

Of Idols and Creatures



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We know that an idol (εἰδωλον) is nothing in the world. *1 Corinthians 8:4*

God's invisible things, both his eternal power and divinity, were understood and recognised from the creatures. *Romans 1:20*

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Preface

Circumstances have caused the publication of this book to be greatly delayed. It is quite something to find ourselves privileged to openly take a stand on God's Word against ages old traditions of philosophy and psychology.

Simple Bible believers, who live by the Word, shall find little that is "new" in this book. It is not directed against their conceptions. Not even though they always have formulated the Scriptural truth in accepted philosophical terms such as for example "immortal soul." In the end it does not come down to just a word.

Yet everywhere where the newer "personality cult" or the "old fashioned" mysticism clings to these terms, our duty is irreconcilable battle.

The Author

Biggekerke, 16 April 1938

Introduction

The immediate occasion for the writing of this work was the fact that in the literature of our time, people frequently come across a certain veneration for the "personality,"¹ or for a "Higher Self,"² the thing was considered to be the "kernel" or the "essence" and the "central controller" of the person. The person is then not only someone who refers to himself as "I" (which was also named **he** and **you**) but he **has** then a "Self" deep inside himself. Now there is very certainly an "inner" and an "outer" side to the person. In the Holy Scripture the "heart" is indicated every time as central to the "living soul." A single "thought of the heart" in an unpleasant situation, can make the heart beat faster and the blood rise to the cheeks. The Holy Scripture speaks a great deal about the "heart, that is very deep and out of which are the issues of life." But the Scriptures say nothing about a "Self" dwelling in a person. The Scriptures do indeed say of the spirit of a person, which is in him – and we too speak in daily life of "fortitude," a great spirit, a child who has spirit. People also speak

¹ [See also A Janse. Werk maken van z'n persoon(-lijkheid). *Gereformeerd Schoolblad* (3) 1980.]

² [Janse frequently uses the term "Ik" which can be translated as I, self or ego. I have used Self or Ego (capitalised) to indicate this.]

about something, that is **in** the person and that undoubtedly is to be experienced, although it is invisible. We as well as the Holy Scriptures sharply distinguish “spirit” from “soul.” Compare: spirited, soulful, a great spirit, a good soul.

My objection against the terms mentioned above is not that they speak of an “inside” and of a “centre” and of “spirit” and of “heart” and of “soul.” It is truly very necessary, that /8/ we learn to use these terms accurately and that in this we learn to understand the Scriptures, where they speak about the person and about the invisible things in people. My objection is rather that a terminology is introduced into our Christian literature (which steadily distances itself from the Scriptures) and that steadily comes closer to the use made of Scripture by the spirit of the age.

The Holy Scripture never speaks about an “essence” of things, that should be thought of as a “formative” law-giving principle “in” or “behind” the creature (just as we see it) for philosophy.

The Holy Scripture knows nothing of a “higher Self” of persons, that by nature would be more pious and closer to God than the person as we see them before us. The Holy Scriptures speak nowhere about a hidden kernel in the person, which would be his most real existence – and which was named as “formative power” of his so-called “lower life” and as the central Self, as lawgiver, controller or restorer of his bodily life.

That this “Self” was reborn and then sins no more,³ and that this “Self” would be immortal in his “essence” and that this Ego-point in me should be closer to God than my hand or foot, may well agree with a certain philosophy of the world, but not with the Scriptures.

At no time do the Scriptures use the term “the immortal soul.” Only twice was the word “immortal” used of people and then both times it concerns “the mortal” that shall **put on** immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53-54). The Scripture knows nothing of something that is “immortal” of itself by nature. It was said correctly of God, that he alone has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16).

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That the person after his death continues to exist among the dead as “he,” as the same person as earlier, is not dependent in the Scriptures on the doctrine of a deep essence-kernel in the person, which must be “accepted” by our thinking.

³ See for Romans 7:17, Dr J A C van Leeuwen. **De brief aan de Romeinen**. Korte Verklaring, p. 128. J H Kok, Kampen, 1939.

“God, virtue and immortality” were things which, according to Kant, people with “practical Reason” must “accept.” This is how these things lost all foundation in modern consciousness.

In the Holy Scriptures the objects of faith are really and actually noticeable, only if we have eyes to see them. They are not things which people must “accept” that they exist.

Those who believe the Scriptures have no need of the meagre abstract postulates of the so-called “practical Reason.” They recognise these as empty images, as imaginations of the heart, as idols, even though they bear the names of God, virtue and immortality.

The same goes for “Personality,” a “higher Self” and “immortal soul” and “essence” of persons.

Whoever looks at the real person standing before him – whoever takes someone by the arm, whoever studies a living soul, just as God has created him, also in his psychic life; whoever researches the creature visible before his eyes - has no need of the empty speculations about the above-named things, which people must “accept.” Neither the Scriptures, nor feeling-in-the-light-of-Scripture, have anything to say about that practice.

When now someone does his uttermost best to “develop” this “kernel” through a self-improvement course with personality-building, then he is busy with an illusion, with something that does not exist. And if he then thinks that once that “Thing in him” has become great and strong, it will then entirely control and elevate him and he shall succeed in business and that “thing in him” also shall support him in his sickness and can even work miracle healings /10/ - or as some think, that the experiences of an “immortal soul” gives him a basis for blessedness – in a word, as he openly or in silence places his trust on that “Self” in him, on the mysterious person-power, then he is busy venerating this idol of thought, this imagination.

But then that Sovereign “Self,” that must control the “lower life as of out of a central observation-post” in him, has at the same time become a genuine idol [Greek εἰδωλον, Latin Idolum]. And his veneration for that Self-image is then pure “idolatry,” idolatrous imagination.

That this idolatry can also make an impact among Christians is principally to be attributed to synthesis, to the amalgamation with Scriptural thought of all sorts of fleshly so-called “scientific” wisdom of this world. Tradition perpetuates these concepts among the people. Throughout the whole of church history this synthesis fills the same role as we find in ancient Israel with the service of Yahweh on the religious “high places” of Bethel and elsewhere. The service of Yahweh in the high places formed the transition to the service of Baal, Astarte and Moloch. All kinds of religiosity

around the “immortal soul,” “for eternity,” – all sorts of apparently Christian terms such as Kant’s: God, virtue and immortality, lead imperceptibly away from Scripture and from the reality of God’s revelation to the religiosity of the world. So for many the transition to worldly idolatrous religiosity, that venerates its idols, has been made easy.

The above-mentioned “personality image” is one of the idols. In our day it comes again very strongly to the fore, also in connection with the spirit of the age, which again loves the mystery and again awakes the religiosity of people and which serves the “Great Personality of the Leader”⁴ as if it were truly a god.

When we go to these “high places” and speak religiously about the “personality” which “with God’s help”! must be developed /11/ - or of the “immortal soul,” on the “experience” of which our fate for eternity is totally dependent, or of a reborn Centre, a “Self-point” in us, that cannot sin – then this service on the high places is the cause that a subsequent generation will serve the gods of this age wholeheartedly and openly.

This publication wants to call for conversion from the veneration of idols.

God rules over our lives not through such a mysterious Person-kernel, but he rules the concretely given persons, just as the Scripture teaches us to see them: as His creatures, standing in a great diversity of relationships and things. He strengthens us or strikes us down. He lifts us up or humbles us. He makes us prosper in business or decreases our incomes. He heals us in sickness or allows our lives to come to an end. He is the Sovereign and we stand as creatures bang smack in the middle of the visible, real, existing creation, in the place where He has now brought us – and under the laws of God, which are over all.

God gives us also in everything our specific task. And belonging to that is the call that we should research all His great works under the sun. The creation is for us like a great book, within which all the creatures are letters. Well now, here is also the specific task of science. Science must do what God has appointed for it. And that is: to research God’s works under the sun, to His praise, Ecclesiastes 2:26, 3:10-11, 5:17 and 8:16-17.

There is still a great deal outside its terrain, which God has kept concealed from science. So for example the world of the angels, and of the dead; the very great, and the especially small. When

⁴ [Presumably Janse is referring here to the Nazi “Führer Principle” with the adulation of Hitler, and the personality cult of Lenin and Stalin.]

science researches creatures, insofar as God has granted them as “givens” for science – then it is precisely in its place. That is not “remaining hanging in abundance”⁵ but it is obedience.

Also in our practical life we must be obedient in this. /12/ We must accept the people and the things, as God causes them to exist, as “creatures” in our environment, and as He speaks about them in His word. And then we must not attempt to be wiser than people ought to be. Thus no “postulates,” which will reach beyond Scripture and experience for the “true essence” of the “most central part” that would be the sovereign in a person, and that ought to be experienced as mystery.

Whoever venerates an idol, that does not exist, feeds his soul with ash (Isaiah 44:20).

No, it is far worse, for behind the idol stands the world of spiritual wickedness in the air, of the principalities of this age, who serve darkness.

Finally the Israelites, when they ran after the dumb idols with religious zeal, have served devils.

And so it can be, that those who hold in honour the “Self,” the “Ego” also the “sinless regenerate Self,” the Personality, the “soul,” that “Essence” of humanity, and who describe that concept-thing (although not much is able to be written about it!) and “develop” it in a course... so it can be, that with that they are busy giving service to the spirit of this age and showing reverence to it, without even perceiving it.

This service is due to our God, that we research everything which He has given us under the sun to research, concerning all creatures... and there is so much to say about them, that there is no end to the science! Ecclesiastes 3:11 and 8:17.

And this honour must be given to God, because He is the Sovereign. He is the Lord and He inclines the hearts of kings like water courses [Proverbs 21:1].

Will a people who know Christ, then honour the “Ego” of an office-bearer, the “Personality-kernel” of the king, as if this something was the “lawgiver” of the king’s deeds? Shall a people, that is named after Christ, then worship a **nothing**?

The heathen have, when their expectation was disappointed, /13/ thrown away their images “for the moles and the bats.” [Isaiah 2:20] So the learned world of our time will throw away the whole particular personality-Self-culture so as to devote themselves with all strength to concrete human

⁵ [“blijven hangen in de veelheid.” (quotes in the original). This phrase may have had significance for the debates of the time, but is now obscure.]

powers, which really exist, and place the whole of life under the demands of their idol of the supreme Idea of the State. We can then hear them decrying their old “ideologies.” But their new gods are nothing better.

In Israel the “high places” for Yahweh were the intermediate forms for the high places of Baal and Astarte – and their service brought Israel under the power of Nebuchadnezzar, before whose State Image everything bowed in the valley of Dura; except then the pious friends of Daniel.

In our time the “pious” self-culture is “with God’s help” a transitional form to the worship of the new gods of this age. Also although people mean it completely differently, it can still be a preparation for the service of the great “Person,” the “Lawless One,” whose coming is to betray the whole of Christianity; hence then to betray the “remnant of the chosen,” that have treasured God’s Word in the hour of the temptation, which shall come over the whole world. And that treasuring of the Word is also necessary for the Christians, although they dedicate themselves to science.

Should anyone think that it will not come to that, with the veneration of Personality, then I could point him among others to the work **Healing through the Spirit**.⁶ Roose says of it, among other things, “This book summons us to deal seriously with Christianity, the spiritual power.”

This work proceeds on the basis that on the one hand the person stands under laws, but in his deep Personality-kernel he is **free**, the person is a “free child of his spirit,” a /14/ “free creation of the spirit.” There is “a portion of God in humanity and nature,” and that is the spirit. There is also certainly even “a message from God out of the divine consciousness to the human,” which reveals itself through “physical rhythm,” **through the body**. But the rule is, that the person “comes into contact with the spirit of God” (note well the small “s”) “in the very innermost sanctity of the human personality.”

No wonder that the “advance of psychology” in this book was welcomed as “the approach to God himself”! And this psychology we must “use consciously as one of God’s sacraments for daily life.”

“There is **something** in each person, that has direct companionship with the infinite and perfect spirit of God, and in that respect the person himself is spirit, with a part of his being that is indefinable and that is **free**, so that nothing can be predicted about it.” (p. 26)

⁶ **Genezing door den Geest**, by Malcolm Spencer and H W Workman. Translated by Ir. P Telder. Amsterdam: H J Paris, 1934. See the rather favourable review by Dr J C R Roose in *Algemeen Weekblad voor Christendom en Cultuur*. [Translation of **Spiritual Healing: a critical appreciation**. Malcolm Spencer and Herbert William Workman. London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1934.]

This internal spirit of each person is “the seed of perfection” of the whole person, also of his body.

“God planted the seed through the creation in each individual.”

“He renewed this seed through the incarnation of Christ, on which the activity of the Holy Spirit is based.”

The actual “internal” was developed in each person, progressively... and the spirit can in a number of cases of illness, so work that the spirit heals the body.

But then people must also “have faith in the powers of the spirit.”

So much for the book by Spencer.

This is now not just any old book by a miracle healer. No, it is the result of a “round table conference” in England, where doctors, theologians, and practicing spiritual healers came together. Many cases of healing through “faith,” prayer, meditation, laying on of hands, anointing and so on were discussed there and the account of these /15/ can be found in the so-called “critical evaluation” in the above-mentioned book.

According to Dr Roose people one is very deeply impressed when one discovers the voids in our Christian life and the perspectives which are possible.

I read in my Bible, that there “signs” happen for the confirmation of the **Word**. But if here signs are ascertained, actual healings through **this spirit** of which there is mention here, then they are **not** signs which confirm the **Word of God**, but of false prophets.

The Lord has prophesied for His church, that there will arise **many** false prophets and that they shall perform great signs and that they shall deceive many, even many Christians. Yes, if God did not watch over them even the elect would also be deceived by the signs. Everything points to the fact that a Christianity no longer fastened to the Word turns its interest to the world of the occult, to “unconscious” powers of the soul and a deep personality-kernel and to unknown powers of spirits.

We must certainly be blind not to be able to notice the dangers here.

Also among “Calvinists” can people sometimes read these in-vogue words and modern presentations in psychology and in philosophical fields. As soon as something was written among

us about psychological questions or when an author approaches things psychologically, it often becomes clear, how weak our defence is against the personality cult and its training.

Say that someone has an incurable illness. He might become aware of a case of recovery of a neighbour through strength of personality (his own or someone else's). What shall then restrain him from placing the proof of the power of his own "Personality" kernel on to an appeal to a powerful Personality?

Should people just remain sick?

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No, they may pray that in the way of the Lord they may recover just as thousands have been healed by God in the same way and have thanked Him.

Those who trust in Him shall not be ashamed. If it be His will, however, for them to be given a lengthy illness, then God's child who is redeemed by Christ's blood from the eternal destruction, will do nothing other than patiently await the day that he shall be with the Lord. He shall not, for the sake of his life, gladly go to false gods and to the idols of this world, behind which the devils work, and the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

But the simple fact that people like Spencer dare to name the name of Christ, makes them appear as "angels of light." Yet the Lord has warned us about them.

Let us then banish everything from the circle of Christians, except that which God's Word has preserved for us. We must learn to speak differently about everything which except for terminology is the same as the things of this spirit. We must here speak just as the Scriptures do. In that way we lighten the struggle of our sick brothers and sisters, who threaten to be tempted through spiritual healers of this spirit. And we may restrain weak characters from training their "personality kernel" in a personality development course. And may we also still help many, who are always so busy with an "immortal soul," that they do not even hear the Word of their God, neither His threats nor His promises. It is still always only that Word, that can make their souls blessed (that is the entire person) (James 1:21).

1. Creatures, and science about them

When people speak about the “essence” of things, then, generally they mean that there exists something “in” or “behind” or “above” that thing, which is the “reality,” or the “essential nature” of that thing.

Our everyday life does nothing with that “essence.” A tin can stands before me. What stands there is **this** tin can, of a certain size, with this shape, of a certain weight, my property, from this manufacturer, out of that country, bought for so much, used for this purpose and with a future like this. The can has many “numbers,” we can make many calculations with respect to it, and averages and proportions. Every hour of the day its temperature changes and through its expansion and contraction its size is constantly changing. Its place in space varies, rapidly with respect to the sun and with respect to the stars – above all its place often changes, by being taken from place to place with respect to its surroundings in the room.

There is nobody in the world who can know that actual thing there before me in all its relationships, let alone someone who is able to know everything at the same time on each hour of the day about this can.

There **is** also nobody, who can find out all the works that God has made, from the beginning to the end. Yes, even if a wise man said, that he would know it, he shall still not be able to find it out, not even about a simple tin can (Ecclesiastes 3:11 and 8:17).

The Holy Scriptures speaks very delightfully about the things, of plants and animals and people, of mountains and rivers, of each thing according to its kind (Genesis 1 and 2, Psalm 104). And also the Lord himself boasts in the magnitude of the ordinary things. The Lord speaks in Job 38-42 to His servant Job about snow, the east wind, thunder storms, stars, about the lion, about young ravens, wild asses, horses and rhinoceri, about the peacock’s feathers and about storks.

The special sciences stand even more so before a tremendously great richness of wisdom, of everything which can be known about the ordinary things, which we see before us every day and which we call “ordinary” things. As science with its means investigates these things and applies its understanding to the givens and their distinctions, then the genuine men of science are often in

rapture, then they relate the full wonders of them, then they praise what they saw and then they may sometimes forget to eat and drink when they go on speaking about them.

