J.)

Dr. Bavinck continues: “Nor was there an established name in the Hebrew for what we call body. In the SV of the Old Testament will appear sometimes the word body, but this word translates different words in the original, so that almost none of them are rendered correctly. Furthermore, the Dutch translation of the Old Testament more often uses the phrase “dead body” for one Hebrew word: fades away, expired, or where *nephesh*, soul appears.

In Leviticus 19:28, 21:1, 22:4, Numbers 6:11, 9:6 the translator of the States Bible has dead or dead body, but the original has for this (see Marginal commentators) the word soul.

Touching a dead body is then called in Hebrew touching a “dead soul.” (23)

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“This suffices us to see that in the Scriptures we are never dealing with abstract concepts, but always with the language of daily life. The man is not analysed philosophically into his components, but always taken in his

unity, and now reflects more of one side, and other times more of the other side.” (24).

Another quote:

“In general we mean by the soul the spiritual substance, which with the body makes up the essence of man and, which through its immateriality and immortality, are distinguished correctly from the body shaped out of dust.

This is, however, a conception of the soul which is derived more from the philosophy of Greece than from Christian theology.

The newer psychology sees in the word soul “only a collective term for all consciousness-phenomena...which is as foreign to the Scripture as the former view. We must therefore impartially... simply ask Scripture what it means by soul.” (31)

So we can see what Prof. Bavinck thinks.

It has not been given him in Scripture to distinguish “the living soul” from the psychic, the soul life, that is the object of psychology,

The scholastic concept of soul was often again dragged into his book and hides behind the distinctions.

For us it is of interest to see how through the Scriptures Bavinck had to abandon the idol discussed above, the “immortal soul” and dualism.¹⁸

In the next chapter, I would like to give a more systematic review about what in my opinion experience and the Scriptures says about these things.

¹⁸ Prof. Dr A. Noordzij goes into more detail on this Biblical concept of the soul. See “Korte Verklaring” on Ezeziel, pp. 84, 95, 128, 143, 150 (“dead souls“), 202, 208, 223.

CHAPTER 2. LIVING SOULS

What does ordinary experience say of the difference between man and animal?

“According to his bodily construction man belongs to the mammals. In spiritual respects he is exalted far above all animals.” Thus begins an article on Man in an Encyclopaedia. And the writer adds: “The brains are therefore significantly more strongly developed than in the apes; the brain weight of man is \pm 1400 grams; that of greatest gorilla only 450 grams.” Our textbooks on natural history are apparently of the same opinion about the division. We are given a Zoology section, a Botany section and a Minerals section. And the man is then without further explanation associated with the animals.

How weird is that!

The great difference that a plant has an organic life, while a piece of granite or a piece of turf has not, has been pointed out. Hence the separation between botany and minerals.

And that an animal is a “living soul”¹⁹ - and as an ensouled being is something completely other than plant life - that was the occasion for the distinction of zoology and botany.

But the vast distance between man and animal has not been observed. Or if it so happens that someone has seen it, then they have divided the man into two pieces in “body and soul.” The bodily part then has been attached to the animals, and the spiritual part - well, natural history does not talk about that. At most, it sees in the additional kilogram of brains, that man has, a referral to the “spiritual” world.

But if we proceed in this way with respect to man, then why has there not been a separation between plants and animals? Why do we not say that the plant is material plus life? The matter belongs to the particular construction of minerals and the life then transcends physics.

This is so even in the animals. This people can, as far as substance is concerned, be content with piecing together the minerals, and refer the soul, “the life of the animal,” to another science, e.g., to biology.

Fortunately, in plants and animals we have seen something very unique in the whole creature, and people have classified them correctly: mineralogy for the lifeless things, botany for the living organism, zoology for the living souls that we call animals.

And so we now had no man in two divisions: in body, that belongs with the animal, and spirit, that is to be assigned to the brain, but we must hold to the great distinction between the whole man and the whole animal.

¹⁹ See Gen. 1:20 and 24.

Of course, there are similarities. There is even still much more similarity between humans and animals than the textbooks give. That concerns the form of skeleton and muscles, of blood circulation and nervous system. But also biology sees everywhere parallels in nutrition, growth and reproduction of the organism between man and animal.

And even in psychology, there is parallelism between the conscious phenomena of men and animals. The Holy Scriptures also attracts such parallels, even to the detriment of people, just think of the text, in which the Lord of Israel says: An ox knows its owner and an ass the crib of his master, but Israel has no knowledge. The knowledge of the ox and the donkey are here called knowledge of the animal. But it is still not human knowledge.

But nor is the appetite of a hungry man the hunger of animals, although there are similarities.

And while a human hand may have parallels with the claw of a lion, an animal's paw is still something other than a human hand. And even though a gorilla and a human had exactly the same weight of brain, one was still an ape's brain and other the brain of a man.

So human blood is something totally different from animal blood. This murderers may narrate from their fearful experience.

And human spittle is not the same as animal saliva. When our Lord was spat upon by the Jews, all the hate-filled contempt of their evil souls against His suffering person was in this fluid.