Now that thing, which is a part of the cosmos, a creature of God, that now stands before us, that is the reality for all practical people and also for the Holy Scripture and also for the special sciences. It is the **essential manner of existence**, with which the practical person and the man of science have to reckon. It is thus “in existence” through God’s providential ordinance. And in that thing speaks the eternal power of God, which sustains everything, and the Divine Majesty which stands there above it, so that no person in the world is to be excused as he regards the **creation** as the basis and praises the creation as divine glory. Romans 1:19-22.

Now it is possible that there is a proud attitude to life in this man of science. Namely that the man of special sciences, for example physics, says that **his** field encompasses everything. Or also, that only his field of science concerns the “reality” of things. This is foolishness. Whoever researches the tin of the can of the physical side /19/ and knows everything about this, still knows nothing about the can as an **object of human craft**, and also nothing of the **economic** value in money and also nothing of the “history” of this can.

But even when all fields of science join together with all their results, they have still found out nothing about God’s work in that thing. Even then was this science – supposing that it had achieved complete wisdom in its field, which is not even possible, then this science was still not an all-encompassing knowledge of the thing.

How God stands over against that thing – what he has done in that regard – and shall do – no science can discover. Science researches God’s **creation**, not God Himself in relation to this creature, and also the creation still only partially. Science cannot experiment on **heavenly** things, for example on the heavenly army host. It researches nothing about all the angels – evil and good – who find themselves in the streets of our cities and on our country roads and in the train and in the houses.

God gave science no task concerning this.

Further, there is the world of the realm of the dead (Sheol) and the “occult world,” which likewise is hidden from us. And the Lord has strongly forbidden His people even to attempt to seek to communicate there and to penetrate into such secrets.

Science must stick to its task in obedience to God's ordinances for it and to its field of research. It must therefore relinquish the illusion that it can encompass the whole cosmos and can know everything. Foolish intention.

In addition this is wholly irrational. Men of science must from time to time split their field into divisions, because the field becomes much too large for one person. Doctors no longer know /20/ all medical science about people – the one limits himself to the eye, another takes the ear, the other the skin... and each specialist complains again and again that he can no more keep up with the literature.

What is it that makes a person want to see the physical object before him from a somewhat “spiritual” height, and to seek something “in” or “behind” it, that then should be the “real” thing?

It cannot be because people wish to see the things as a **whole** – for a tin can always appears as a creature with a **unity**. And everything that I named above: number, measure, weight, temperature, price, skill, etc. is to be observed in that one thing. And a doctor has no need to compose a person out of ears, nose, eyes, head, muscles, psyche, temperament, character etc. etc.– for **the person never comes before science except as a unity, a creature, a living soul**, in which is everything that is to be studied.

In recent times in some scientific circles some people speak of “Ganzheit” [totality], that could be conceived thus: as if people again recognise, that each thing exists as a creature in its whole. Often among us there is sympathy for the “Totality Philosophy” from reaction against the sciences, which have lost sight of this unity.

Yet a viper sits there in the grass. For with “Totality Philosophy” the vitalistic and teleological nature-philosophy means a **mystical mysteriously hidden “essence”** of the thing, that governs all the rest of it and holds it together. A mysterious power (entelechy, or “Person,” or “Ego,” or “Goal,” or “Plan”) should then work and govern “in” the living soul, just as it is given there before us. And people can also seek that power behind the tin can and behind the whole world. So people then see something “**in**” or “**behind**” or “above” the creature that constitutes the “real,” the “essential,” of that thing. And that is called the “essence” of things which philosophy /21/ seeks for. And in that “essence” one sees then the “ground” and the “law” of the creature. So when people in recent days take the “Ganzheit,” as “totality,” as the whole creature, just as it stands there, then one intends essentially that this creature is a “law” unto **itself**, and “forms” itself. The mystical **interior**

“essence,” the idol, has then extended itself over the whole visible, tangible thing, that **as a whole** becomes “mystery” and “law.” The “totality” then becomes an “idol.”

The Holy Scriptures are not against science.

The Holy Scriptures praise very highly the wisdom of men in the form described above, when they research all God’s work.

Not only that of Adam, who gave names to the animals – and which he named with understanding of the matter – but also that of Bezaleel and Aholiab who were wise in artistic engraving (Exodus 31:3). The Scriptures speak of people brave in administration of justice (Exodus 18:21, 1 Kings 3:11). Further the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are full of the appreciation of wisdom. Wisdom was praised by Job, whereby people dig mines for silver and gold and iron (Job 28:1-12). Also although it is true that the person cannot find the Highest Wisdom from within his science (Job 28:12), yet human wisdom concerning God’s creation is highly regarded in the Scriptures. The wisdom of the prince of Tyre was also very much appreciated in Ezekiel 28:4: “So says the Lord to the King of Tyre: ‘full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.’” “You were in Eden” (the cultural world of Tyre) “and I had placed you there.” Ezekiel 28:12 and 14.

In the New Testament wisdom and understanding were even less rejected. The Lord only asks of us, that we shall serve Him with the whole of our understanding.

The understanding of God’s works, such as is undertaken in the fields of science, which research God’s works, is never called in the Holy Scriptures /22/ “fleshly understanding” or “wisdom of this world, which is foolishness to God.” For true knowledge of what God has given us to know – also the knowledge of Solomon’s ally Hiram and the knowledge of the seamen on the boat, which brought Paul to Rome, - were never condemned in Scripture.

No, those who in science and craft and practical life “have understanding as their kinsman” (Proverbs 7:4), were never therefore reprimanded.

2. **Fleshly science and idols**

Which people were then indicated in the Scriptures as people “**who are inflated by the understanding of the flesh**” (Colossians 2:18)?

In the letter to the Colossians Paul wrote against them, and they are also described there. They were those, who were carried away by false philosophy: people who imagine that the world of things, just as they appear to us, was not genuine; people who think that they must have the hidden as the genuine. People who train themselves to be “spiritual” people, separate from the “visible and sensible,” separate from the “unreal” world, such as is knowable for us – so as to penetrate into the “essence” that was there “in” or “behind” or “above.”

Through asceticism and fleeing from the world, through fasts and meditations in silence, they try to touch the “spiritual essence” of things. They think that these were real spiritual beings. As “spirit” they themselves then related to the world of the angels and so they walk in the service of angels, yet at the same time they walk according to “that which they have not seen,” in vain fantasies of their evil heart. Sin works in their religious “science,” it was “fleshly” science, vain (= empty, worthless) philosophy. They were puffed up by the understanding of the flesh. (I use “flesh” here in the sense in which it appears many times in the Scripture, namely as **sinful** human existence, that is in conflict with the Holy Spirit). Through their sinful “understanding” of things they elevate /24/ themselves above other people, because they think they have seen mysteries, have come close to the “**essence**” of things (cf. Colossians 2:8, 21-23). This science then was practised as religion, to the honour of God, yet Paul names it self-willed religion and as such **worth nothing**. “Christian” science, which occupies itself with such imaginings, finds its judgement here in the Scriptures.

God has given us so much to research, that we truly do not need to hunt for something else, for something that we “have not seen,” and something about which we should fantasise for ourselves. In this manner Christian science would become “arrogance fed by the understanding of the flesh.” And so the name of Christ would still be slandered by scientist, who have **certainly** seen God’s works, although they do not themselves fear God. There is a great deal lost when Christian science is busy with “idols” instead of God’s great works.

We should be twice as wary against the arrogance in modern philosophers. In order that their arrogance does not lead us also, from seeking to be great in the world, to this vain philosophy in a “Christ-like spirit,” to this gnosis “for the glory of God,” for that should be a fearsome thing.

This “understanding of the flesh” is according to the sinful heart of humans. It will **not submit itself under the law**, it does not ask about the task and compass/ambit of our knowledge, which God has established for it. In this it is actually set against the Supreme Sovereign, and against the Supreme Wisdom.

To know the thing as it presents itself to us as a creature of God in reality is below the dignity of the arrogant. He reckons that is only the exterior of things— it is not the “essence.”

According to the Scriptures the “essence” for us is nothing else than /25/ that which is given for us as the creation of God. The existence, the “real Essence,” the given creature in all its connections, that is the “essence.” There is still a great deal “in” or “behind” or “above” it, but the “essence,” that is the whole thing, such as it is lock, stock and barrel. The essence of that black horse with white feet is that black horse with white feet. There “in” the horse are the bowels. That animal lives. “In” that animal there is also feeling and will and observation of its master, but no horse “higher essence”. Above that horse is heaven – and above this creature is its Creator, but whatever there may be “in” and “behind” and “above” and “under” this animal, is **not** the “essence” of vain philosophy. The Holy Scriptures know of no creation “in” or “behind” or “above” the ordinary creation, which we then call “essence” which should stand closer to God than ordinary reality.

Philosophy which is “puffed up by the understanding of the flesh” speaks completely differently from the Scriptures.

This seeks always for the so-called “higher,” for something “divine” in the creation, for the “concealed,” that should then be **more** than what is revealed. The revealed was then more or less seen haughtily regarded as the “lower.” Just as in Colossians, also here false religion is at play. The “higher” is then “divine.” In any case it stands closer to “the divine,” and closer to “heaven.” Often this higher is an intermediate thing, a mediator. The person will still worship something and therefore seeks to elevate something “high” from the common creation and designate this sovereign as “divine,” so as thereby to come into contact with the deity. **Pan-theism** sees its god present “in” all things and in each common creature, for example, a stone, a stick, as the “reality” of it. Sometimes people say that God is the one “essence” of all things.

But among Christians especially **partial theism** has done very great evil. Then **a part** of the creature is honoured as god or divine, as “sovereign,” free from the law of God. /26/ One first views something of the actual creation as the “higher.” For example the spirit, the thinking, spiritual life, experience, the general form. These become “free,” **they are a law unto themselves** and the lawgiver over the “lower.” With that something divine was conferred on the “higher.” Then there comes quickly a religious aura around that word (so for example in “soul” and “experience” conceived as experience of the “soul”) and then the way quickly becomes free for hypostatizing of the higher, an illusion hanging in the air, above the creature. People began with the creature and ended with a vain image, with a “Thing” that God has not created as a thing.

3. Realism and Nominalism

Before we go further into discussion of the “higher” and “lower” of partial theism, we must say something about two important directions in the doctrine concerning knowing. Because there have been major disagreements in the course of time among those, who elevate the one part of the creation above the other, as something closer to the divine which must be the reality, the “essence.” One was about the question what that “essence” is and the other one was about whether or not that “essence” can be **known** by our thinking in terms of concepts. Two principal groups give contrasting answers for both questions. They are the **Realists** and the **Nominalists**.

These designations are borrowed from Mediaeval philosophy. We should pay attention to this, for **realist** means here almost the reverse of what people understand by realism these days. Realism in literary studies, for example, is in our days the restoration of the real concrete life, such as that is **represented** by the author. What is now the true **reality** of the things, the realistic author does not enquire after.

But in the Mediaeval conflict between philosophers it concerned precisely such an ideal “higher” reality.

The Realist and the Nominalist both saw “that specific horse” standing in front of the plough. They had no conflict about that, that this was a real horse. But the conflict broke out over the question of whether that was also the “real,” the “true” horse.

Strictly speaking both denied it.

The Realists said, no, **this** horse is not the real one. “The /28/ horse” considered as an idea or “form” which stood independently of this and other horses, as Idea-Thing, is in fact the real, and this horse is only a copy, an illusion of the horse.

They said, when we reason about “**the** horse” then we speak about the most real horse-being. And then I know the highest truth.

The Nominalist on the other hand said: When I say **the** horse, then I say a word, a name, nothing more (hence Nominalist, from *nomina*, names).

They said, the true essence, the true “Thing” is properly unknowable. What do we know of it? Realist reasoning about **the** horse as a species and **the** magnitude as an essence is verbiage. They were only names, attempting to express what (according to the Nominalists) was not to be known by any words, namely the foreign, unknown reality of that warm living black horse, but could only be “approximated” in the experience from afar with “true knowledge.”

And they said, a farmer has no use for “the” horse as a species. All that remains for us is the experience, the impression, which we get from that warm living black (“horse”) there in front of the plough. That **is** something, that **does** something.

Such knowledge through experience is the only “knowledge,” it is the true, experienced, approximated knowledge. And this knowledge the Nominalists then places over against the “dead works and concepts” of the Realists, who speak about “the” horse and “the” paw, “the” strength and “the” trust, in abstract.

The Realists thought to grasp in these words a higher reality– but the Nominalists assert that “living reality” only approximates the “true knowledge” from afar.

The **realist theology** believes it is able to describe the “essence” of God, through general form-schemas. The most inclusive general form was: absolute **being**. That had to be God! And if that stood firm logically, then it can also be proved, that God **is**. After all, the Being had to necessarily “be,” since this is given already in the concept.

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The realistic Scholastics (Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus) did not see eye to eye with the question of whether God is primarily “Reason” or “Will.” But they always commenced from abstract being.

These logical conclusions over concepts are certainly remote from the truth of Holy Scripture, which speaks of the living God, as He has revealed Himself to Adam and Noah and Abraham, and as He has dwelt among us in Christ and as this truly “Son of Man” is waited for expectantly by us “coming with the clouds.” And the Word of Truth is here exchanged for form schemas.

The **Nominalist theology**, however, neglects the Word of Truth just as much. They saw the “essence” of God, just as for that horse, as an alien reality only to be experienced, and distinguished this “true knowledge” very sharply from the “scholastic” knowledge in words and concepts.

Mostly the Nominalists valued certain Scholastic knowledge and they also attached “truth” to the concept-judgement – but the concepts did not give “proper” truth, which could only be experienced as “true knowledge” in a momentary connection with that foreign unknown reality.

The Nominalist could still appreciate the Word-communication of the Holy Scriptures as useful book-learning, and he could also accept the truth of these words – but the “true knowledge” was for him still something completely different.

With that he did just as much violence to the Holy Scriptures as the Realist. He could appreciate the truth of God only as pointing away to the to-be-experienced “real” contact with God.

It is naturally also very well possible, that Nominalists do not limit the experience-impression positivistically to hearing, seeing and tasting – but they also call “true knowledge” a lively impression that they get on hearing a name or a word. The word “spoke” then at that moment really as “impression” of the true reality, /30/ **not** otherwise expressible by direct words.

But also in “speaking” words the aim is not the truth, which is logically discerned and about which we may rely, but the “true knowledge” is one we can feel, which overwhelms one rather than being intellectually understood.

This conflict between Realists and Nominalists had nothing to do with a splintered scholastic distinction. This is clear from the fact that for many long centuries both movements have contended under new forms in almost every area of human knowing. Even today Realism and Nominalism battle each other under new forms. Also among those who have never heard anything about this debate among the learned, one sometimes finds very purely the realistic, but principally the nominalistic tendencies expressed.

What toothache is – so says the Nominalist from among the people – is only known by him who actually has a toothache. And even then it has already become only a vague memory. The genuine “knowledge” is the experience itself.

This sentence would be correct, if it were formulated like this: What the psychical condition (impression) is of having a toothache, is best felt by the person who has a toothache **now**. For “feeling” we may also read: having psychical awareness.

But the Nominalist relates this sentence also to the **distinctively logical** knowing of truth in respect to toothache and with respect to everything else. And that is decidedly incorrect.

In practice the man who has toothache wants only the specialist knowledge of the dentist and the nominalistic man of the people does not say, “Oh doctor, I have ‘true knowledge’ of it, but for you it is only book-learning and I count that for nothing.”

Nominalism that speaks so highly of “experiencing” the reality, is basically alienated from life.

The man who conceives justice as experiencing the feeling of justice, runs, when he gets into juridical difficulties, to... a lawyer, /31/ a person of comprehensive knowledge of the law. And the emotional type of pious person who gives little for the “words of the matter” because he says he “knows” the “matter of the words,” can still in serious life-moments very genuinely listen to the truth-communicating words of the minister. The Word hits him, then he as a rule turns things back to front again: the **truth** did not come to him in those **words**. But those words spoke to him and that speaking was the genuine thing – the word was not truth, but it became truth in his being hit.

So the expression “true knowledge” in this sense is a specifically nominalistic term. Just listen to how the typical Nominalist from the people asks another whether he also has “knowledge” of this. That is not always pride on the part of the questioner. Mostly he must even confess, that he alas is unable to remember it... and that he now must live on only the thin memory of the experience, hoping for a renewed contact with “reality.” Hence the complaint about “deadness.” The memory of an experience is poor as well and offers much too little for practical living, which demands a firm line and wisdom.

The Nominalists of every school struggle with this difficulty, especially in the life of faith. One cannot do without “the words of the matter.” Therefore Scholastic book-learning must be taught. “Keep on force-feeding the Catechism, Master, perhaps it may become true knowledge one day!” But this attitude brings with the increase of learned words also an increasing inflation of concepts – so decreasing the net effect. Nominalism cannot appreciate the truth, but seeks a truth behind or above the truth in experience, the sensation, the feeling, the emotions (how this experience is then understood, is neither here nor there) therefore it gets into peril.

In this peril the Nominalist scouts again and again for certainties.

There are examples of people who in this struggle /32/ have turned themselves away from Nominalism. So we see in Luther the Nominalistic tendencies already weaken, the more he came to believe the truth of the Holy Scripture as direct truth.

But there are also examples of Nominalists who in this peril have clutched at the concepts, at the “words of the matter,” like drowning people clutching at straws. They “know” all right, that they are only clutching at straws, but one cannot do without concepts and therefore they suddenly start making much work of “the doctrine,” despite their principal antipathy towards concepts.

This nominalistic zeal for concepts can very much look like the realistic veneration for forms. Yet there is a principal difference. The extreme realism of Plato finally honoured not the concept, but the world of the objective “forms,” imagined as realistic, of which the concepts are the keys. Plato has elevated these “forms” to independently existing “law.” “The horse” is then as form taken to be independent, like the “horseness,” separate from the created world, and thus being **above** the creature. Yet it is the “form” which God gives **to** the creature: “above” the creature is God only. The **nominalistic** concept-admirers on the other hand see only the concept itself – the “doctrine” is according to them not the key to an actual firm knowledge of an objective reality outside the person, but a very necessary “concept stall” which alas cannot be dispensed with. In this spirit strongly-outspoken Nominalists have often processed a whole quantity of traditional knowledge of **realistic scholastic** origin to make these words and concepts of realistic origin into a “living” concept-reality, which they then zealously promoted with nominalistic fire. Over against the consistent nominalistic direction, which attacks all certainties, they had then still an (apparent) firm ground in this “experience” doctrine of realistic origin. So in the 18th century the men of /33/ feeling among the Reformed zealously promoted the form-schemas of Aristotle (!) so as to combat with these **Descartes**– whom they did not like on account of his nominalistic consequences for the concept of truth. In this way we can find among various Christian streams today⁷ a nominalistic subjectivistic life-attitude is paired with an obstinate making of ideas and concepts to real “higher truths.” Also in epistemology the certainty-seeking Nominalism lapses again and again into the acceptance of disguised realistic elements, that is to say, for **concepts**, which are taken over from the realistic tradition yet without the realistic background – nevertheless Nominalism keeps on setting the pace.

In the historical section of his book, **Calvinism and the Reformation of Philosophy**, Prof. Vollenhoven gives a sharp analysis of the realistic and nominalistic motifs, which have caused difficulties in the church and the church-“fathers” and the reformers through the centuries. In the systematic section he presents a design for a Calvinistic epistemology, **which will deal radically with both realism and nominalism.**⁸

⁷ [Janse named three streams of Christianity: Ethicals, Moderns and Reformed.]

⁸ See also Herman Dooyeweerd. **De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee**. Amsterdam: H J Paris, 1935. Book 2, Part 2, The problem of knowledge.

He sees “knowing” as grasping **truth** about “something” that can be known (through your own research or through reliable communication of truth through others).

God gave us the knowing function so we could know the truth, so that we, provided that we are in obedience to His laws for thought, can function as logically distinguishing **subject** (logical subject-function of the person). And also He makes the things knowable for us through His “laws,” so that they can function as logical **object** (logical object-function of the thing). Prof. Vollenhoven sees /34/ in this logical subject-function only one of the many subject-functions of the person. When he functions as observer of a piece of green glass, then he is active as a **psychical** subject and to that corresponds the fact that the form and the colour of the glass functions as psychical object (psychical object-function of glass, form, colour!). When the judge brings a piece of **stolen** glass to the table, then he acts as a juridical subject and the glass enters the issue as a juridical **object**.

In these cases the whole person is present, but if we wish to distinguish purely what he does, then we can see him function in turn as observing (psychical) subject or as logical or as juridical subject in the different law-spheres, for which God posits⁹ the “law.” He can then furthermore function among others as biotic subject (feeling), as social subject (in the manners of the human community), as ethical subject (friend), as religious subject (believer, praying person).

Regardless of how people now judge this terminology, this is certainly obvious, that in this epistemology the certainty of our knowledge rests on the law of God on **two** sides. Just as the law of God is the presupposition of the course of the planets, so it is that also for all knowing functions and for the knowability of things, which God has given to us to know in His sovereign providence.

Everything now hinges on whether the Law of God is **firm** according to both sides, i.e. with respect to the knowing function and its knowability. In daily life we depend on this just as firmly, as much as we depend on the course of the sun and the validity of the laws of nature.

That we can depend firmly on day and night, summer and winter, on the ordinances of the heavens in general, is because God has promised this stability to Noah, Genesis 8:22-9:17.

⁹ [Janse has “waarvoor God ‘de wet’ stelt.” This seems to reflect Vollenhoven's technical use of the term “stellen” for God's action in establishing the law as the boundary between God and the creation. For instance, Vollenhoven says in his *Isagoge*: “Deze grens nu is de wet Gods, door God blijvend aan het geschapene gesteld. Want al wie souverain aan de kosmos wetten geeft and deze handhaaft is God, daarentegen is al het geschapene aan zijn wetten onderworpen.” *Isagoogè Philosophiae*, p. 13, para. 13. The published English translation uses “posited” for this term: “Now, this demarcation is the law of God, which is permanently posited by God for that which is created. For the only being who sovereignly gives laws to the cosmos and maintains them is God; on the other hand, all that which is created is subjected to his laws.” *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 15.]

And because we may depend firmly (provided that it is correctly exercised) on the knowing function and on the firm knowability of things, therefore we may also depend on the calendar and natural science.

But even firmer still than the ordinances of the heavens, even more firmly /35/ than the firmness of “nature,” correctly praised by the modern natural sciences, is the Covenant of the Lord with His people in Christ. And just as we now depend intuitively on the fact that in God’s fixed laws for nature also belong certainties for our knowledge (otherwise neither calendar nor science would be possible) so the simple pious folk depend on it that the knowledge concerning the covenant communicated in Holy Scripture and the promised leading of the Holy Spirit into all **truth**, shall correspond with the certainties of God’s covenant. Otherwise living by the Scriptures as truth would not be possible for them.

Loving God with the whole of your understanding – Nominalists say, that here a nominalistic understanding (“the true understanding”) is intended, but many simple believers dare to accept the Scriptures with their ordinary understanding just as firmly as the communications of the calendar and natural science. Yes, on second thoughts, the certainty of God’s Word appears to be the basis of that certainty with respect to all the rest. In this way they can resist the criticism and scepticism and the defeatism of worldly wisdom. That they could do that, was the fruit of the faith that the Holy Spirit works in them. It is revealed to children. Once when the Lord Jesus foretold His resurrection, then the disciples said to one another: What would that mean, rise from the dead? They thought it a real “problem.” Mark 9:10. Yet a child could understand it, for it means simply: rising again from the grave, where people would lay His dead body.

So the greatest miracles of God, the depths of wisdom and knowledge of God are told simply in unequivocal words. God’s unsearchable judgements and inscrutable ways were recounted by Paul in Romans 11 (cf. vs 33).¹⁰ Oh yes, there is continuing revelation of God and again and again broader communication of God’s Covenant secrets, certainly there is again appearances of heavenly persons – thus from out of a world which God has not made knowable for us through research – but /36/ this hidden world is something totally different to the nominalistic “proper unknown world” which only would be known as impression-on-our-knowing, as “true knowledge,” as long as this “impression” lasts.

These heavenly personages speak nowhere nominalistically of “true knowledge” – they speak common humanlike words, as we all do in ordinary life, such as we depend on. And nowhere do the

¹⁰ [The original text cites inaccurately Romans 12.]

inspired writers, who saw these heavenly sights, say: Oh Lord, how might I just once experience the “correct” impression of them.

In the Holy Scripture the faithfulness and veracity of God are a guarantee that what He says concerning His Covenant is **true**.

Nominalism makes God’s trustworthy spoken Word, that we have in the Bible and that never lets anyone down, into a word that first must become true, as for instance Karl Barth holds.¹¹ But the truth of God does not become true through the grace of its reality¹² of that in our “perception,”¹³ NO, the truth of God is not even absent from the long series of letters, black on white, in our Bibles. The truth stands there communicated in many languages – it is true what is written there and he, who hardens his heart and closes his eyes and ears, has nevertheless heard the truth of God. The communion of the congregation with Christ around his table is not taken away for him, who also eats at the table of devils. 1 Corinthians 10:21. And the Christian, who becomes “one flesh” with a prostitute, takes the “members of Christ” and makes them members of a prostitute. 1 Corinthians 6:15. Paul does not say there that it is impossible, but that it is not permitted and disgraceful.

God is for the godless not the Unknown, yet the God who has spoken to him, but whose word is rejected, and whose holiness is trampled upon by him.

Karl Barth understands the name **Yahweh** as a refusal to mention a name. The Realists made it into “the Being,” the highest unmoved Being. But the whole of Holy Scripture witnesses to this Name as that of the Faithful and True, /37/ who guarantees the covenant with Abraham, even more than that with Noah. That means, that the things of the Word of the Covenant (both the blessings as much as the curses of the Covenant, both robbed again of power by Karl Barth, because he takes them together dialectically) are things which are more reliable than the “laws of nature,” justly lauded by natural science as fixed! That means that the Bible as communication of truth is far more reliable than the calendar.

It is not a mystical “essence” of things, that must be known by the light of the Holy Scriptures but what must be known is the **truth** about God’s creation and about Himself in His revelation.

¹¹ [Janse published a number of works critical of Karl Barth. These were collected and published as A. Janse over Karl Barth. **Kampen: Uitgeverij Van den Berg, 1987**. “A. Janse saw Barth so caught up in a total ‘de-certainty’ movement, what with the ‘lightning strike’ of transcendence, that all certainty was undermined.” **Gerrit Cornelis Berkouwer**. A half century of theology: movements and motives. **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977, p. 45.**]

¹² [Janse uses the term “Wirklichkeit.”]

¹³ [Janse uses the term “Erkenntnis.”]

4. “Higher” and “Lower” in the creature

We saw in our first chapter the delineated, but nonetheless formidable much-embracing task of science – to research God’s great works “under the sun.”

We saw in chapter 2, how fleshly science with religious intentions “entered into that which it had not seen.” We thereby remarked how these religious motives frequently also have charmed the thinking of Christians, so that **partial theism** is not an unknown phenomenon in church history. It is there just as common as the service in the high places in Israel’s history. And also here the veneration for the “higher” easily led to worship of what does not exist, of the idol.

In the third chapter we gave some principal lines for the understanding of two important streams with respect to knowing, namely Realism and Nominalism. The Realist elevates the general form “horseness” to the higher “essence,” that he thinks he knows conceptually – the Nominalist wishes to “experience” the “reality.” He thinks therein to feel an **unknowable** mystery in the moments of “true knowledge,” while the “dead scholastic concept” considered as a necessary evil provided practical service. Among the Nominalists there is still a difference between those who in practice and in theory conscientiously stuck to the “experience,” the feeling – and those who reverence greatly “scholastic” knowledge as “a necessary conceptual apparatus.” We saw how both groups deviate from /39/ the simple Word of God, that enables us to know clearly the **truth** concerning the **creature**.

Now we have a closer look at the distinction of “higher” and “lower,” that people mostly identify with “internal” and “external.” These distinctions often did service to indicate something in the creature as “essence,” as being the “basis” or the “law” of the creature and that as such was named “high.”

We want to see if the Scriptures give any basis for these distinctions.

First of all it draws our attention, that the Holy Scriptures always respect the boundary between the Almighty and His creation. He is Sovereign Lawgiver, Who creates everything according to its nature; He is God, who is to be worshipped and loved by the whole creation.

All other distinctions within the cosmos fall beneath this boundary. There is nothing divine in the created. There may be then a great distinction in rank between heaven above and the earth beneath,

there may be distinction between holy and unholy, consecrated and common (Deuteronomy 12:21, 22), visible and invisible (2 Corinthians 4:18, Hebrews 11:3, 7, Colossians 1:16, Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:15), internal and external (2 Corinthians 4:16). But this is something completely different from the distinction between God and the creature, between the divine (that gives the law and supports and that is to be loved) and the creaturely (which stands under the law), wherein the eternal power and divinity of the Creator was revealed.

Also heaven is a part of the non-divine. There is no mention in the Scriptures of veneration for heaven as for a divine something that supports and is to be loved. There is certainly a difference in order, yet not in measure of creatureliness. When the Lord Jesus forbade his disciples to swear by this and that, then he forbade not only swearing by heaven, because /40/ “the heavens are the throne of God,” but equally he forbade swearing by one’s head, because we cannot make one hair white or black. The idea that our head should be more creaturely than the heavens, is not from the Scriptures, but originates from the idolatrous veneration for the “higher” creature. The heaven is certainly called the throne of God in the Scriptures, yet in the same breath there was added to that, that the earth is the footstool for His feet (Matthew 5:34-35). Not only the earth, but also the heaven is created. And not until the second day of creation did God call the “firmament” into being and he named that also “heaven.”

The Holy Scriptures point then also always to that high created heaven, where God has his dwelling, by indicating our starry and cloudy heaven, which has one creation-relationship with the earth.

In the prayer of Solomon he prayed with uplifted hands to the heaven: Hear You then in heaven, the firm place of your dwelling. And similarly he spoke of the rain, which in drought shall be expected from the heavens (1 Kings 8:39, 54 and 35). That is the same heaven, which in Elijah’s days were black with wind and clouds (1 Kings 18:45) and into which Elijah was taken up with fiery horses.

There is therefore also in the Scriptures mention of the birds of the heavens. Our traditional usage should set itself against this: “sparrows and starlings and the heavens,” that have literally nothing to do with each other. Here we feel wrongly “essential” difference, between something divine and something that has nothing divine. But in the Bible heaven appears in the usual usage continually. Winds of the heavens, a stork in the heavens (Jeremiah 8:7). And the earth is God’s “footstool.”

The heaven shall disappear like smoke (Isaiah 51:6). John saw a new heaven, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (Revelation 21:1, cf. 2 Peter 3:7-13).

At present I will not go into the texts in which relate to the heaven /41/ of heavens, the “third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2) and those where the firmament is meant. I just aim to demonstrate that the Scriptures see both in the one creation-connection, that lies beneath the “law boundary” of God and creature.

When the Lord Christ was taken up into heaven to sit there at the right hand of God, it was a cloud that took him away before the eyes of the disciples. And He shall return in this way in the clouds. So long as He is sojourning as the Son of Man in the heaven, He is elevated above our “spatial image” “under the sun.” His **place** in the cosmos cannot be determined by science. But we may lift our eyes to the sky, as we wait for him expectantly, for He shall return as the disciples saw Him ascend until a cloud took Him away before their eyes.

The heathen have looked on the “lights of the heavens” with veneration as something of a “higher nature.” They worshipped the host of the heavens. When a piece of meteorite stone fell there, people ran and brought divine worship to that creature superstitiously. **This** veneration for this “heavenly” stone was misplaced. This veneration is due only to God. The meteorite and a gravel stone out of our rivers are both creatures of God and both contain more or less the same rocks. Modern physics sees correctly that “host of the heavens” in one creation-relationship with our earth.

But, should someone say: the higher heaven is divine all right and its inhabitants are something completely different.

Certainly, we can very well understand, that John came to the point where he dropped down before the glorious angel to worship him.

But also here is the Scripture strong: See that you do not do this, for I am your fellow servant... worship God (Revelation 22:9 and 19:10).

Exactly those angels give us a glorious example of creatures, even though they are not human, which still also stand under the law and which, in so far as they have not fallen, serve God with joy. They too stand in the creaturely, under the law.

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The Lord Jesus taught us therefore also to pray from day to day: Your will be done (by us), on earth as (the angels) in the heaven also (do your will).

We humans are created after the image of God, after His likeness; yet even that does not make us beings who stand above the law, in no single respect and in no single function. When the Scriptures calls the judges “gods” then this word has the significance of authorities. In this sense it connects to the usage of the nations, who called the authorities gods. Note that it is still not the person who is called a god, for the word directly concerns the **office**: it is God Himself, who will judge through the office of the judges. **God** stands in the assembly of God’s people, in the judicial bench, He judges in the midst of the gods. Psalm 82:1.

But these gods in the office are anything but judges through the grace of their rather noble divine Personality. In Psalm 82 the judges, who show off themselves, as if they could judge “freely,” were rightly chastised. And the Psalmist poet says: I have certainly named you gods, and children of the Most High, but you shall perish as ordinary men, because you have not delivered the poor and the destitute (as your office was required) out of the hand of the godless oppressor.

And therefore: do not trust in princes, they return again to dust. God does justice to the oppressed. Also when the princes do justice, is it the Lord, who appoints justice through them. (Psalm 146).

Adam is also named the Son of God and yet there was nothing supra-creaturely said about him. He was busy in the garden with cultivating and guarding and he was busy with giving names to the animals. So he was totally of this world, in which God has placed him.