Human suffering is different from animal suffering, even though the pain reaction is often equal in man and animals. So we need to search for that difference to show any special points of difference between man and animals, as, for example, that brain weight. Because everything is different from man to animal, since the first is human and second is animal.

This goes so far that even the environment gets its stamp. There is a difference between a human dwelling, even a shabby one, and an animal kennel. Anyone will feel the difference, whether they enter a dwelling or if they go into the ape-house in the zoo.

The separation of man in stature, which would belong to the animals, and spiritual existence, that then is far above all animals and therefore, would be far above my mammalian physique, is in flagrant conflict with practical life experience, for no single normal man is an animal of a human sort – nor is an animal a sort of man.²⁰ Yes, someone who holds his dog more dearly than

²⁰ Similar views were expressed by the Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel. Man cannot be understood in terms of an animal with a distinguishing characteristic, since man is peculiar in trying to understand his uniqueness. What he is seeking is not his animality but his humanity. However, the real problem with such definitions is not that we by this means obscure the fact that we do not know man, but that we obscure the fact that we also do not know animals. We do not really understand the inner life of

men, still speaks about the loyalty of his dog with great wonder: Who would expect that of such an animal, he says. It remains an animal, with wonderful animal loyalty, which is similar to that of human loyalty.

And through bestialising of people that is again a tragedy, that such animalness is not fitting for a man. Evil and sin can destroy so much /32/ human glory - but it remains human. If bread were to be brought into a region, which had been devastated through famine, and people ate like animals, then the beholders would quickly shiver. Even supporters of the evolution doctrine feel that if something is not fitting for a man.

The whole of practical speaks of difference at every point.

And it requires considerable faith in “the science” of the textbooks and all the propositions of unbelief and much engagement with cynical men, before the eye is closed to this difference, and the scientific blindness enters, which looks on people as merely an order of mammals.

This blindness is so unnatural and in such conflict with reality that it actually appears without contradiction only in books and in schools and in science. In practice the cynical professor is still over against his colleagues in the same way as over against a “mammal.”

In other words: it is not true, what our textbooks actually say, that man according to his bodily form belongs among the mammals. He belongs just as little to the mammals as to the sea anemone does among the flowers or as shellfish species do to the limestone. And just as little is the mussel among the minerals, even less does man belong in a zoology book.

What does science say of man?

The second sentence of the **Encyclopaedia** was this: “In spiritual terms he is far exalted above all animals.”

That seems to us at first glance more truthful, but nor is it true in that regard. Surely, here the spiritual loftiness is posed against the mammalian body type.

Man is divided into two parts: the higher and lower, the mental and physical.

Concerning what is higher, that only philosophy and theology can speak about. Natural History can see only the greater brain weight. But that is after all only a gradual difference; a gorilla has 450 grams of spiritual capabilities and a human 1400 grams of the same - so three times as much.

But that is not the whole difference, that makes man into a man. When Natural History does not see the essential difference between human blood and animal blood, human breath and animal breath, human body and animal

animals, but we assume in such theories that there is a continuity between man and the animals. Heschel asks, “Is the animality of a man the same as the animality of an animal? Would it be valid to describe an ape as a human being without the faculty of reason and the skill of making tools?” **Who is Man?** Stanford University Press, 1965, p. 23.

body, then they have no reason to accept an essential difference in a spiritual being.

What do the philosophy and theology say? Have they made the case for what is actually humanlike concerning the whole human, of also of his body?

No, they have also made the same separation in man.

It would take us too far afield, if we were to examine one by one all these constructions, which are imagined about humankind. There are very astute ones such as that of Aristotle and very witty ones such as that of Thomas Aquinas, the great Roman Catholic Scholastic teacher. If we cut out the Monists - which thinks of man entirely of one piece like substance or entirely as mind or "soul" – then the Dualists remain. These are the philosophers and theologians, who see two so-called substances in man.

And always is that then a higher and a lower part of man. The lower then always lies on the material side and the higher on the invisible side. They get then a man which is half animal and half angel. In terms of the body he belongs among the mammals, and in terms of the soul or spirit or ego-consciousness or thinking he is related to the invisible higher beings.

In these theories then the misunderstanding is easily added that the world of the visible is less valuable and the invisible stands nearer to the Creator than the visible.

According to this view my conscious life is closer to God than my foot. And "soul" is then a holier word than body.

This philosophical distinction of Greek-Pagan origin was taken over by the theology of the Middle Ages and then with more or less force it remains alive in tradition.

Pantheistic tendencies have made use of that "higher" as if that was something divine. The deepest depths of the human heart, the Centre, the self named with a capital I, that was a sanctuary, where divine and human touched each other. There in that sanctuary the "actual union with the divine being" was experienced. I heard this term some years ago from the pulpit. The speaker was at one time overcome by the actual union of God with his "soul" in his inner sanctum.²¹

It was in a speech in which the philosophical ideas of Plato and Descartes and Spinoza and Kant were combined with theological speculation on the Essence and Faculties of man and God into a very devout shining "spectacle of man" which nevertheless was pagan through and through.