The believers are also called Children of God and there was much that is glorious said about them in the Scriptures – but of a central sanctuary of the human Personality, within which a “something” dwelt, that had direct dealings with the Spirit of God, and is also “free” just like God, powerful to /43/ heal and to break through “nature,” yes, powerful enough to practically become God... of that the Scripture knows nothing. All sorts of thing are found only in old mystical writings of all sorts of tastes and in many modern religious books.

As many as believe in Christ, to them he has given power to be named “Children of God.” They have authorisation in the name of God to bear His Name. The Mediator is God, revealed in the flesh. He is at the same time God and **human**, in the unity of the Persons. He is our Head. But even “in Him” we have no chance to break out above the law, no chance to transgress the boundary between God and creature. For He has humbled Himself to the death on the cross in complete obedience to the Father. Jesus of Nazareth, who is truly man, has in His office as the Christ, completely fulfilled the will of God and this man has, as Head of humanity, borne the guilt so as to subject His renewed creation completely to the law of the sovereign God.

And even in the human aspect of Christ there is no divinisation of His creaturely being. He is raised up to the right hand of God and clothed with majesty in the heavens. Yet he appears there also as truly human, “our flesh in the heavens,” as a pledge for our resurrection of the flesh. There is no mention of a divine **part** in the human Christ that should stand “free” with respect to His lower life. His compassion of spirit for our misery and His weariness from the journey, His hunger and thirst and His anxiety of soul in Gethsemane, are always again creaturely, standing under the law. That this same person is at the same time God, the eternal Son of God, who has “taken on our flesh” – that is what the Scriptures confess just as clearly as that He truly was completely human.

The church has then also confessed according to the Scriptures, that our Lord is both God and man in the unity of the persons.

The man, who stood there by Peter on the ship and who /44/ had brought the fish into the net, was truly God, revealed in the flesh. Peter had to fall down before him and worship him. Even so he did not then worship the creature. John could write of him that he had heard him daily with his ears, and had seen him with his eyes, and that he had touched him with his hands... and that this man from Nazareth... was the eternal Son of God, God Himself (1 John 1:3).

The church confesses about him, that God and human are united in Him in the unity of the persons, although still God and human are not mingled or changed.

With the last words the church **also maintained the boundary between God and creature, also in the Christ**. Even in the man Jesus the church saw nothing human ascend to the divine; this Jesus was completely human. He possessed the highest human functions, which every human has – and nevertheless He remained as human in His place under the will of the Father (Hebrews 5:4-9).

When teachers arose in the community of Colossae, who through asceticism and secret knowledge would establish a circle of saints, “perfected ones,” who stood above other members of the community on account of their “knowledge” of the service of angels and mysteries, then Paul reminded the congregation that they **had** perfection **in Christ**.

In baptism they had fellowship with that obedient human, with Christ their Head. Fellowship in His death, but also fellowship in His glorious resurrection – and now through the Spirit fellowship with their Lord in the heavens. This Christ has died because of sin – he also. They are now made perfect in Christ – and they may daily put to death more the old man and put on the new man, who is

created according to God for good works, yet always so, that this all comes through the Holy Spirit from Him.

So they are not steadily becoming a higher sort of human – they are not divinised or spiritualised – they are not /45/ spirit-persons. Their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. They become spiritual people, that is to say, people who live out of Christ, out of their covenant Head – through the Holy Spirit.

Their Head is also One with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures can also then say: the Lord (the *kurios*, **Jesus Christ**) now **is** the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17). He is then also the life-making Spirit, who in the administration of the Spirit of the New Testament freed the church from the law of the shadows of the Old Testament and who liberated those who live “out of the Law,” such as Paul in his youth, from this yoke of self-righteousness and who also makes the old creature into a new creature, into a bearer of the image of the Lord Jesus, into a bearer of the image of the heavenly one, such as He in the past had borne the (corrupted) image of the earthly (Adam). There is no mention of a divinisation of the creation, of breaking out above the law. The creature does not become something divine, but a new creation. For 2 Peter 1:4 people should see the Marginal Notes¹⁴ and Calvin’s Commentary. The corruption of the dead must put on incorruptibility and the mortal, immortality. And those who then still live, must certainly be changed, they can not step from the street into the kingdom of glory, but **this**¹⁵ they shall see, that humble body of theirs will be changed; they keep it therefore, and they don’t become something “higher,” something spiritual or “heavenly,” that should be somehow free from creatureliness (1 Corinthians 15). The whole Scripture holds fast to the whole person. And it leaves him creaturely, even in the highest elevation to the child of God, also when he may be called a glorious member of Christ’s body. And the new humanity, the Church, may certainly be called the Bride of Christ the Bridegroom, and the Wife of the Lamb, but not a spiritual community standing above the creaturely law, divinised, “free.”

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¹⁴ [*het verderf*, Namelijk dat den ongelovigen en ongodelijken zal overkomen; en hier wordt **het verderf** gesteld tegen **de heerlijkheid**, gelijk ook **de begeerlijkheid** tegen **de deugd**, 2 Petr. 1:3. Anderen verstaan het van de verdorvenheid der menselijke natuur. “*the corruption*, namely that shall conquer the unbelievers and ungodly; and here the corruption was placed over against the glory, as also greediness against virtue, 2 Peter 1:3. Others understand it in relation to the depravity of human nature.”]

¹⁵ See also Calvin’s *Letter to Lelio Sozzini*, June 1549. Schwarz. *Calvins Lebenswerk in seinen Briefen* pp. 353 ff. See *Pro Ecclesia* Vol 2 no. 43. [Janse also discussed this issue in “Calvijn aan Lelio Socinus over de opstanding des vleeschens.” *Pro Ecclesia. Weekblad ten dienste van het Gereformeerde leven in Nederland*. 2 (1936-37). No 43, 23 July, p. 165.]

5. The Gnostic “Higher Self”

Where the “free” spirit, or “soul,” receives honour as “divine atom,” as “basis,” and as “highness,” there is fellowship with the vain philosophy of the teachers in Colossae (Colossians 2:8).

And there is also fellowship with the early Gnostics, who caused such great destruction in the first Christian churches through their secret doctrine and through their fallacious understanding of religion.¹⁶

There are two groups of Gnostics in history: the libertines, who lived frivolously, and the ascetic pious type, whose motto was “touch not and taste not.,” and who mortified the body. The last ones were seen as angels of light: their asceticism and strong self-willed religion often made great impression on the people. Therefore Paul had to warn the community very solemnly about them. And we must still be alert against them. Some years ago I heard a preacher of ultra-orthodox Reformed persuasion give a lecture about the “soul.” According to him this was the “essence” of the person, hidden very deep inside him (the “Ratio”), the sanctuary with innermost chambers, where God could reveal Himself. At such moments the “soul” saw the “essence” of things. The speaker had himself once been privileged to experience it: then he had been “**in actual union with the Divine Essence.**”

Such a union of my creaturely “essence” with the Divine “Essence” certainly far exceeds the truth of Christ, of whom the Scripture teaches, that He as human has placed Himself under the law of God in complete obedience and of Whom the church has always confessed that even the unity of the Persons /47/ has **not** transgressed the boundary between God and creature.

By the way, one can also read about this “actual unity” in Jan Luyken (**Jesus and the Soul**) and in **Böhme, Angelus Silesius** and **Eckehart** and in the German admirers of these writers today.

The veneration of our so-called inner man is also an entrance-way for this spirit of the age, as if that were the place where the salvation-event must now happen. Then one does not look at the beginning of our era in the year 33 or thereabouts, when we died with Christ and also were raised to a new life, out of which salvation event the whole church through the ages has lived (and out of which we too, as members of this church, can live through the faith which is worked by the Spirit), but then one says: even if Christ were born a thousand times in Bethlehem (the great salvation event

¹⁶ [This book was written in the 1930’s, prior to the discovery of the library of Gnostic texts at Nag Hammadi, and other subsequent discoveries. However, the general tenor of Janse’s criticisms can remain unchanged as the additional material now available to us does not alter his basic point.]

of the Scriptures), if he is not now born in your hearts, then still everything is lost. That may be meant as a pointer to the fact that erring Covenant children among Christians must still be brought back to the Lord through “circumcision of the hearts,” through removal of the “heart of stone.” It may also mean, that the believers must live daily **out of Christ** through the Spirit... but then is it rather unfortunately expressed. Why do people then not say that with the words of Scripture? For now it certainly sounds very pious, yet it is in fact not the language of the church, but the language of **heretics**, who will divinise people “in the soul.”

In order to see how terrible is this exchange of the facts of salvation with our spiritual life, we need only look at the writings of the poet, “**Angelus Silesius**,” the “angel from Silesia,” Johannes Scheffler, an adherent of the mysticism related to Eckehart.¹⁷

Angelus Silesius belonged to the most dangerous heretics in church history. He died in Breslau in 1677.

In his songs, **Cherubinischer Wandersmann**, he allowed the “soul” to sink into its “ground” and then he said:

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“A sunk-soul person is eternally free and one,”

And then he asks:

“Can there be even a distinction between God and him?”

Further he says: the spiritual birth of God in me is the same, as that by which God the Father generates the Son.

Therefore he can say:

“I must be Virgin Mary and carry God in me, if I am to be eternally blessed.”¹⁸

But this God, whom he bears in himself, is still not enough for him. Presently he climbs up still higher. For the God, who was born in him, is defined and limited, he is shut up in the finite creature. With relation to him Scheffler says:

¹⁷ [See **Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church**, p. 54, and Vollenhoven, **Schematisch Karten**, p. 70. Editor.]

¹⁸ [Published rhyming trans.: I must be Virgin Mary and carry God in me/if He’s to grant me glory unto eternity. (1:23, p.33)]

“That God is infinite, that I do not grant you, for see

He seeks me still, because He wants to rest in me.”

Further:

“I am as spacious as God, there is nothing in the whole world, which holds me enclosed.”

His deluded thinking about God, who was born in his heart, becomes even more daring:

“For what one says to me about God, still does not satisfy me wholly, the Super-Godhead is my life and my light.”

And then it comes: then the false genius, the sovereign thinking, climbs on high. Then Silesius says:

“I must still journey above God into a desert.” (I must still journey above God, into an empty wasteland, where no more distinctions, no limitations, are feasible.)

That is thinking broken adrift, like that of a modern person, who does not remain in his place with his thinking (thus “under the sun” and in this time and in the light of God’s Word) but a thinking that believes it is able, as sovereign subject, to “survey” God and cosmos. Such thinking can look up at the heavens and say: what is above the clouds?

Answer: the starry heaven.

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And above that?

The heaven, where the Supreme Being dwells... and what is there above that? Asks a thinking standing sovereignly above God? And then the answer is: the infinite nothing, that is still above God.

In this sense – but then not spatially, but “spiritually,” the mystical thinking of this Gnostic reasoned in this sense: it can get to that which stands above God.

Finally my ego is the highest.

That Silesius then also says honestly:

I consider nothing to be high, I am the highest thing,

While even God without me is of no account himself.¹⁹

Can you see now the background of the saying? If *I* do not bear God in my heart, then the fact of Luke 2:7a is of no significance.

Let us not say “for me” after that in order to make it still acceptable. Since for those, who reject Christ with an obdurate heart, his birth shall still become of stupendous significance. The obdurate heart should say: the salvation fact is also of stupendous significance **for me** into eternity.

We see here how this language makes powerless the warnings, threats and admonitions of God’s Word.

The divinisation of the “higher” in the person leads to veneration of idols, to service of false gods with vain speculations and that means practically: rejection of God’s Word, both in his consolation and admonition.

Finally this religion is for satisfaction of “the flesh,” it is according to the desire of the evil natural heart to feed itself with this vain pious speculation.

But it is making him blind, and such a heart feeds itself on ash.

¹⁹ [Published rhyming trans.: I am as Great as God, he is as small as I; He is not over me, not under him am I. (1:10, p. 36)]

6. The Biblical I, the living soul

a. The term “immortal”

The Holy Scriptures use the word “soul” frequently, and it has there a multifold significance, but never does it signify there: something of the natural person which is immortal, that does not stand under the judgement of death.

After the fall into sin the whole person is by nature subjected to death. He certainly does remain in existence in death, yes he does remain also according to his bodily existence in eternal death, but that existence we may not call “immortality.” The word “immortality” applies only to that which cannot (anymore) be subjected to death for eternity.²⁰

The Holy Scriptures speak nowhere about a higher part of the natural person, that we could possibly call an “immortal soul.” For the whole person in all his parts is subjected to death and thus is certainly mortal.

When the Lord God said to Adam: the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die, then the whole person who stood there before Him was threatened. After the fall the Lord said: you shall return to dust. That dying did not mean the taking away of the existence of the body through destruction of the “mortal remains” – for all “who sleep in the dust” shall hear the voice of the Son /51/ of Man on the day of judgement (John 5:25) and they shall come out of the graves. Also the sea shall give up her dead. And then they shall all stand before Him in their body, as whole human beings, just as God had created them. Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29, Revelation 20:12-14. The final sentence of death is then directed to the whole person. This person is then given over totally to “mortality” for eternity. There has also never been formerly something “immortal” in the natural person after Adam’s fall.

²⁰ Dr Kuyper also makes a distinction between “immortality” and “continued existence.” See **Dictaten Dogmatiek**, Part II, Locus de homine, p. 122. [Kuyper does not make this explicit distinction there. Janse appears to be referring to Kuyper’s view that while all the dead continue to exist after death (thus rejecting the idea that the unrighteous dead are destroyed in hell and thereby cease to exist), only the righteous have eternal life. The soul is not immortal, but it continues to exist after death, either in eternal death, or in heaven, in eternal life. Kuyper says: “Eternal life was not infused in Adam, but it was promised to him as a reward for fulfilling the law of God... The sinner cannot acquire life through good works. Therefore we must make a distinction between the immortality which God possesses, and that which humans possess. The immortality of humans is dependent, that of God is original.”]

When the heathen spoke of a part of humans that could be called immortal by nature (the “immortal soul” in Plato, etc.) then they were in conflict with the truth. And it remains dangerous to adopt this term as Christians, in imitation of the ancient church Fathers such as Clement [of Alexandria – Ed.], Origen, and the later Christian philosophy and psychology, without a closer explanation of the fact that this expression in Plato is in essence something wholly different from what the Christian must mean when he says that his “soul” is immortal.

In Plato – and in his trail the traditional use of the word – every natural person has a “soul” which is immortal by nature.

In the Christian idiom, however, this should only be said of the believers. And then it should be intended by this, that the deceased believers immediately after their death are with their risen Lord as “dead who sleep in the Lord” and who now already “from henceforth” in Christ are freed from the sentence of eternal death in Christ.

Christ is “our flesh” in heaven. He has so completely triumphed over death, that he is now there as whole person. To be permitted to see Him, is in principle already to behold eternal life. The rest of the “souls” is a rest on his triumph. Revelation 6:11.

Death no longer dominates, where the believers may see their /52/ own resurrection of the flesh, as it were before their eyes in the Lord. Christ has said: I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live, even though he dies (John 11:25).

Therefore the believers have, also already here on earth, “in hope,” “in principle,” eternal life through faith in Christ, that no more stands under the sentence of death. They are immortal already here, in faith, in Christ, as we might say. And in much greater measure we should be able to say of those who die in the Lord, that they are now “immortal” with the Lord.

Yet the Holy Scriptures still do not use this word here. The first mention of immortality in the Scriptures is with the return of Christ in the clouds. And then it shall apply in fact to the whole person. Then shall “this mortal,” that is the person as he was when placed in the grave, put on immortality. “This corruptible,” that is the human person as he returns to dust in the grave, must then put on incorruptibility. (1 Corinthians 15:52-54)

Only then is death **completely** defeated in victory. And only then the Scriptures speak of people who are no more under death, yet have **put on** immortality.

Only then can one speak of “immortal souls,” with souls taken in the Scriptural sense, of souls who were allowed to put on immortality, because they are members of Christ’s body. And then these “souls” are not divine atoms, not “higher” **parts** of people, but they are the whole person in both body and soul, just as God created them and as Christ has reconciled and saved them.

After all, Christ has wholly surrendered himself at the cross, with his whole weight, in order that he should make us wholly his own. Also our body is “of the Lord.” And therefore the Scriptures do not speak of “immortality,” as long as the last enemy, death, has not relinquished the body of believers. /53/ And when that has happened, the soul is saved in the full sense of the word. For the **fundamental idea** (note well, the fundamental idea) of the word “soul” in the Holy Scripture encompasses the whole person. The believer says to himself: go back to your rest, for the Lord has done good to you. For You, Lord! have saved my soul from death, my eyes from weeping, my foot from offending. The commentators indicate that “saved my soul” means **me**. Psalm 116:7-8.

b. Practical idiom and scientific terms

The Holy Scriptures speak of the Biblical I, of the “living soul” in practical language, often in the full life and connected with the idiom of people who have lived in the time of special revelation by prophets and apostles. The OT used Hebrew idiom and the NT is written in Greek, yet despite all the differences there is still a unity of the Word.