But apart from these pantheistic pagan excesses it is a pity that in neither philosophy nor Christian theology do we have a Scriptural conception of man. Or rather: we have even among the most positively Biblically sound Christians, who know man in practical terms in the light of the Holy Scriptures,

²¹ [Janse also refers to this incident in **Of Idols and Creatures**, p. /46/.]

theoretically always defer to the Greek dualism and Mediaeval synthesis of Greek concepts and practical Scripture Words.

That's a shame, because especially in the conception of man very important points of philosophy and wisdom are addressed.

Also here we must again bow in obedience before God's /34/ Word and hold ourselves as close as possible to the practical language of Holy Scripture. I wanted now to discuss how the Holy Scriptures sees man in distinction from the above perspectives of Natural History, but also in distinction from Plato, Aristotle, Thomas and the theology and tradition.

Where we deal with people every day it was of value for us, if we learn to see just theoretically, what we experience practically and in the Holy Scriptures already knew long ago.

A wrong theory can often play practical jokes on us. And a theory according to Scripture can open our eyes much glory in God's creation, that we still have never seen.

And it can also open the eyes to much danger that can come to us along the way of an erroneous theory of man. That example of man in the front of the zoology book – and that other even worse image of the “actual union of the soul with the Divine Being” typify the dangers that threaten us here.

This external so-called mammalian physique is called in the Holy Scriptures the temple of the Holy Spirit – and concerning a separate sanctuary deep in man, where God and man touch each other or were united, the Scripture says nothing anywhere.

Nevertheless, the idea that the external man is further from God than the interior man, is also very widespread among us. We have taken that in from our youth, simply without further thought and without examining the Scripture. And so it seems certainly exaggerated, as I give man no place in the zoology books and it seems disrespectful, that I call that higher soul sanctuary, which would border on God, an idle image, something which does not even exist.

Listening to the whole Scripture

In order to speak about man in obedience to God's Word, it is necessary that we listen respectfully to the whole Scripture, and especially remember, that they speak of God's creatures and not about one or other scientific construction. The creature, which stands before us, that is what the Scriptures speak about.

It is thus a totally wrong attitude to ask the Bible what it says about the theory of creatianism - the doctrine that God creates every human soul for his birth, or even the doctrine of traducianism, that the “soul” comes totally from the parents.

It is a vain occupation, to search for a text for such a proposition, for Scripture does not speak of the doctrine of “soul” but about that man himself. As a

result, the adherent of creationism may find exactly the same proof texts for his teaching as the traducianist.

So there is no construction of man, for which they cannot find texts as “proof”. To prove that our bodies stand only on the lower side, they can indicate texts such as “you are dust...”

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And to prove that “soul” is so much better, one can point to Ps. 119:25, “My soul clings to the dust, make me live according to Your Word.”

But if we read this text with the Marginal Comments of the **StatenVertaling**, it appears that the poet here says I am lying down on the ground in dust and threatening to sink down into the grave. Cf. Psalm 22:16, “You made me in the dust of death,” i.e., in the grave.

The text has nothing to do with an elevated soul, which was far too good to cling to the material, the visible and the sensory. That is not a Scriptural, but a Platonic thought, and yet we read that there, because our construction precedes and the proof text then follows.

Elsewhere, they joined the soul even to the lower side. The living body was called flesh complete with soul and everything else.

And over against that, they place as the higher, that comes of God, the spirit of man, his Person, his Self.

Again, it takes no effort, to place the words where the Scripture speaks of flesh and Spirit – as sin and Divine gift –over against each other as the body and spirit of man.

But if you then read Romans 8: “There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but after the Spirit...” then everyone will certainly feel that her it does not mean: who do not walk according to the spirit rather than according to his flesh – but that it addresses the walking after the Holy Spirit. Over against “fleshly” (that is: as a child of Adam whole sold out to sin) stands “Spiritual,” with a capital s, that is, led by the Holy Spirit as men who were purchased by Christ.

And the spiritual people of the Middle Ages, who in the monastery in self-willed religion tried to suppress the so-called flesh, in order to make his spirit free, did essentially the same as a heathen, as for example Gandhi.²² Hatred and envy also belong to the works of the flesh. And ... the self-willed religion that says not to spare the flesh and speaks of not touching and not tasting and not handling... that is – says Paul – for satisfaction of the flesh, i.e., the

²² [See A Janse. Gandhi. *Anti Revolutionaire Staatskunde* 8 (1931) p. 206 ff and p. 256 ff. Also he returns to this subject in *Calvinistisch Jongelingsblad* 8 (1953-1954) 22 / 181 25 sept. / I; 23 / 187 2 oct. / II; 24 / 195 9 oct. / III; 25 / 203 16 oct. / IV; 26 / 212 23 oct. / V; 27 / 217 30 oct. / VI Conclusion. Also reprinted in *Gereformeerd Schoolblad* Brochures No. 16. Gandhi.]

desire of the sinful hearts of men who prefer to seek their salvation outside of Christ.

This construction, which elevates the spirit as the higher divine principle in man above the rest, which then would be called flesh, has been equally well proved with texts of Scripture as the construction of the higher soul over matter. But then we confuse the mind of the Stoa with that of Holy Spirit. And so the confusion grows still greater, and the difficulties multiply.

But if we allow the whole of Scripture to speak about the creature, as it stands there before our eyes every day – and thus not about a philosophical construction such as that of Plato or of the Neo-Platonists, then God's Word is clear and simple. The the weighty difficulties of these construction fall away. Then the Scripture speaks also /36/ on this point back to us - and then we can understand by listening attentively, so as in this area also to be able to learn life-wisdom.

The constructions of science can then follow. They must not precede it.

Scripture does not speak about a mystical “essence” of things

Another dangerous misunderstanding which we must keep in mind is the belief that the Scriptures speak to us about what in philosophy is called the “essence” of things.

There is an immense amount to be studied about that child, there before me in my class. We can count and measure and weigh – the structure and physiological functions, the psychical and the logical – his family life, his language development, his place in history, his rights, his moral and his religious life - all possible sciences would be needed, to describe everything about that child.

So rich is that single creation of God that stands there before us.

And then there is still much, for which science has not received a task from God. The eternal counsel of God for that child, how God sees that child, and where his grandparents and great-grandparents now are in the realm of the dead, and which angels protect him – there is around this child a world of mysteries about which science as a whole has received no task - where it knows absolutely nothing. Spiritism is not a true science of the human occult. Of the occult things we know only as much as God's Word tells us, and nothing more.

But the fleshly understanding has driven man to abandon that rich field of science, that God had given her (that was only the “appearance” of the creature), and to seek in and behind the creature for an idea, that he can then call the “essence.” So they came to their task to seek the “essence” of man. And they found that in the “higher soul” – or sometimes in the better spirit which should govern the flesh.

This idea of “Essence” behind the creation of God makes science poor. There is actually nothing of substance to say about the “essence” and so it shrivels up the many-sided wisdom that God’s creation exhibits, converging into one gray profound mysterious word, with which one can make an impression, to know the “essence” of things, the essence of the “soul” for example.

And what tragedy, if someone tries to read the Scripture with this intention. Then he runs the danger of seeking for the “essence” behind any ordinary communication. Then immediately he has lost the richness and realism of Scripture. The Scripture does not speak about the so-called “essence” of things, that is an idol, a vanity, a non-existent product of philosophy, but concerning the things themselves, as they stand there before us in reality in their full “Wesenheit.” About God’s creation and about God himself the Scripture says a great deal to us, but about such an “essence” of things it says nothing.

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What does the Scripture say of man?

God created man in His image and in His likeness. We soon read the same words about Adam, Genesis 5:3. Adam gained a son, after his image, after his likeness.

So the Scripture says ... just as the son is like the father, so that man was created by God in His own image, and as a father sees his own image and likeness in his young son, so God sees that in his people. The genealogy in Luke (3:38), also has then this conclusion: Seth was the son of Adam and Adam was the son of God. Shall we then depart from this and place the image-bearer of God at the front of the mammals in the book of zoology?

And that human blood is not the same as animal blood – not even in the sinful world –that the commandment to Noah teaches us concerning those who shed man’s blood... to be punished with bloody punishment.

The shed blood of an innocent man calls for vengeance. Can we see this, if our children here are attacked in their life existence? God still loves His people - even the heathen, to whom He gives bread and clothing – even the wicked on whom he makes His sun to shine. That they feel in their bodies, and God takes revenge on them whom they unrighteously strike deadly in that body.

How did the Lord God create man in His image? He had formed him out of the dust of the earth and breathed in his nostrils the breath of life: and so man became a living soul.

The supporters of the construction of the higher divine soul say always, that here it says that God has breathed the soul into Adam. But it does not say there: God breathed his soul into his nostrils and thus he became a human being. No, it says, God breathed into him the breath of life, that breath which is still in our nostrils.

Our breath is most closely related to our metabolism and with our lives. If we stopped breathing for twenty minutes, our life has ceased. Our metabolism began before our birth in relation to the breath of our mother – and her breath was kindled by her parents and so you can think back through an uninterrupted row of historic breath all the way to Adam. And certainly so that my breath in the nostrils now (think back to Adam) has not stood still for an hour, or even half an hour! And that breath had begun, when God himself breathed it in to make His image and likeness.

Pantheists then think, then my breath is Divine breath. But Tertullian has already indicated that if someone has blown on a fire to fan it, his breath is still not in it.²³ God breathed life into us, along an historic road. So I can say: the breath of the Almighty is in me.

And so – through that forming out of the dust – and through that breathing-in of breath into the nostrils, so, it says, the man became a living soul. So it happened in this way, says the Scripture, that the man became what he now is, as he stands before us.

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And that is? You should think: a divine creature? Godlike? Citizen of heaven? Celestial angel? No, it pleased God to put to him as a living soul on this earth, on this beautiful earth – it is indeed nice – among all these wonders of His creation... to have dominion over them. So God put His image and likeness on the earth and called him in His Word: living soul.

There was already in Scripture reference to living souls, in Genesis 1:20 it says: And God said, Let the waters bring forth a swarming of living souls. And God created great whales and every living creature that moves.