It is everywhere God’s Word, that speaks about human beings and in that speaking the Scripture is consistent everywhere. Nowhere is there contradiction of conceptions, so that for example the Old Testament should speak of the living soul as “*nephesh*” (soul) but the New Testament Greek word *psuchè* (psyche, soul) would refer to the *psuchè* (“immortal soul”) of Plato and Aristotle and of the tradition. We should not expect to find the scientific terms of the philosophers behind the New Testament Greek. It was the practical language of the people, which was used by the authors. And above all they were Jews, who grew up with the Old Testament. The OT Hebrew word “*nephesh*” had come to them in the Septuagint in the Greek form *psuchè*.

They read thus of Elijah, that he prayed that his *psuchè* might die, while the Platonic *psuchè* was called “immortal.” They could thus understand perfectly well with their word *psyche* (“soul”) what the /54/ Hebrew indicated with *nephesh*, namely the whole **person**, the living soul.

When we research the significance which the word soul can have in the Holy Scriptures, then we must more than anything hold fast that practical speaking of the Holy Scriptures. We must not

expect to find there the technical terms of the Greek philosophers, even though the same Greek words are used. And we must also not use these words in order to construct a biblical scientific psychology or anthropology. We must allow the words of Scripture to stand in their prophetic service in their simplicity and depth, where they speak about humans and about humanity in general.

God has not through his Word taken out of our hands the task to **research** the living souls who “are under the sun.” To do so effectively science has need of a set of well-defined terms and distinctions. And in the process of research distinctions multiply themselves and the terminology extends, so that only specialists can understand the literature.

Yet he who believes Scripture and is placed in scientific work, will not isolate his scientific research from the practical knowledge of people from daily life, he considers that fatal for science. Genuine science never stands haughtily far away from practical life. And in addition the Biblical believer will take into account what the Scriptures say with respect to the object of his study. For in that way the Word of God is a light for him also on his scientific path, that can protect him from errors and can open his eyes for the veneration of their idols, which again and again perform confusing and disturbing work in science.

It is therefore important for anthropology and psychology and for all sciences, which relate to humanity, that they take account of the way Holy Scripture speaks about humanity.

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We shall see that by the word “soul” a great wealth of living reality is indicated – a wealth which is shrivelled up to an idol in the traditional word “immortal soul.”

The usual Biblical speaking about “soul” in all the significance which the Scriptures gives to it shall again be able to open to us the Scriptures, where it speaks of “the salvation of the soul,” as of the whole person. If we can understand that, then the weak points of traditional Christian thought are strengthened over against the Gnostic Self and the doctrine of the “wholly other,” and of the “higher” that would be saved. And that is extremely necessary. The danger is that faith in idols sneaks in under old cherished pious terms, which do not line up with what the Scripture says.

c. Humans as living souls

The word “soul” first appears in the Scriptures in the creation narrative. God said: that the waters should copiously bring forth a proliferation of living souls. And God created the great whales and all swarming souls... there appears the same word as for “breath” (Hebrew: *nephesh*).

In Genesis 2 the human was also named a living soul. With that he is not placed on the same plane as the animals, for while the animals were brought forth from the water and by the earth (Genesis 1:20 and 24), the human was created by God in a wholly unique manner – with the previously spoken intent to make humans according to His image and after His likeness (1:26).

In Genesis 2 this was repeated in more detail. The Lord God had formed the human out of the dust of the earth and He Himself blew the breath into his nostrils. The breath, which continues in us as metabolism, we have from our parents. The first seed of life in each of us was human living material and that life has been in uninterrupted /56/ “breath” in our forebears and handed down from Adam to each one of us. The “breath of God” is in our nostrils (Job 33:4). God has let us see life along this way. Had this breath failed in one of our many ancestors in his youth, then we should not now exist. And the beginning of this is already written in Genesis 2. “Historically” (genetically) our life’s breath comes from the fact that God has blown the breath of life into Adam’s nostrils. The creation narrative concludes then with these words: “**thus** the human being became a living soul.”

God spoke with this living soul in the garden of Eden. There is no mention of a Gnostic higher or lower component with respect to God. Adam stood as a whole person before God and was made as a whole living soul in His image. Also his breath is not divine, no more than a fire lit by a human should have something human about it. There was nothing said about a “soul” which should “rest” in God as on the kernel point of his existence. The conversation of the Lord with Adam covered the animals, and the garden, the trees and fruits and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After the fall the conversation covered the pains of the woman and the work of the man and the seed of the woman, who would crush the head of the serpent. The Lord God clothed our first parents with animals skins... but that this all “properly” still concerned only the lower and that the human in his death awoke to a “higher plane,” because he is then saved out of that lower... nothing is said of this even in the notice of impending death in Genesis 3:19.

The word “soul” has acquired a peculiarly religious sound in tradition, under the influence of the Greek concept of “immortal” part of humans, and under influence of Gnostic divinisation of the

soul as “wholly other” over against the usual created world. The word soul does not have this sound in the Holy Scriptures.

Humans are, as it appears there, living souls, living beings /57/ with life’s breath in the nostrils. The word “soul” is named after the breath, which is characteristic of living beings.

d. Blood, breath, desires of life

An important element for the life’s breath is the blood. The blood is the bearer of metabolism, bearer of life. Therefore in Genesis 9:4 it is said to Noah: “the flesh with its soul, that is its blood, you shall not eat.” Here the use of living flesh, with the warm living blood still in it, was forbidden. Was there perhaps then an animistic desire to eat the “soul” (anima) of animals in order to strengthen its own mystically conceived soul-material? We should then take this text not as “traces of animism in the Old Testament” but as a commandment against the animism of the nations.

In Leviticus 17:11 this command was repeated for Israel with the remark: for the soul (the life, the breath, the metabolism) is in the blood. Elsewhere, in Deuteronomy 12:23 the reverse was stated: for the blood is the soul. Practically understood this offers no difficulties, for men can equally well say: blood is life, and to say: the life is in the blood.

In Genesis 35:18 it was recounted how Rachel died at the birth of Benjamin. It states there: “it so happened, as her soul departed (for she was dying)...” We can think here of the soul as life, and translate: as her life fled, but it is also possible to think in this of the flowing out of the **blood**, that after all was seen in connection with the breath, the desires of life, and life itself.²¹

So it is also spoken of Christ, that on the cross He has surrendered for us His soul, His blood, His life, Himself.

Soul, blood, life, oneself, his person, all say approximately the same thing. Soul does not signify a separate mysterious part of the person, it stands on an equal footing with the other usual indications of the person named here.

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In different places where the *Statenvertaling* uses the terms breath, desire, inclination, life, person, human, mind, heart, and suchlike usual practical words out of the fullness of life, more than once the underlying text has the word “soul.”

²¹ [Did Rachel perhaps die of an unstoppable haemorrhage following the birth?]

In Job 41:12 it was said of the animal monster, the Leviathan: his “soul” (nephesh) could ignite coals – people have correctly translated this drastic indication of the hot life’s breath full of desire in the red animal mouth by **breath**. Yet “soul” says more in this case.

In Ezekiel 36:5 the Lord speaks of the rapacious Edomites, who have plundered His land “with covetous plundering.” The underlying text has for “covetous” the expression “of the soul.” They plunder with their whole robber breath “soul” in it.

In Psalm 27:12 David prays for liberation out of the hand of his fierce enemies, who “draw near to eat his flesh.” And then David prays thus: Do not give me over into the “soul” (nephesh) of my adversaries. People translate “desire,” but the underlying text points out how the enemy follows him with heated breath, with his whole soul, as a beast of prey with a covetous soul.

In Isaiah 56:11 [12] there is mention of the wicked party songs of Israel, who conducted themselves sleepily in their work as watchmen as lazy watchdogs, yet who were fierce as dogs, when it came to do with their gain. Of them it says: these dogs are strong of **soul**. Also here again is the sketch of the covetous dog soul, which attacks the bone with violence and growls at anyone who dares to come near. That blood-heat dog-life, that seeks satisfaction, is named “soul” here in the general Scriptural idiom.

Ecclesiastes 6:7 says: all the work people do is for their mouth, and nevertheless the soul was not filled. That was to say each day the soul hungers all over again.

Israel expresses in this way a malevolent loathing for the heavenly bread in the desert: in Egypt we had cucumbers, /59/ pumpkins, leeks and onions, and garlic, but now our **soul** is dry and there is nothing but this manna. Numbers 11:6.

Proverbs 6:30 also warns the Israelites about not despising the thief, if he steals in order to fill his soul, that is, “because he is hungry.”

Psalm 107:9 praises the Lord, because He heard the prayer of desert travellers and found them water and food. For He has satisfied the thirsty **soul**, and has filled the hungry **soul** with good things.

The righteous have the promise of the Lord (Proverbs 10:3): The Lord does not allow the **souls** of the righteous to hunger.

Therefore the Lord cares for His people in an indirectly way when he gives commands such as: when you go into your neighbour's vineyard, you may eat grapes until your **soul** is satisfied, but you shall not put them in your vat. Deuteronomy 23:24.

A satisfied soul (that is a person whose hungry soul is filled with food) has eaten enough and he despises virgin honey, the best of the honey can not charm him. But a hungry soul finds even bitter food sweet (Proverbs 27:7).

The soul of the sluggard is covetous, yet there is nothing there, but the soul of the industrious shall be made fat.

In all these images we see how coveting, the desire for life and for maintaining the breath of life, was observed very sharply and concretely in the living soul, and was indicated by "soul."

In the New Testament the word soul (*psuchè*) was also used in connection with nourishment.

Jesus said to His disciples: do not be concerned about your **soul** (*psuchè*), what you shall eat and what you shall drink, nor with what your **body** shall be clothed. (Matthew 6:25, see the marginal notes in the *Statenvertaling*.)²²

Consider that "soul" and "body" only occur a couple of times mentioned close together, /60/ and it always imposes the traditional conception onto us, as if there is mention here of a dualism, of two substances in a person. In psychology people speak of a twofold *substantia incompleta*, which were connected as it were by a creation-weld into one **complete** person. Death was then not **breaking** the pitcher **into pieces** (Ecclesiastes 12:6) but the release of this original "weld." Soul is then that which has nothing to do with eating or drinking, and body is then the part that belongs on earth. In

²² [Zijt niet bezorgd Namelijk met angstige en onmatige zorg, spruitende uit kleingelovigheid en verhinderende de zorg der zaligheid. Anders zo zijn wij ook schuldig voor deze dingen te zorgen; 1 Tim. 5:8. *leven* Grieks, **ziel**; waardoor het leven betekent wordt. Zie Job 2:6; Matth. 2:20. "Do not be concerned," namely with anxiety and excessive care, sprouting out of lack of faith and preventing the care for blessedness. Otherwise we would be also guilty of care for these things; 1 Timothy 5:8. *life*, Greek – soul; by which life was signified. See Job 2:6, Matthew 2:20.] "The King James Bible translates this verse "take no thought for your life . . . nor yet for your body." This could give the impression that Jesus was pointing His disciples to other concerns than those of the body and physical life (e.g., to heavenly rather than earthly life, to the soul rather than the body). That is not what He meant, however. The second half of verse 25 shows clearly that life and the body are matters of ultimate importance (see also 10:28 and 16:26: in the latter verse "soul" also means "life"). The soul, indeed, is inseparable from these. Jesus therefore was not turning His disciples' minds away from life and the body and toward something else. Rather He was telling them that *with respect to* life and the body, they should not be worried about eating, drinking, and clothing." **Matthew. Bible Student's Commentary**. H N Ridderbos. Translated by Ray Togtman. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987, p. 139. Translation of **Korte Verklaring der Heilige Schrift – Mattheus**. Kampen: J H Kok, 1950-1951.

the texts cited above, however, eating belongs to the “soul” (to the *psuchè*), completely in accordance with the usage of the whole of Scripture.

We can see then, that the NT retains the usage of the OT, despite the Greek word that would bring Plato to mind.

In general soul is thus the indication for the characteristic of the living being, just as God has created him according to its nature.

The whole being, the living soul, has something of its own. It is not matter (such as a stone), in which there is a spirit (such as an angel), but it is just like all the other creatures, a **creaturely unity**. The doctrine that all creatures are made out of **spirit** and **matter** is not taught out of the Bible, but arises from philosophers who did not have sufficient grasp of the many-sided richness of God’s creation. The living plant is not composed out of spirit and matter any more than a living animal or person. The person certainly has spirit and soul and heart and body, but soul and heart are not the same as “spirit” – and body is certainly not matter, yet it is a concept out of the world of living beings. A stone does not have a “body.” That characteristic of the living soul was, as we have seen, found in the living blood, in the breath of desire, in the life’s direction of taking in food, and in the inclination for the fulfilling the desire for life.

In this sense the Lord speaks: take care for your **soul**, what you shall eat or drink.

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e. Life in general, with all its environment, house, goods, office, and family.

But also life in general here on earth is often called **soul**.

In Matthew 16:25 the Lord says, when he speaks of martyrdom to His disciples, who according to tradition well-nigh all lost their lives for the sake of Christ: whoever loses his soul (*psuchè*) for my sake, he shall retain it. Being killed was here thus called “losing your soul,” that is to say losing life here on earth. We must therefore pay attention to this for the Greek has still other words for life.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:30 about Epaphroditus, who in delivering the gift of money to Paul had come near to death, that Epaphroditus did not consider his soul when he did that work.

Priscilla and Aquila have in their time also risked their necks for the soul of Paul. Romans 16:4. Peter certainly said, that he should set his soul for the Lord Jesus to protect Him from His suffering, yet that was then not necessary. John 13:37.

The Good Shepherd gives His own soul for the sheep.

In all these texts one translates **life**, yet in each case there stands **psuchè**, the Greek word for soul. The same word that the Greek philosophers used for “immortal soul” was here conceived by the New Testament authors in a manner taken over from the Old Testament. Also in the Old Testament the soul (*nephesh*) often includes the broader significance of life, which connects with the above-mentioned terms for blood, breath, desire, inclination, and similar meanings, but which also encompasses the “environment.” Everything which the living may enjoy of family and house and goods and of “life” in general, he loses when he loses his “soul.”

The Satan says in Job 2:4 that everything which someone has he will give for his soul. (Cf. in this connection: he who would keep his soul... he who loves his soul will lose it. John 12:25).

The Lord said to Lot and to his family: If you wish to preserve your soul, /62/ that is, if you will preserve your life. In the days of Paul this use of the word soul was also still very common in daily life. The Greek **psuchè** of Plato and Aristotle was then certainly already a common good for the philosophers, yet the Greek-speaking seamen understood Paul very well when he said: Men! I see that on the voyage we shall suffer great loss not only of the cargo and of the ship, but also of our souls. In the middle of the storm, however, he admonished them now to be of good cheer, for no loss should happen to anyone’s soul. Both times Paul used **psuchè** (*psyche*), that in the traditional conception signified only “immortal soul” and has the distinctive sound of something higher. Here it stands in the fullness of life and in the practical usage of the Holy Scriptures.

People should not say, that the Scriptures are obscure and confused in their usage with respect to the soul (*nephesh* and *psuchè*). That is irreverent and it is also untrue, for there is nothing confused about it: it is a continuously concrete usage, that points to the creation, as God has created it with all life movement. There were also still other words used for breath, desire, inclination, life, but in the texts quoted above the intention with the word “soul” is obvious. We are close here to the hot breath, close to the warm blood, to the life-desires of the “living soul,” as it stands in all sorts of relations to his surroundings. What is mean everytime is this warm-living person, this living creation of God, which has become a “living soul.” And it is also called soul. The heartfelt devotion of the young Schem to the daughter of Jacob, so that he would give “everything” for her, is

signified in the words: his soul cleaved to Dinah, Jacob's daughter. Genesis 34:3. And when Delilah said to Samson: You have not loved me, your heart is not with me, then his amorous soul was sorrowful to the point of death. Judges 16:16.

All these things are clear signs of the living side of the living soul. There is nothing confused in it. The basic significance of: human, /63/ who according to Genesis 2:7 has become a living soul, remains maintained under all this. We remain with the word soul always close to that creation, we are creatures ourselves and just as it is to be seen about us everywhere.

Therefore it is not at all strange, that this same "nephesh" is sometimes translated as **person** in our **Statenvertaling**. Of Joseph it has: his "person" was put in irons. Psalm 105:18.²³ But again "soul" stands in the underlying text.

And when we speak of "so many people" then the Biblical usage says without exception: so many souls. This is also used in our baptism formula, which speaks of Noah and his eight souls.²⁴ Also, people still speak of a city of 3,000 souls.

One often thinks that we are dealing only with a well-known figure of speech. When one says, the crewing of that ship requires 70 heads, then one has taken the part for the whole, one has counted the heads. Sometimes people also say, count noses. Now people might think, that 70 souls is an analogous figure of speech, where parts (the "immortal souls") are named for the wholes. However, this is not correct, for where the Scripture says 70 souls, there the complete persons were meant, as in the expression: "the man became a living soul." When Elijah prayed that his soul might die, then he had entirely resigned himself to die. One cannot say, "his head died," but one can say, "his soul died." 1 Kings 19:4.

When Abigail comforted David, she meant the whole person of David: When someone rises up to kill your soul, then shall the soul of my master be bound in the bundle of the living. 1 Samuel 25:29.