And in vs. 24 it says: And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle and creeping things and beasts. So a lobster and a herring and a seal and a cow, a lion, a snail, are termed living soul in the language of the Bible.

And the man is also a living soul, with nothing on top of that. This was God's will, and that is surely no disgrace for a man to be as he is, and what God wants, that He shall be His. It is a shame, if he resists God and wants to be some other and higher being, that that to which then God calls him; for instance, to be a part of God!

²³ [Tertullian does not seem to use this exact image, but has others similar. "And in an act of your own, such as blowing into a flute, you would not thereby make the flute human, although it was your own human breath which you breathed into it, precisely as God breathed of His own Spirit. In fact, the Scripture, by expressly saying that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and that man became thereby a living soul, not a life-giving spirit, has distinguished that soul from the condition of the creator. The work must necessarily be distinct from the workman, and it is inferior to him. The pitcher will not be the potter, although it is made by the potter, nor in like manner, will the *afflatus*, because made by the spirit, be on that account the spirit." Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 2, 9. **Ante-Nicene Fathers**, Vol. 3, pp. 304-305.]

But, says someone, is there no longer any difference between man and animal? The dog is a living soul, and man a living soul?

It is an all-inclusive difference. It has pleased God to make man a living soul according to His image and likeness, to have dominion on the earth. Therefore this living soul is elevated as the direct head above the living soul: animal. Just as your son is more to you than your dog, even though they both eat and drink and sleep, even though they both know and love you, so is the man more than the animal, even though they are both dust animated by the breath of life.

They both have much in common. Both breathe through the nostrils. And the Preacher says: Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both. As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath (**Ruah**), man has no advantage over the animal (in this respect). Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place (to the grave), all come from the dust, and to dust all return.

Yes, the Preacher certainly knows: the breath (spirit, **Ruah**) of men returns to God who gave it to him; but... he says, who know anything about that? Ecclesiastes 3:19-21.

Through the grave it certainly comes out strongly that the man just like the animal... is a "living soul."

But also in the whole of life. The man has breath, nutrition, metabolism, flesh, blood, nerves, limbs, intestines, sickness, pain, anxiety, fatigue, life, sex, hunger, thirst, memory, dreams, reproduction, growth, decay, end, just as for the animal. And also in the higher functions – as the person moves in the field of logical thinking, then he does it with his brain as instrument of the living soul.²⁴ If its circulation is stopped, /39/ then its logic disappears. The man stands in this way in his social function and in his economic management, in his art and law and ethics and also his religious life and when he praises the Lord in all his works; - finally he still always stands there as a living soul, who praises God.

God also demands more from him.

God made the man from dust and Himself breathed life into him – and thus the man became a living soul. By this act of creation the man was at the same time in everything human, and this living soul was in distinction from the animal the image of God – and is gifted more than the animal with many functions of logic, language, political life, law, customs and religion, and

²⁴ Compare the comments of Dr Bernard Zylstra: "The human intellect, man's reason, never functions in a vacuum. Man's intellect does not think. Man himself thinks, by means of his intellect. The direction of the intellect, therefore, is determined finally by the direction of the thinker - by man's central commitment." **Perspective** 3 (1969) Number 2, April, p. 3.

placed there as a living soul in all law- spheres²⁵ to demonstrate honour and obedience to God, so as to praise Him.

This “living soul” is as such a whole, as we see each other walking along the street – named soul in Scripture. That is the basic concept soul, from which all other meanings are derived.

The word “soul” in Scripture

Soul signifies firstly, the practical man as a whole.

Jacob came to Egypt with 70 souls.

These souls have blood: God demands the blood of your souls from the hand of a murderer. Genesis 9:5.

These souls eat: Leviticus 7:18. And the soul that eats them will share in bearing its iniquity.²⁶

Of these souls is said that they may not touch unclean things, then they are unclean, that they are not allowed to eat blood.

Such souls are sold or stolen.

Such souls were wounded, such souls die.

There is even talk of dead souls. Where our translation has “dead body,” it says: “dead souls” – that is the concrete soul, but now dead. And where our translation says: person – Joseph’s person was put in irons – since there it says: his soul was put in irons.

And when God sent to Israel in the desert a leanness to their souls, then those real Israelites in the wilderness were lean in their bodies.

It is this word “soul,” that we meet again and again in the Psalms. Whoever takes the bother to read the Marginal Commentators of the SV in the Psalms, they will again and again find against “soul” that the Marginal Commentators say: “soul,” that is my person, that’s me, or even my life. The Greek soul is found very rarely in the conception of the Marginal Commentators.

Psalm 116:8. You Lord have saved my soul from death... that is, You have saved me from death.²⁷

Many say to my soul: he can expect no salvation from God; that is also again: my person.

²⁵ [The law-spheres of Calvinistic philosophy. See A Janse. **Inleiding tot de Calvinistische filosofie**. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1982, pp. 49-51.

²⁶ Cf. Matthew 6:25 Be not anxious for your *soul* (psyche) what you shall eat nor for your *body*, what you shall put on. Soul here is the *so-called* animal life.

²⁷ [On Psalm 116 see also A Janse. **De heerlijkheid der Psalmen als liederen des Verbonds**, pp. 82-83.]

You will not leave my soul in hell (Psalm 16:10), there it is again: You shall not leave my person in the grave, in the realm of the dead. Here it is even with an eye to Christ spoken of his bodily organization.

And this use of “soul” is not unknown to us in reading – there is nothing magical about this, because we feel that here it is spoken about the person. The Word of God is not dark in its speech.

Also in the crude vernacular this use of the word remains: children call to each other: come here, I will give you to your soul. And they do not mean the Greek notion of soul – “immortal soul” – but the Biblical concept: the person, as he specifically runs there as a concrete creature of God.

The term “immortal soul” is not in the Bible, although it says there that Elijah prayed in his despondency that his soul might die (1 Kings 19:4), and Samson prayed: let my soul die with the Philistines (Judges 16:30). We talked already of Psalm 119:25: My soul clings to the dust.

Also in the New Testament we find on the day of Pentecost 3000 souls who believed. And every soul is stirred to be subject to the powers (Romans 13:1). Of Christ it is said that He has given Himself to us, and elsewhere, that He has given His soul as a ransom (Mark 10:45).

A text that is almost always misunderstood is Matthew 10:39, whoever finds his soul, he will lose it – which is spoken of retaining his person in the prosecution, by denying Christ. Those who deny Christ, who finds himself in life, who finds his soul, himself, his life ... but Christ says: these I will deny, they shall as whole persons come into ruin.

In parallel with that Matthew 16:26 (Mark 8:36) is misunderstood; it says there: what does it profit a man if he wins the whole world and suffers harm to his own soul? Here is it all again: win the world through denial of Jesus, that is, lose everything, your whole person, in the ruin.

People make the following lax traditional saying of that: oh, what does this world profit for a man (as if God had not created the earth), if he suffers harm to his soul, which is related to God.

But it never once says there: harm to his soul, rather it is said, harm of his soul, that is: loss of his whole soul. As Paul on the ship said: the voyage will turn out with loss of the ship, that is: we will lose the whole ship. So the phrase “suffer harm to your soul” signifies nothing less than: as a whole real man to enter into everlasting death, seeing all God’s good gifts completely changed into death.

Conversely, the salvation which the Lord Christ promises, is not a salvation of a Greek immortal soul, but an eternal immortal life for the whole man. Or, as the Catechism has it, in the terminology of Greek philosophy, but totally in the intention of the whole of Holy Scripture: that I, with body and soul – that is as

a whole concrete living soul – am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour.

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The soul that goes into destruction is the living soul.

And the soul that is saved is the same living soul. Not a “soul” of ours, not a mystical “essence” existing behind us, but we, as we run there, would be held, or go... what God forbid, to destruction.

Thus the scripture say. It is of that which the Psalms sing.

The most important life-signs that constantly occur in all of us are certainly our breathing and our blood circulation. The Hebrew word for soul: **nephesh**, signifies, therefore, the breath through the nose. Here are so many souls, which means literally so many breaths. But blood was also given the same name, which means the Israelites could not eat the blood, because in the living blood is the breath, the soul. Animists wanted in the veneration of their soul drink that breath, so Israel could not therefore do that, so as not to lapse into Animism.

Where it says of the dying, that their souls departed, then it is very concretely stated, that their breath went out – something that always affects us in our dying.

The Mediaeval people painted angels, which drew the Greek soul in the shape of a child out of the mouth of the dead. That is a pagan version. The Biblical version is this: the living soul breathes out the breath and then the dust returns to the earth and the spirit returns to God, and the man himself is in the kingdom of the dead.

But with Rachel – it happened, that her soul departed – there the flowing away of the blood can also be meant. How real is still the Holy Scripture, not nearly as mysteriously pious as the religious stories of men.

But apart from breath and blood the consciousness of the living soul is also a powerful sign of life. The soul (**neshamah**) of man is a lamp of the Lord, searching all through the secret chambers of the belly (Proverbs 20:27).

Here the soul life, the psychical life, is signified, which has knowledge of what is in “going on” in its own living soul. This self-consciousness, this knowledge of itself, is often spoken of by the Psalmist. He then sings: “Why do you bow down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted in me? Hope in God.” And so we inspire courage again within ourselves.

We speak then not with one or another divine atom in us, with some mysterious higher pious being in us, but with ourselves, with our knowing of our selves, with our psychical life, that psychology can examine and that is connected very closely with our physical body. Any failure in heart beat and we get confused, it makes us giddy. Any cessation of the flow of blood in the brains and we know nothing of ourselves.

Job 14:21, 22 says, If a man is dead, he says nothing of whether it goes badly with his children is bad – but if he is alive, his soul /42/ in him has grief. Here is again that consciousness, that grief a man has as to what happens to his children. Think here of Job's children. As long as there is consciousness in man, he has sorrow over what happens.

As the poet summons everyone to praise God, then he ends the psalm, praise the Lord, my soul, that is, all that is within me praise the Lord. With the whole of our hearts, with the whole of our psychic life, our eyes, our mouths as expressions of the heart we will give praise and honour to God. Here it is not a Greek "immortal soul" which gives praise, so that the substance is also singing, no, this is a man, a living soul, an image of God singing with his whole heart and his whole soul and with all his strength, also with his mouth and eyes and hands.