The expression: a soul is killed, often appears and means: killing a person. Leviticus 24:17. In the Psalms David often complains, they seek my soul, they think to take my soul. Lord save my soul, it constantly refers to the life of the whole person David, as he fled before Saul.

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²³ [NIV: his neck was put in irons. This is a more literal translation of nephesh, which can mean throat.]

²⁴ [CRC – Liturgy for baptism of infants: "Noah and his family."]

Let no one say, that despite everything David hung onto this earthly life superficially, in an Old Testament manner. Whoever speaks like this, does not know the significance of the struggles of this living soul David. If David had been killed by the hand of Saul, then the great Son of David would not have been born. In the soul of this fugitive God had saved his Son, as can be seen in the complaint of David in Psalm 22, where prophetically the Lord Jesus himself lamented: save my soul (cf. marginal notes).²⁵ For David the fulfilling of all God's promises of the seed of the woman hung very concretely on David's life, on his soul. This living soul was preserved by God. The Lord would bring the great Messiah forth "out of his loins." Should David then not have had any fear when the enemy pursued his soul? In his person the Christ was coming. Just as He at present wants to become visible in the person of His children, so that in their manner of living, in doctrine and in life, as concrete people, they shall be legible letters of Christ. Also now their soul (blood, life, person) is precious in his eyes. Psalm 72:14.

As David then remembers in Psalm 30, at the consecration of his house, how the Lord has redeemed him, then he says, Lord, (God of the covenant), You have raised up my soul from the grave, You have saved my life, so that I have not descended into the pit. The whole person, who in his terrors and anxieties as it were was a certain prey of the grave, had experienced that God had saved his soul from that pit.

And by that saving of the person David, God prepared the coming of Him, who makes His people live, even though they have died, and who will raise them out of the grave.

The life of the believers, after their death, with the Lord, is not by the grace of an "immortal soul" which everyone (supposedly) would have – but by the grace of Him, who on the cross gave up His soul with His whole weight and who was present in David's living soul "according to the flesh."

Also He was in Noah. There we all were in Noah /65/ in the Ark. If Noah had been drowned, our life would have been taken away. Therefore it was of such great significance also for us personally, that God had preserved and protected the eight souls in the Ark.²⁶

God speaks to us in His Word not about idols, but He speaks about very important world-governing things – whereby we personally as living souls with our whole weight have the greatest importance.

²⁵ [*ziel* Dat is, mijn persoon, of leven, en zo in het volgende. Zie Gen. 12:5; Gen. 19:17. *soul*, that is, my person, or life and so in the following. See Genesis 12:5, Genesis 19:17.]

²⁶ [Janse has "dat God Noach zijne acht zielen heft behouden en bewaard."]

Therefore, when God speaks to us in His Word about Noah and David and Jesus Christ, then we must know that Noah and David and the Lord Christ are of very great “personal” importance for us. This is enough reason for us to reflect about this relationship, and not to act, as if we must derive some sort of lesson for our soul (that higher thing), because (apart from the bit about the soul) they are just old stories.

Then “Noah” must do service as an idol for veneration.

This is consistent in Weatherhead.

Weatherhead published on the title page of his book, **Why do people suffer?** this motto: “Name the world, if you will, the Valley of Soul Formation.” In that book all God’s judgements are taken to be for the service of “the soul.” Whoever believes in **eternal** judgement, makes of God a monster, according to Weatherhead.

Because that would boil down to slighting the highest, the “soul.”

This book was translated into Dutch and introduced into Christian circles: let no one say that I fight against windmills and that these things do not appear among us.

Also in the New Testament **psuchè** was used for the whole person.

In Luke 9:25 the Lord admonished His disciples, that they should not be ashamed of Him, in order to escape persecution and to preserve their “soul.” (v. 24). The whole life should then again stand before them, while the faithful were dead. But then the Lord says thus of it: What does it profit a /66/ man, if (thus to be repudiated by Me) he should gain the whole world, and should lose **himself**.

After all, he who does this, prolongs his life, but after that comes the full judgement. Then he will be **completely**, as a whole person, lost in God’s court.

In the parallel passages Matthew 16:28 and Mark 8:36 for “himself” there stands “his soul.”

People often read there wrongly: “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole external world (seen as doing well in the common life, not seen as connected with the denial that is mentioned in the text), and suffers harm **to** his “immortal soul,” or what shall someone give for salvation of his “immortal soul?””

Yet it says: “What does it profit a man, if he through denial of me may continue to enjoy, or as the case may be receive back, after the darkness of the prison-cell, the whole world (which persecutes him), and also suffers loss of his soul (that is loss of his **whole** soul, of his whole person) in the destruction. Or what shall a man give to save his whole person in God’s judgement.”

“Loss of **his** soul” is linguistically the same image as in Acts 27:10 “with loss of the ship:” not **to** the ship, for the whole ship was going to be lost. Thus not **to** the soul, for the whole soul would be lost in the judgement of the cowardly. Revelation 21:8.

A sharp admonition indeed in the struggle of the church in this world, not to be ashamed before the Lord of the church. Since, if we are, it will seize us in the flesh and bone in the day of judgement. It is a whole lot sharper than the traditional conception: harm **to** the idol, that is supposed to represent in us the religious part, the higher bit.

The Scripture addresses the living person as a whole and comforts or threatens him wholly.

Good on him who seeks the Lord when totally terrified by threats. The Lord is very merciful and gladly forgiving. /67/ Also Peter found grace, when he had been ashamed himself of his Master for a moment.

And just look how this righteous man became courageous as a young lion. Acts 2:14.

He has not considered his soul of any value any more than Paul. Acts 20:24 (the underlying text has **psuchè** here also).

f. Interior life, “heart,” “kidneys,” “mind”

Not only life, breath, desire, delight, person (Leviticus 5:1 etc.) was indicated by the word soul, but in certain contexts also the **mind**, the interior life of feeling and consciousness and willing. We usually call this the psychical in the person. It is the field of research for psychology.

Also here, however, “soul” signifies something, that each person can observe in himself and in others. It is thus not a mystical “something” in the person, a “higher self,” “that is smaller than a person can imagine,” and that “touches God,” and has never been seen, yet must be believed in. (The bits between quotation marks are cited verbatim from books on psychology from our circles.)

Here **soul** is, however, our own **interior life**, which we can address in order to cheer ourselves up.

The dejected Psalmist poet, who finds himself far from the public service of God in exile, speaks thus to himself: Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Saviour and my God. still love him for his redemption... Oh my God, he then complains, my soul is downcast within me, therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan... deep calls to deep, in the roar of your waterfalls... [Psalm 42]

In Deuteronomy 6:5 the Lord commanded that the Israelite shall love Him with his whole heart and with his whole soul and with all his strength. Here soul is the interior life next to heart /68/ and next to strength. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 also spirit and soul and body are named next to each other as “things” which a person has.

That is not to say, that a person is a three-fold creature, existing in three substances (trichotomy) any more than the mention of “body” and “soul” close together in Matthew 6:25 presents a two-fold division (dichotomy).

It is simply an enumeration of what the living soul person has. He has still more: for example “kidneys” (my kidneys desire much in my bowels, Job 19:27) which indicate the very deep life, which we mostly call the subconscious. Cf. Psalm 16:7. Even at night my kidneys teach me. Psalm 26:2. Test me, O Lord, try my kidneys. Isaiah 17:10. I, the Lord, fathom the heart and test the kidneys. Revelation 2:23. “That I am the one, who searches the kidneys and hearts.”

Soul speaks then principally of the emotional life, in the sense of emotions and contrivances of the heart.

Paul exhorted the Philippian, that they must stand in one spirit, be of one mind (it says in the text: be of one **soul**) combating together for the faith in the Gospel (see **Korte Verklaring**).²⁷

When David had to flee before Absalom, his followers were bitterly disposed. Husai reported to Absalom that they were bitter of **soul**, like a bear who is robbed of her young. 2 Samuel 17:8.

Job complained in bitterness of soul about his internal psychic difficulties: when I say, my bed shall comfort me, then you terrify me with (dismal) dreams, so that my soul chooses strangulation... [Job 7:13]

This “soul” in the person also stands in full life-connection with the whole living soul, which here yearns for death.

²⁷ [Check text of the Commentary]

Hannah poured out her bottled-up emotions in her prayer and when she said to the priest Eli, who in hurtful misunderstanding /69/ considered it drunkenness: But I am pouring out my soul before the face of the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:15.

Jonathan said to David, who was totally distressed, in full compassion: Whatever your soul says (what your emotional life desires from your friend), that shall I do for you. 1 Samuel 20:4.

In Job 14:20-22 it was said: When people die, they know their children no more. If they become great, the father does not know it. Or if they become insignificant the father pays no attention. And then Job thinks of his own fatherly sorrow about his children killed in one day. Then he said: when that happens, and the flesh is still on the father (such as for Job himself) then that flesh has sorrow. And his soul still being **in** him, is in mourning. Here again all the emotional life is named soul, in touching psychological depiction. This soul (that emotional life, that psychic life) is **in** him, just as also heart and kidneys and powers are **in** the living soul.

Song and music may bring this psychic life to a stirring of emotions. Therefore there were also singers and trumpeters in the service of the Lord. And then Israel sang: O my soul, praise the Lord. Psalm 146:1. And then the whole Israelite, the whole living soul, stood up to praise God with heart and mouth, with his attitude as much as with his psychical emotions, for in the end they were all one.

When our Lord said in the garden: my soul is totally distressed unto death, then this psychical anguish has seized him in the whole of His human soul – so that He fell down and the drops of blood pushed out of his sweat pores. An angel had to attend to Him so as to strengthen Him, it had seized Him so much.

And he experienced all that so that His people could find rest for their souls, Matthew 11:29, that in everything they should trust in Him, who has purchased them for His own, in terms of their psychical life as much as their body. He shall preserve our spirit and soul and body. In heart and kidneys we belong to Him.

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When His disciples are hated by everyone, then they must possess their souls (their emotional life) with patience. They must bear that suffering persevering in self-control. For none of them, not even a hair, shall be lost. Luke 21:17-19.

Peter said: if you are reviled because of the name of Christ... those who suffer that must commend their souls to God with doing good. 1 Peter 4:14 and 19.

They must not slacken and succumb in their souls. Hebrews 12:3. The pastors must help the community in this, for they watch over the souls. Hebrews 13:17. They must be there when the souls of believers are made to totter by preachers, who want to make them live “out of the law,” out of self-willed religion. Act 15:24.

When God’s people are made irresolute in the soul, they are unable to praise the Lord with the whole of their heart and the whole of their soul, then the souls must be made strong through the Word, which can save the souls. James 1:21.

For among the fleshly lusts, who conduct war against the soul of God’s children not the least is the apparently true wisdom in self-willed religion, which still is nothing other than satiation of the flesh. Colossians 2:23.

That is how irresolute souls are seduced, such as for instance by the antinomians of 2 Peter 2:14.

John was assured, that the elder Gaius certainly fared well concerning the soul, for he delighted himself in this, that Gaius stood in the truth against the false teachers and also walked in the truth (vs. 3). He had heard about that (vs. 4) and now he hoped also, that this brother who prospered in the truth of the sound doctrine also might enjoy health and prosperity, despite the animosity of Diotrephes, who wanted to be first in the church and attempted with loud evil words to eject Gaius from the community. Gaius could even become sick because of this. His soul could even become breathless like Elijah in the desert, like Jeremiah in the stocks, like Jesus in Psalm 22.

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In Psalm 66 the church recounts this conflict with enemies, who took them by surprise. And then the prophet said what God has done for his soul. I called to Him... and He heard. God rescued his people from their spiritual enemies and enabled their soul to praise Him for His loving kindness for His people. Psalm 66:16-20.

And in this deliverance this soul was redeemed from the grave and from hell. Their death is a passage to eternal life – with the Lord – and their resurrection is going to be the complete fulfilment of the redemption of their whole soul, of their whole life in Christ, to “immortality.”

No wonder that Balaam, who saw that prophetically, uttered the lamentation: may my soul die the death of the upright (true children of Israel) Numbers 23:10. And no wonder that Samson, seeing in faith this struggle between the church and her enemies, not esteeming his life, cried out: let my soul die with the Philistines. Judges 16:30.

No wonder, that many in church history have lost their soul (here, their life, their whole person) for the sake of Christ. They knew, that in this way they would find their soul (Matthew 10:39).

g. The “inward person” and the “outward person”

In 2 Cor. 4:8-18 Paul wrote about his persecution and oppression. He said there, that in the danger of his life, which he must suffer for the sake of Christ, he is busy “to bear **in his body** the death of the Lord Jesus.” He speaks there not about Christian asceticism so loved later on, by which people tried through self-willed religion to mortify the body (the lower), so as to supplement the work of Christ somewhat for salvation.

No, he meant this: I am now daily threatened with death by the enemy, so that the life-giving power of Christ shall reveal itself **just in my bodily existence** on my missionary /72/ journeys. After all, he can, being itinerant, according to the body be present in the communities. Thus the life of Christ, the power of the Lord, who arose from the grave, was revealed **in the mortal flesh** of Paul. Through the conversion of the heathen the life of Jesus was revealed. So then, says Paul, I suffer danger to my life, and my body does not get any the better, but in you, communities taken from among the heathen, the life of Christ is at work. And that is through my service, by which I am consumed bodily. Oh yes, death works in us, but life in your members. 2 Cor. 4:12.

And then he says: therefore I shall not delay. For although my **external person** (there it says outward man²⁸) was corrupted, not by asceticism, but by the Apostolic missionary work performed in danger of death), so nevertheless the internal (there it says inward person) is renewed day by day (in the community with Christ). For our light oppression (among others floggings, prison, stoning, banishment, misjudgement, betrayal, shipwrecks, attacks by robbers, discomforts of travel, sojourning in unhealthy districts), which very rapidly passes away (it can still last for a decade) is not for nothing. It (that light oppression) produces for us a wholly-very-excellent-eternal-weight of glory. Paul does not count the oppression, when he thinks about that. He heaps the words up one on top of another, when he must compare **the weight** of the coming glory against his suffering.

²⁸ “Outward” and “inward” are here adverbs, thus: **sides** of the person. It is the one person whether according to his internal or according to his external **side**.

Oh yes, he counted his “body.” In the first chapter he spoke of “abundant suffering,” of oppression. He speaks there possibly about the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19) and relates then, that in Asia he had been exceedingly oppressed even beyond his strength, so that he doubted that he should escape with his life. Yes, he already had the sentence of death in himself. But God has rescued him “**out of such a great death**” out of such great danger /73/ of death. And he hoped that the Corinthian community would pray for him, that the Lord would also rescue him further from the danger of death.

So Paul was hardly a Stoic, who despised death, or a man of asceticism, who took pleasure in mortifying the body. 2 Cor 1:8-13.

But Paul speaks of “light oppression” over against the heavy weight of glory, because he does not comment on the things which are before our eyes (dishonour, discomfort, suffering for the sake of Christ) but on the things which people do not see (the glory which God has laid aside for His faithful servants, the glory of the children of God, his “life” Colossians 3:3, that as yet was hidden with Christ by God).

This suffering in the body of the present time does not offset the glory which shall be revealed to us, when we will be glorified with Christ at His return. Romans 8:17-18.

That makes it for Paul a light thing to suffer heavy oppression.

The more he is oppressed externally (according to the bodily side of his existence), the more his heart of joy springs up within him, the more he enjoys joy according to his internal existence. By faith, hope is made strong. And the love for his Lord makes him rejoice in the service of the Lord and in walking in His ways. He has pleasure in the law of God “after the inward man,” as “interior person,” after that interior life of faith, in communion with the Lord Jesus, whose broken body he again could eat in the Holy Communion. Already the eternal life ruled in him in terms of this interior person. And his enemies could not steal this side of Paul from him. His “exterior man” could be killed, the “interior man” was renewed more and more; according to the body people saw Paul pulled down, according to “the soul” of Matthew 10:28 Paul was “immortal.” /74/ That life of him was hidden in God. There was the new person, which had been revealed in all kinds of fruit of the Spirit in his body. That life of the Spirit was **truly** alive, even though the body (the external persons in all its relations) still had to die because of sin. Romans 8:10. The Spirit is life for the sake of righteousness and if the Spirit of Him who has raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in us, then we have a firm guarantee, that He, who has awoken Jesus from the dead, shall also make alive our

mortal bodies (that is the believers according to their “external person”), through His Spirit, who dwells in us. Romans 8:10-11.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the continuous rebirth of people concerns thus the whole person. And as the rule is in human life, that out of the heart, from the inside out, are the issues of life, so the Holy Spirit also works out from the renewed heart to its outside, from the “internal person” through to the “external person.” The law of the Spirit of life is a pleasure for Paul according to the “interior person” and that is clear also from his deeds “in the body.” But there is in the whole of his “living soul” *in concreto* still another activity, namely that of the law of sin which still works in his “members.” Hence the conflict between this twofold “law” in Paul. Romans 7:15-26.