Let us look at Psalm 66: Come, hear me, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul. That is the mystical soul text par excellence. But we must read what it actually says.

What story does the poet relate? A story totally about his immortal soul? No, he goes on like this: I cried to Him with my mouth, and his praised was on my tongue... and God has heard me.

And what did the Psalmist pray for? Something for his soul? No, something for the church. First he praises God for his help in the Red Sea and the Jordan. Then he says, the enemy came and took us (the church) into the fire and into the water, treated us as slaves, they rode over our heads and... You Lord have heard our prayers and... redeemed the church, including me.

If there is any text which testifies against the religion of the immortal soul, then it is certainly this one!

Christ our Lord has given His soul, that is himself, his whole existence as a living soul, with breath and with blood and with consciousness, all for us. His breath is exhaled, His heartbeat has stopped, His blood has become dead blood, but none of His bones are broken and His body has not decomposed in the grave, because God would not abandon His soul in the grave, and not permit His soul to see corruption. Death has lost its power over this living soul.

For us also that is the case. For the time being death remains as our final enemy staring us in the face. But the resurrection of Christ is a certain guarantee that we also will not suffer in death. Those who believe in Christ, shall live, though he were dead.

When the living spirit dies... ²⁸

What remains of us, when we die?

First of all, our outer man, me, in terms of my external existence.

²⁸ I wrote a series of articles on the "realm of death" in *Op den Uitkijk* 9 (1933) and 10 (1934).

The body, which is sown. Scripture calls us then “dead souls,” and it calls us still by name. He, she is buried. Not mortal remains, but he. As long as that corpse remains recognizable, /43/ those who know him call it: it is he. Later it is dust, bones and it is forgotten. The dead person also lives no more. The dead know nothing at all, their hatred and love are gone... they are living no more. Dying is not a separation between two substances, matter and spirit, material remains and a soul... No, it was separated from all spheres of life. Our time is out of here, we do not follow the clock, we abandon our organism, we abandon our conscious life here, also our reasoning, our place in our family, in the state, in society, we do not speak our language any more, we do not create any art, we no longer come into court, we have no more moral life and we also do not participate in religion – the elder, who dies, is no longer an elder. The whole of our life here we have let go. Jesus names that the moment in which you shall be lacking everything.

But besides this very specific Scriptural view of the visible facts, it suggests to us the even more real facts of this world, where science has no role, namely, the realm of the dead, the occult world.

Lazarus is borne by the angels to the realm of the dead to the place where it is good. To lie in the bosom of Abraham, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that was the hope of the Israelite, that is what he named Paradise in Sheol. When Jesus says: Today you shall be with me in Paradise, today with father Abraham, then the murderer understood that very well. Strangely, he, the robber, poor child of Abraham, also there? Even a crucified, a cursed one, and still today preserved in eternal life!

Now it does not say there: Lazarus’ soul or spirit, but says: he arrived there. Let us now take that as really so. Lazarus is there exactly the same Lazarus as here – only the material body, Lazarus as body, as a living soul existing in the full miserable life, that he has left behind him.

That is now dead soul, but here in the heavenly paradise, he is, what Paul calls “naked,” he is not covered with a body. Nevertheless as a naked, unclothed man Lazarus has favour with Abraham. He has there also hands, feet, fingers, just like the rich man in pain. That seems very strange to us, but it is yet again wholly in the sphere of Scripture. God and the angels have no substance, but they still have a shape in the Bible, and it says nowhere that this is “only figurative.” That having shape and form is exclusively a privilege of substance, and that “spirit” is something that we should think of as formless, is another pagan philosophy intruding into our Christian thinking.²⁹

Well now, that Lazarus, who earlier lived in that human material clothing as living soul, that inner man Lazarus, who had earlier lain at the door of the rich – and now he was with Abraham without /44/ matter, as a dead person who shall at some time rise again and nevertheless now already has eternal life.

²⁹ We confuse this simple Scripture faith and not with speculation all sorts of constructions, which are a philosophical *image* of God. See: A Janse. Beeldendienst and Schriftgeloof, **De Reformatie** 17 (1936-37) no. 4, 23 October 1936, p. 27.

When we read in Paul, that his outer man was corrupt, then that is his health, his eyes, his hearing, his physical strength. And the inner man ... that is Paul, who works with those weak eyes; and this is already stronger, more hopeful in God, all the more joyful in the midst of persecution. But that is not consciousness – no, that is Paul, as he with his whole heart and with his whole soul and his whole conscience and with all his strength loves God and is zealous for His service in all things. But this is not a “soul,” but the whole Paul, who shortly will be unclothed [of the body].