As a whole person Paul places himself, however, unconditionally on the side of the “Law of God.” The law is good. And he complains about the “law of sin in his members.” Although it is that he, stumbling in the practical life, still **does** what he even still **no longer** wishes to do; he may frankly confess, that in reality he himself **no more does it with the whole of his person**, but that the cause lies in the remaining sinful inclinations, which are in him. And because the renewing is working from within outwards towards the outside, he can place his mind (nous, or understanding) on the side of the law of God and place the principal seat of the law of sin in his members, in the external side.

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Elsewhere he states it still more sharply: his reborn “internal person” is not his true life. No: **Christ lives in me** and what I now properly may live in the flesh, in the whole of my concrete person, that I live **through faith in the Son of God**. Gal. 2:20.

The concrete living communion with the ascended Christ – through the believing eating and drinking of His flesh and blood – (John 6:53-54) – is the source of eternal life for the whole living soul. Now already we have the principle of that – in dying the believer will according to his “soul” (cf. Matthew 10:28), according to his “internal person,” be absent from the body, and present in another heavenly tent with the Lord – and at the same time the whole creation (the “souls” of the martyrs in heaven with impatience and the believers on earth sighing with the whole creation, Romans 8:23) anticipates the redemption of the body, the complete adoption as children. Romans 8:23.

Only then is the “living soul” redeemed according to all sides and also the mortal **body** of the believers has received immortality. Only then is death swallowed up in victory. Only then the shouts of joy, which the dying believers here already “in hope” have understood in principle, are perfectly heard: death, where is your sting, grave, where is your victory? 1 Cor 15:54-55.

Thither extends the expectation for the future of the prophecies in the Scriptures. It is remarkable how little mention there is of the “intermediate state” of the dead between their dying and the resurrection of the flesh. Just as in the tradition the salvation of the dichotomistic higher soul almost is the be-all and end-all, while the resurrection of the flesh is seen as a separate sequel, a redemption-of-the-lower left-over, so the Scripture speaks conversely and powerfully of the resurrection of the last day and only very much in the passing of an intermediate state. Yes, Paul considered everything to be lost, when the resurrection of the flesh is lacking. Then the Gospel would have been proclaimed for nothing, it would then have been vain effort, /76/ a speaking into the air. 1 Cor. 15:14.

It is remarkable that the word “soul” is predominantly used in Scripture to denote things other than the immortal life that God shall give to the believer directly after his death here on earth. The latter is meant only a very few times.

And while there is also mention of the deceased as “the fathers” (gathered to his fathers), “the dead,” as “Abraham,” and “Lazarus,” and “the rich man” in the hereafter – there are only a very few times mention of the deceased as “**souls** under the altar.”

In addition these “souls” are presented totally differently from the souls of the tradition elevated above time and space and everything that is lower; for these “souls” cry out for **vengeance** of their **blood** on those who dwell on the earth.

That whole Biblical usage is very far removed from the usage of tradition, which was nourished by Greek philosophical speculations about the essence of the soul.

As a rule, when thinking in the line of tradition, questions such as these come up: how can blessed souls still have feelings of vengeance and impatience and how is that resting for a soul? And what are the garments, which people put on them? And many seek a way out in the conclusion: it must have been represented anthropomorphically. Or in the case of Lazarus and the rich man: it is only a parable. In doing so one builds on one’s own wisdom and explains the simple direct representation of the Scriptures for... something that differs from what it says; even so different that we will never

understand it. Except of course the philosophers, who know that differs from a common man's understanding.

Only in complete rejection of the scholastic dichotomistic soul and of the mystically honoured "soul" – can we do justice to the usage of the Holy Scriptures on all sides, without leaving anything out.

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Naturally there is with such a rejection still no scientific systematic anthropology given. That is a lengthy task.

But only when we understand the Scriptures in its speaking about mankind, can we begin on our own anthropology.

h. "Body and Soul"

When we in every single case in the Holy Scriptures read "body and soul" next to each other, then the defenders of the tradition push against us with the words, see, there it stands still, "body and soul." And involuntarily we are inclined to understand this biblical term according to our usage, as a dichotomy: body (material substance) and soul (spiritual substance), both connected by a creation-seam, which is released in death. Indeed as Prof. Bavinck had stated in 1920,²⁹ both "soul" and "body" in this traditional significance differ from the "soul" and "body" in the Scriptures.

We can see that in the expression body and soul in Matthew 6:25: Take no care for your **soul**, what you shall eat, nor for your body, for that with which you shall be clothed.

There is thus eating for the soul and clothing for the body.

²⁹ ["In relation to the word 'soul' we must not think of the meaning which is connected with that today, and which we much more likely have borrowed from philosophy than from the Holy Scriptures." Dr H Bavinck. **Bijbelsche en religieuze psychologie**. Kampen: J H Kok, 1920, p. 16. "In the second place it is of importance, that the nature of humanity, with all its rich gifts and powers, is still always a unity according to the Holy Scriptures. Through the in-breathing from above, by Divine inspiration, the body formed out of the dust of the earth became a living soul. We may not interpret these words, as if a longer or shorter time previously, a soul in our sense was brought forth from nothing by God, and after that was inserted into the body formed out of dust. For the concept of a pre-existent soul, which first would have existed by itself for a longer or shorter time outside the body, is totally alien to the Scriptures. The doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul is of Greek origin, filtering later to the Jews and appears in the apocryphal books, but it is nowhere to be found in the Scriptures of the Old or New Covenant." Ibid, p. 17.]

Our traditional usage would never use body and soul next to each other in this way. The defenders of the tradition also never come up with this text.

They have actually but one text, to which they can appeal with any **appearance** of justification. That is Matthew 10:28: “Do not be afraid of those who can kill the body but who cannot kill the soul, but fear much more Him who can destroy both **soul** and **body** in hell.”

This text **appears** to assume the Greek dualism. Above we saw this expression in the same connection as internal-person and external-person, as “interior person” and “members,” as heavenly “abode” and earthly tabernacle. We can then explain Scripture by Scripture and must not /78/ take it, that in this **one** text the Greek philosophical dualism is mentioned, which we otherwise certainly find in the apocryphal Jewish wisdom books and in Philo and in the first church fathers, yet nowhere else in the Holy Scriptures.

Meanwhile this text sounds as if it gives some anchorage for advocates of dualism.

But when we see how, in the consistent usage of the Holy Scriptures, the word “soul” is employed completely differently and that nowhere does the word have the religious sound of something higher, then we must be very careful about building such an all-important point of anthropology upon **one** text.

The Gnostics for example can appeal even for divinisation of people to the sound of 2 Peter 1:4 for there it states, that we through Christ “shall be partakers of **the Divine nature.**”

The marginal commentators explain this word by the witness of the whole Scripture,³⁰ but the heretics say: but still it is written there.

So the pantheists appeal to Acts 17:28: In Him we live, we move and have our being. Yet see the marginal notes of our fathers.³¹

³⁰ [*der goddelijke natuur* Dat is, zodanige goddelijke eigenschappen, die den schepselen kunnen medegedeeld worden, en waarin het evenbeeld van God bestaat, als daar Zijn goedheid, heiligheid, wijsheid, heerlijkheid en dergelijke andere; Ef. 4:23,24; Col. 3:10. Want anderszins kan het wezen van God zelf geen schepselen medegedeeld worden. *The divine nature*, That is, such divine properties, in which the creatures are able to share, and in which the image of God consists, such as His goodness, holiness, wisdom, glory and similar others; Ephesians 4:23, 24, Colossians 3:10. For in no way can creatures share in the essence of God himself.]

³¹ [*in Hem leven* Dat is, door Hem of door Zijne kracht; gelijk Rom. 11:36; zie 1 Cor. 12:6. *zijn wij*; Dat is, hebben wij al wat wij zijn naar ziel en lichaam, en worden ook in hetzelfde wezen onderhouden. *Live in Him*, that is, through Him or through His power, compare Romans 11:36; see 1 Corinthians 12:6. *are we*, that is, we have all what we are according to soul and body, and were also sustained in the same manner.]

Held in the whole Scripture, these texts all at once come into the full light of **the doctrine and the usage of the whole of Holy Scripture**.

Let us therefore place Matthew 10:28 also in connection with the consistent usage of Scripture. The Lord spoke repeatedly of **losing your soul**. From a dualistic standpoint such a thing may not be said.

In Luke 12:4 (the parallel passage to Matthew 10:28) there is no mention of the soul even once.

Had this now been the most important part of the text, that the person in general has an “immortal soul,” which people cannot kill, and on which equally the whole religious life hangs, then Luke in all likelihood would have mentioned this with emphasis. /79/ But he says only: fear not those who can kill the body and after that cannot do any more.

On top of that there is objection against this text from the standpoint of dualism.

Jesus speaks of killing the **body**. But dualism says: the person consists of **matter** (that is his body) and spirit (that is his soul). How can, however, “matter” still be killed? The word “body” here also includes more than “matter.” And so “soul” contains more than “spirit.”

And again on top of that, God can “destroy (=kill) both body and soul in hell.”

i. “Dead soul”

When James was beheaded by King Herod, then his “body” was killed. “Body” here contains more than “the matter.”

The “living soul” James now became, following Scriptural usage, a “dead soul.”

In Lev. 21:1 it states that a priest should not defile himself with a **soul**. The connection indicates here that “dead soul” was meant, and so it is translated as “dead person,” just as it is in Numbers 5:2.

In Leviticus 21:11 it says he shall not approach any “**dead souls**,” which was translated: **dead bodies**.

In various places the underlying text has only **soul** which people translate as “**dead body**.” So Numbers 6:11 and Haggai 2:14.

What the tradition mistakenly names “mortal remains,” everywhere in the Scriptures this is still “soul,” sometimes “dead soul.”

We could say dead person, dead people.

The Scripture speaks then also always of **he**, who was buried. Not “his material residue.”

In so far as we can follow the person here “under the sun,” we follow him to the grave. And there the dead rest until the day of resurrection. When Christ comes in the clouds they come **out of the graves**.

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For so long are they there in the grave. That is the Scriptural language.

And there **he** decays to dust. (cf. you – not: your body, but “you” shall return to dust). Later the Scriptures speak of bones and dust.

But the expectation of the redemption of the **body** out of the pit of corruption remains for the believers, so that they do not see the “graveyard” as a resting-field (cf. car-graveyard) but as a field of God, wherein the body sown waits for a new incorruptible **garment**, which shall be **put on** in immortality and in communion with Christ as the firstfruits of the resurrection.

This dualism is scarcely Scriptural in its lingual usage about the body of the dead – so it is scarcely faithful to Scripture also in its portrayal of the internal person (cf. the soul in the sense of Matthew 10:28 such as we explained in the light of the whole Scripture) after death.

It does not say: the “immortal soul,” the “*substantia incompleta*” of Lazarus was borne by the angels to Abraham’s bosom, but **he, Lazarus**, the same **person** as here on earth, but now as a person in the realm of the dead. It also says: the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in pain... not: “his immortal soul” saw...

The representation of the Holy Scriptures of the dead is in this respect much closer to the practical usage of the Eastern people and to **Homer**, than to the dichotomistic tradition, which in the legacy of Plato teaches an “immortal soul” as a spirit without form. A spirit has no flesh or bones, said the Lord Jesus. But the Scripture says nowhere that a dead person could not have any shape. Indeed, if that had been the case the disciples would not have taken Him to be a spirit. Also the dead have

shape according to the representation of the Scripture (and the Eastern /81/ people), and indeed the shape (not “flesh and bones”) which they had here.

The realm of the dead is a very concrete given in the Holy Scriptures. There is the place of the dead. The Scriptures speak much about the dead. And the Lord forbade Israel to enquire from the dead.

Proverbs 21:16 says: A man, who strays from the way of understanding, shall rest in the community of the dead.

Isaiah 14 speaks in a satirical song about the King of Babel over his descent into the realm of the dead, vs. 9-16. See the **Korte Verklaring** of Prof. Ridderbos.³² Christ is risen from the dead, that is, out of the midst of the dead.

Everything which we know of the dead and of the realm of the dead and of “being with the Lord,” and of the resting and sleeping in the dust, that we know from the Holy Scriptures. For scientific research here is a forbidden part of the cosmos, also because of the **prohibition** against enquiring of the dead or to tread other occult paths (fortune-telling, sorcery). But also because this field in fact does not lie in our field of vision, the realm of the dead is no longer “under the sun,” and the grave is the boundary for scientific research by people about people. Everything that we know further about the continued existence of the dead people, we know only prophetically from God’s Word. We can still systematically process the data of Scripture, but in that way we may certainly curtail our curiosity.

We spoke about this already earlier. A serious penetrating study of Scripture concerning Sheol, Gehenna and Hades and “a dead person” (people after dying, pious in the Lord) is highly necessary. The translation of these words by “hell” and “grave” is unclear. Here traditional Christian thought must also be made stronger (over against Spiritualistic appeals to the Scriptures) /82/ by weeding

³² [“Now follows a remarkable scene in which the Babylonian ruler’s ‘descent into Sheol’ and his arrival in the realm of the dead is pictured. Especially at this point one has to take account of the explicitly poetic character of this prophecy. The entire description of the meeting between the ghost of the Babylonian king with other such spectres is pure poetry (as Calvin says: ‘As he had formerly attributed gladness to the trees, so now, by a similar figure, he attributes speech to the dead.’) The deep silence, which otherwise prevails in the realm of the dead, is now broken by his approach; the specters are aroused from their slumbers. They are the kings who once led nations the way a male goat leads his flock. They are presented as first seated on their thrones, then rising at the approach of the Babylonian ruler, whose coming fills them with astonishment and perverse delight, since many of them have been robbed by them of their thrones and lives. In this spirit they now call out to him that he has become as powerless as they. Thus he is thrust down into the realm of the dead, and an end has come to all his pomp and festal delight. Instead of artistic Babylonian rugs, maggots now form his bed and worms his covering: he must lie on the ground. (It is easy to see that the picture of Sheol and that of the grave are not clearly separated.)” J Ridderbos. **Isaiah**. Bible Student’s Commentary. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984, p. 141.]

out of the Christian tradition its false unscriptural dichotomistic presentations. Otherwise the new streams, which worship the occult, could get too much of a grip on us, because we are not handling the Sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word, to its fullest extent.

If one now wants to call the dead in the hereafter, those outside our concept of space, "souls," then they should on no account do that in the dualistic sense of the "immortal soul" of Greek philosophy and the tradition.

Just as the living person as person is named "soul," so people named the dead, as internal person, as "unclothed" person, also "soul." It is then the "dead" Lazarus, who came into Abraham's bosom, not the dichotomistic "soul" of Lazarus.

"They carried **his 'soul'** (dichotomistically conceived as *substantia incompleta*) into heaven" is a thoroughly unscriptural usage. Even people of flesh and bone can be in heaven.

Elijah went up as a living soul, completely, to heaven. And the Lord Jesus takes His **dead**, who have died in Christ, to Himself, so that they also might be where He is (He understood as a truly complete living person) and so that they as persons **fallen asleep** (persons, souls), may see His glory and in seeing that, already shall be blessed and really **rest** in the grave until His return, to rise again as immortal people (persons, souls). Only then is death swallowed up in victory, according to Scriptural usage. 1 Cor. 15:54, "Then" so the Scripture teaches us to say. And it is wisdom for us to speak like this, despite the aberration of the tradition.

Many a person wants to visualise inquisitively or scientifically, how it is possible that **he** as "external person" rests in the grave and that **he** also (as "internal person") is with the Lord. When we look into this question, must we firmly base ourselves /83/ on the Holy Scripture, in so far as it speaks about this to us.

The Scripture teaches us both: that should be enough for us to hold our reasoning in check. Living faith understands both.

But our perspective of space wants to make connections and what we visualise wants to keep on visualising and our science wants to see consistently, wants to see it fit. But here we are on the terrain, that is closed off for our **perspective** and **visualisation** and for **scientific** research. Better than speaking against the Scriptures on the basis of **our** wisdom, we should on the basis of the Scripture **leave our difficulties resting on this forbidden terrain**, until we **shall see the**

Scriptures confirmed through experience and our own perspective. Do we know precisely how it shall happen when the dead in their **own** body shall arise out of their own grave?

Yes, we can still continue our studies, but that shall then have to be coupled with a critical consideration concerning the boundaries of science and of our **visualisation** and **perspective**.

What goes there then from the dead to the Lord? This is every time the question, when we must abandon the tradition for the Scriptures. The answer shall probably be: **the person** as he is **kept in being as a dead person** through God's almighty power.

Is there not again a duality falling into two pieces? No, for when a body for example has had its head removed, then that still does not mean, that the body has been a **duality** with a creation-seam between trunk and head? So also, as the **person** here loses his life, as his body (the "exterior person") is killed, then has he lost his "soul," his existence here as a living soul, but as "interior **person**" ("internal person") "he remains living with the Lord." Lazarus remains Lazarus – but without "body." It is thus not his better **half** (immortal soul) which is there, but it is **he himself** in the state of death, yet freed from the judgement of death in the hereafter, because he now already may be with the Lord" /84/ may be in eternal **life**. His "soul," which already rejoiced in the Lord during his life, **that** soul may now taste the rest in the "hereafter."