The inside man is also very concrete. When we deal with someone regularly, then we know him and talk with him, mainly engaging with him “according to the inward man.” The external, the material, often plays a very minor role. Yet it is much too poor to say: those mortal remains, the mammalian physique, is buried. Because the clothing that was laid aside, for the bereaved, is still him. Piety and mourning do not say: it is merely dust. And it has been much too poor to say: my soul comes to Abraham or to Jesus, because you come there yourself, with the same qualities we recognise now in each other as internal people. The Scripture says nothing about “souls” in the afterlife.³⁰

It is much richer. Not: Abraham’s soul met Lazarus’ soul, but the “unclothed” Abraham received Lazarus into Sheol, and comforted him after all his suffering on earth. It is not: Jesus bought my “immortal soul,” but: He bought me, my person – He will take to Himself me as an undressed man, after the inward man. Being with the Lord Jesus is to me even more than being with Father Abraham – although the one does not exclude the other. They will also come from the north to sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, says the Lord. Then those from the Netherlands will also sit with Abraham. And there shall be many who come.

And at some time God will raise up the seed that is sown. The dead will arise. Abraham will come out of his grave. Sheol (Hades) will give up the dead again. And the righteous – just as God created them, but now filled with the Holy Spirit, will go into eternal life and the wicked shall go away into eternal pain.

Losing the soul for Jesus’ sake

Whoever stands before the choice, just like James the brother of John, who had his head cut off, whether he must deny Jesus, who /45/can better lose his body, better be rejected as himself as living soul out of all spheres of life, than that he clings onto himself, by denying Jesus. For having his head cut off is... to be given a passage to eternal life with the Lord. The previously distinguished life of James, that the enemies may not kill. Do not fear those who can cut off your head, who can kill the body, but who were not able to kill this true life. They can not kill “the soul” of James. Here “kill the soul” stands over against “kill the body.” People often look here for the Greek distinction of

³⁰ If from more detailed exegesis of Matthew 10:26 and Revelation 6:9 this might be the case, then it still does not mean the higher *part* of a man (“soul”) but there is mention of Abraham himself, Lazarus himself – as dead people. Cf. Matthew 10:29: lose his soul and Luke 9:24: lose themselves – in both cases it signifies to be killed. And over against that it says: keeps his soul, that is himself, in that martyrdom.

body-soul, matter-spirit. But that they may not do, because matter, body, is already dead in that definition. "Soul" also cannot stand here for a neutral general humanness, because then every murderer who is to be executed, say can: you can kill my body but can do nothing to my immortal soul.

On the contrary, the text speaks further: rather fear God more, who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. If we consider "soul" to be the inward man to whom God promises eternal life, so here as a pardoned interior person, who from day to day comes closer to the glory of eternal life with the Lord... then I believe that we come closer to this passage of Scripture.

Then it is very really spoken and then applies to the joy of the disciples of Jesus and not for all mankind. It is surely no appeal for martyrs about an "immortal soul," but a guarantee that God gives them eternal life, that nobody will snatch them out His hand. Or to say this in the words of Paul: that through laying down the outward man he shall come according to the inward man to be with the Lord.

The spirit of man

Finally now something about "spirit." The person is living soul and has spirit according to the Scriptures. The spirit is called *ruah, pneuma*, that is, wind.

Just as the wind exercises force, so too the spirit. And the working of the spirit is really visible here.

A sunken spirit – that is a man sitting hunched over.

A lively spirit – then the spirit is there in the eyes.

The difference between soul and spirit you know best, when you compare the words soulful and spirited.

The Holy Spirit and the angels are spirits, who are all called "he." They are persons. The human spirit is never addressed as a person.

Therefore the assumption is not too risky, that the spirit, which a man has, is nothing other than a power, a "wind" that God has given him, and which returns to God when he dies.³¹ Our spirit is nowhere named as a person, we can also not be two people. The formulation: I am a living soul, governed by a spirit that is my own self, that is the formulation of the Stoics, for example, from /46/ Marcus Aurelius, which does not comport with Scripture, unless we start with that formulation and then prove it with texts. Then it can be done. In this manner, we can "prove" the tripartite body, soul, spirit with texts. Then, each heretic has his text for **his** formulation.

Those who read the Scriptures simply and open there eyes for what is around them, who see living souls who are created in the image of God, those who are sunken or lively in spirit, who have a physical material mode of existence in every sphere of life, which are clothed in that, who also deal with our inner

³¹ Spirit here is therefore quite different from soul in all meanings.

man, that breathe their last and are buried, and who according to the Word of God are borne by angels in their inner man to be with the Lord; now naked, waiting until he again will be covered by the new body.

Internal-external are related to each other here not as spirit and matter, for the body is not in the least “just matter,” there is much more than matter to a living organism. And the inner man is not the same as his “spirit”, it is much more; he is him himself. What the man leaves behind – he can lose his arm, he could lose his conscious, he can breathe his last, his blood can flow away, his heart can collapse, he could lose his life, he can totally lose his material organization and his existence as a living soul and become a “dead soul” – nevertheless, he remains in existence, nevertheless he is with Father Abraham, or in pain, nevertheless he has fingers and thirst, and he thinks of his earlier life on Earth and of his brothers.

Thus says the Scripture – in a great wealth of data, we respectfully have to accept, even though it is difficult to understand all together and be encapsulated in a structure in which everything is resolved. Who can grasp and explain even a point in God’s rich and manifold wisdom in the creation? Here it is:

The works of the Lord are very great.