Gregory of Nyssa (church father, died 394 AD) who conceived "soul" in the Greek sense of the tradition, expressed nevertheless the conjecture that the soul, which "connects" with all parts of the body in a living person, also can remain present in the decomposition of the body in each particle of the body returning to the dust and that nothing can tear this soul from the connection, which it now once had with the body.

So Gregory conjectured a certain connection between "soul" and "body" also after death. Just as in a shipwreck a sailor grabs hold of any remnants, so the "soul" can cling to the splinters of the broken body.

In his *Dialogue* with Macrina (his sister), which concerned death and the hereafter, in which he rejects the speculations of Plato and Aristotle – yet nonetheless remains very dependent on Origen, so that also he teaches the ultimate blessedness of all souls, also after the sojourn in hell – the Scriptures force him through the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh to maintaining this connection between the blessed soul and its own body. With that he comes close to the Scriptural usage, that the dead actually sleep in the dust and "remains" there until they shall hear the voice of

the Archangel. The “dead soul,” which was buried, is more than mortal remains. And the dead person, who is with the Lord, is not separate from his blood, forgotten here on earth. There remains a connection, unity of “essence.” The creature can be broken in death – but “breaking” is somewhat different from “separation into two substances,” along a “seam” between the two things in the creation.

It is thus not by virtue of the supposed possession of an /85/ “immortal soul,” which all people would have, but by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, that we shall put on “immortality,” and become immortal.

The heathen, on the other hand, say that this happens by right of nature, because in their opinion our rational soul, our best person “belongs” with God and is of His origin, and **by virtue of its nature** rests in Him and shows a certain similarity to Him and is just as unknowable and free as He is... plenty of reasons to admit this Sovereign into the audience hall of the highest Sovereign, or at least the “virtuous” ones among them.

They also acknowledge sin – yes, the circumstances also, the natural laws in the world... and the mind’s disturbances and passions and deliberations of the consciousness... one and all things under the law – ugly things, lower things, creature things... but totally, totally deep, was still in us that best of all, Ego, that was Sovereign. That was not forced to steal, it was ashamed. That was not inclined to passion, it made us blush. Apart from all that standing-under-the-law so that I would certainly behave differently! As it now after death was free from the need to eat it would never steal again – as it now after death did not know passion any more it should no more hate or commit adultery – what was there then against so that sovereign so obligingly similar to God, free **Ego** to receive in the heavenly tabernacles?

So the heathen **Ego** stood as free-from-the-law over against God’s as an ego over against **another Ego**, as free spirit over against God’s Spirit.

The Christian thinks totally otherwise, he does **not** elevate himself in “essence” above the creation. He confesses: I am dust and ash. He knows himself connected to place and time and all that comes to him from God. Where he lives, that is God’s decree. What he eats, his daily bread, God’s hand provides. His thoughts stand under God’s supervision and as a child of Adam he knows himself condemned before God. Not as sovereign **Ego** over /86/ against sovereign **Ego**, but as creature over against the Creator, as sinner over against God, as child of the covenant over against the God of the Covenant, as straying over against the Father, as recalcitrant or as obedient son, as penitent sinner,

as praising servant of the Lord, as militant Christian, as prophet and priest and king, as church member, as father in his family, as Christian ruler, as Christian scholar... in all relations, in all functions, in all spheres, this living soul stands before His God as before his Sovereign, who **everything**, but then also **everything**, has to say about him and against whose highest majesty he has forfeited everything – over against the Father, Whom he also in Christ wants to thank for all blessedness and salvation-out-of-pure-grace.

There is no trace to be found in the Holy Scriptures of a “higher” something in him, that by nature should stand in closer relation to God.

That people certainly read into certain texts. For example as people so read it, that the Lord has breathed the “immortal soul” (the higher Ego) into Adam. The scholastic psychology has always taught that, but also there the influence of the synthesis between heathen and Christian science was at work. It does not say there: “**the soul**” is of God’s family, but: **we** are God’s family. And not: **the soul** is made according to the image of God – yet **the person** is made according to God’s image.

We must on this point critically consider the traditional scholastic psychology because of this mingling of heathen and Christian motifs – we must ask what God says in His Word about His creatures, which we may see before our eyes and studiously examine.

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7. **Actual distinctions in the living soul**

We saw in Chapter I the tin can as a **creature**, in which the manifold wisdom of God can be investigated by science.

In Chapter II we discussed the unlawfulness of seeking for a mysterious “essence” in that creature – as if there should stand behind the creation an even “higher” creation.

In Chapter III we saw how Realism grasps for this type of higher “essence” of things in the general forms, for example, “the can,” the “can-being.”

On the other side stood Nominalism, that calls these general forms only “names” and that places logical knowing **over against** so-called “true knowledge.” We posited, that **the truth** concerning the **creature** can be known in the light of the Scriptures, as well as the truth concerning God, cf. Hebrews 10:26.

In Chapter IV we examined the Scriptures concerning whether they speak about the divinisation of the creature.

In Chapter V we discussed the Gnostic Ego, that thinks it is able to ascend even above God.

In Chapter VI we saw how the Scriptures see the person as “living soul,” and always as a creature, without dualism.

In this Chapter (VII), we will now examine more closely the distinctions which science can demonstrate in the one “living soul,” which are possible for science to investigate here on earth.

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Thus here we remain on the limited terrain of human **research**, and we thereby make thankful use of the light which the Holy Scriptures shine on this point. It is a great advantage that we were admonished not to go into the vain fantasies of fleshly science.

Also, we no longer seek to absolutise one of the many givens in human life and to make it dominate over all the others. We do not, as does the “materialist” (energeticist) revere the physical as all-dominating, even though people are also physical – and nor do we see the psychical as king, even though we have psychology as a rich field of research about people. Neither do we make religious life all-dominating, for it is not religion, but Christ who is our Redeemer and we do not stand with Him only in religious community of faith, but in complete covenant community³³ in the whole of our existence. And even if we sleep we are “the Lord’s.” We are in life and death the Lord’s possession. He did not buy back only our religious life, but us, precisely and completely as we are able to move on scales. With “body and soul,” so the Catechism says, completely Scripturally. He has redeemed “my soul,” that is **me** totally, from death, says Psalm 116.

So then, it is this person which is the object of science for us.

³³ See my: **Leven in Het Verbond**. Kok: Kampen, 1937. [See for instance, pp. 18-19. “There are the common believers, miserable people who nevertheless cry out: I thank God for redemption in Jesus Christ in whom is all my blessedness, “for both body and soul, and in time and eternity.” For He has redeemed **my soul** and delivered it from death, he has purchased **me** as **living soul**, saved me as **whole person**, when he as whole person, as the Son of David, was hung /19/ on the cross, and when He was raised up (see Psalm 116 with marginal comments). We believe in the resurrection **of the flesh**. And it is **not** true, that the resurrection already happens in “conversion” or in our “experience,” while, if you will, the body shall also be saved one day, but only “as an appendage.” In the Holy Scriptures “the whole living soul” is in the communion of the Covenant. And in the Epistles much more was spoken of about the return of the Lord and of the resurrection of the flesh, the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23), than of the intermediate state of the dead with the Lord. The latter is an expectation of the greatness that shall come, the “revelation of the children of God,” the renewing of heaven and earth. Also the heavens must be renewed: the heaven is also creation, and the whole creation seeks renewal.”]

In order to know, we must first begin with distinctions. God can know everything alike in all its interlaced relationships. For **us** it is necessary to think of things separated in our theoretical science, and to arrange the data for these things and to discuss them one by one.

What does appear then as reality in a person? It is a fact, that anyone knows – and also the Scripture speaks /89/ of this – that we humans are connected to numbers, that our days are counted, that on all sides we have to do with numbers. No single person is elevated above number and sovereign above the world of numbers. Not even a millionaire can make a hundred and one out of a hundred, or lengthen his life by two days or for a month of a year to commence earlier. The living soul stands in the **arithmetic** sphere and in that it is under God's law concerning numbers. A person is also this tall and this broad – he has a part in the **spatial** sphere – and also here he is under the law. He can not make his height one jot more. The person is also flesh and bone, and blood, firm matter, fluids and gases, and he has weight. Also in this – in the **physical** sphere –he is subject to all God's laws for nature. He is not free even to increase his weight [outside these laws].

The person also has an **organic life** – just like plants and animals. He has a head, arms and bones; he has lungs and a heart and blood circulation and life, he was nourished and stands also under God's laws for growth, nutrition and procreation with all plants and animals. So he cannot be “free” even in that. God feeds him, with all living creatures on earth, and when He takes away their breath, then they die and return again to dust (Psalm 104:29).

The person also has a **psychical** life. He has knowledge of his experiences and he knows what he sees. We saw that the Scripture also gives the name of “soul” to that knowing inner life, thus indicating the psychical. The logical “conceptual” **thinking** is still something else again. More terrain of the spirit. Animals also have psychical knowledge in an animal-like manner: a cow knows its owner and a donkey “knows” its master. But the person knows in a human way his environment and experience – also his inner experience of joy and sorrow, deliberation and disappointment, pain and comfort, life and hope – everything which people go through in the psychical. That also stands under God's laws for the psychical, and psychology studies that.

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A person is active also in the logical sphere. In this he has something above the animals, which certainly have some “knowledge” “of the manger of its master.” Animals certainly “learn,” yet do not reason. They do not draw logical conclusions, even though they certainly act on instinct, so that **we** can discover a logical connection in it.

But wisdom, the distinctions in all God's great works – the analysis of what there is to think about – that is given to humans. The Lord has given to us the gift that we can accept education in good understanding, wisdom and discipline, justice and science (Proverbs 1:2, 3).

For that it is necessary to accept that we hear, that is making **distinctions** when we listen. Also in this analytical sphere no person is sovereign. We can not think arbitrarily.

Either it is error and it is not correct, or it is correct.

But a person can not only think, he can also generate something. There is an **historical** development.

He also takes part in his **language-circle**, in which also arbitrariness does not govern, and also not Personality, but God's law for language. Somebody is also in the **social** sphere: he is taken up in all sorts of social interactions and associates with his fellows. Also **economically** he stands under God's law. He stands in the economic life, whether at the centre of a world city, or whether in Robinson Crusoe's island. And there also the economists are not in control, not even the Soviets, but God the Lord. And that we can number our debts, is also from Him. Even here we are dependent on all sides. Also in the sphere of **justice** every person knows his place – when he appeals to justice – and justice is from God. And doing injustice is sin.

Further, the person stands in the ethical sphere. He certainly knows it also through the tradition, in his heart, when he does what is ethically wrong. Even the heathen accuse each other of ethical wrong. How much more delicately must the Christians then feel, where the Lord gives His law in clear words and the Holy /91/ Spirit is promised to them for prayer – so as to lead them in the way of the Lord also in the ethical field.

Further he stands in the religious³⁴ sphere, for example as the praying, believing person (bearer of God's image) over against the Creator: as child of the Covenant to the God of the Covenant, or as a person who seeks to make things right with God by himself through religion. That latter is again sin: **I am the Lord** your God... who has redeemed you... you shall have no other gods before My countenance! To do that is breaking of the covenant. For the prophets the first evil was "going whoring away from the Lord." Also God says: You shall make for yourselves no graven image,

³⁴ See my: **Leven in Het Verbond**. [For instance, see this statement of Janse from this book: "There is nothing in true religion and nothing in the whole of Holy Scripture, that would have nothing to do with Him, and therefore there is nothing we can mention about our religious life and nothing to be read in the Holy Scripture, that does not stand in relationship to the Covenant and to Christ as Head of the Covenant." (p. 10)]

neither follow your own concocted religion. Any religion other than by the blood of Reconciliation and by the Law of the Covenant God is not out of faith but from unbelief. And everything in religion which is not from faith, is sin.

Over all these things is **the honour and the glory of God's works**, and we may see this glory. Some, such as Rembrandt, have immortalised such moments – but every person still sees and hears something of the beauty, which God places over everything, and praises Him for this. On account of this honour and glory of the whole creation the Scripture appeals to us to praise God, above all because of the honour and the glory, wherein God reveals Himself to His church in Christ.

Every living soul who comes before us is right there, in reality, as a whole person, standing simultaneously in all spheres, under the Law of God. There is no piece of his life, no nook of his whole life, where something such as a Sovereign Ego would be able to lodge. He is as a whole person, a father, as a whole person someone who was robbed, as a whole person a thief, as a whole person a believer, as a whole person a God-lover or someone, who certainly sees God's great works but denies God the honour.

From among all these functions, it could also be possible to seek a king /92/ over the whole person. Is his thinking king? Why not his psychical feeling and willing? Is his sense of justice king? Why not his ethical notion? Is his believing king? Why not as a speaker?

So people can go through all these options.

But enough of that.

God is King over all this.

And when a person is king in one or other manner, then he is that not because of his **nature**, because of his **essence**, but because of his **office**.³⁵

God has commissioned him in that office, and he is then an office-bearer through the grace of God.

³⁵ [See A Kuyper. "Every person has received an office or service from God Himself. This is the case already with a child at school, who in learning his lessons, in the good and controlled conduct of his work, in his going to school when he ought, has received a Divine call for the earliest years of childhood. And so it is with the quiet mother, who has her family to care for; with the domestic servants and labourers of every kind, who carry out their duties in families or in workplaces or in places of business. It is the case with the investor, who conducts his stewardship with his money." **E Voto Dordraceno. Toelichting op den Heidelbergischen Catechismus**. 3rd Edition. Kampen: J H Kok, n.d. Vol. 4, p. 496. See the discussion of this passage, and further explanation of the idea of human office, in K J Popma. **Inleiding in de Wijsbegeerte**. Kampen: J H Kok, 1956, pp. 40-41.]

Therefore people must not seek the offices of the Christians (prophet, priest, king), in the office-bearer (for instance, prophet = thinking, priest = heart, king = will) for that is just as wrong as if people start arguing that Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina has to thank her clearer understanding or her firm will or her sympathy with sufferers for her crown.

That office of the person is thus totally different from a part of the person himself.

The person, in so far as he is a subject of research for science, is also an office-bearer.

He is, as far as it goes, “image of God,” called to be prophet, priest and king. By nature we are, however, unholy and impure and have become slaves to sin. Even those, who “in hope” are blessed and already **have** eternal life here “in principle,” and have a pleasure in God’s law according to the internal person, can still not in this, as far as it goes, appear before God. Even though we have not stolen or lied and even though we have not today served any other gods, yet we still can not in this way, **without necessity**, not even because of our work, appear before God with dirty clothes on – Israel must bathe itself and wash before coming before God at Sinai. Should God not take account of us there?

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A father would punish his children, if they walk about with dirty hands. But would God not pay attention to this in his creatures? We become angry when a student shows error in the logical sphere through stupidity. And God, who has made us wise in Adam, should in no way recognise error in that?

No, we as a whole person, with all our misery in all spheres are leprous before God – if He enters into judgement with us, who shall then survive? And on which basis shall we stand?

Therefore Christ has bought not **egos** or **hearts** or “**bloodless souls**,” but people, just as the Catechism says: according to body and soul in life and death³⁶ – with the whole of their life in all spheres. Shall God not grant for us all things with Christ?

And so the publican in the Temple did not stand before God as a Sovereign **Ego**, that now will negotiate on the basis of his totally free status with that other also free **Ego**. That is what the Pharisee did: I thank you Lord, that I am not... I fast... I give...

³⁶ [Heidelberg Catechism, Q.1. “What is your only comfort in life and death? That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.”]

That was a person, who had developed his **Self** to this dizzying height. He justified himself. He had stripped off the world from himself in fasts and giving alms, he had with the help of his Law of Moses, become king in the Centre – and attempted to justify himself there, which in his opinion certainly was successful for him. He went away to his house with his “peace” in his heart, he was contented with himself. Surely he stood inside there above the Law. God’s Law did not judge him, so he thought, on the inside. Surely he thought like this in his deep “Ego”?

But the publican did not stand like this. As a publican, as a servant of the Romans against his own people, as an avaricious (greedy) money-extortioner, he was cursed by the Jews from top to toe. And Father Abraham would certainly not accept such a person. /94/ He fled to God – because of grace. And he was clothed with the righteousness of Christ – he went away with better and greater righteousness than the other.

And then there was change in his life. Even his fingers grasping for money behaved differently. His clothes were of lesser material, but he gained honour; his meals were poorer, but the Judge now had nothing against him. Also he came into the Temple – now justified, in order to praise God – and he brought his own cow for a thank-offering through the priests, who perhaps looked at him strangely because of this religious faith-act.

But concerning an Ego somewhere inside him, that now must be developed “with God’s help” in order to heal again the “flaw” in his existence and to achieve the “unity of the personality” in “continual exciting activity of the Ego that rests in God”... rather, people would be able to follow precisely this course, I think, with the Pharisee.

With that I will naturally not say, that even believers can not be misled concerned the **Ego**. But even though church history shows this seduction continuously, it is therefore no less bad.

Or was it not bad, that Israel again and again served the false gods of Canaan?

Should it then not be bad, when again believers continually intrude heathen motifs in their worldview?

Reformation, return to the Lord, to His Word, is necessary, if we are not to perish through that heathenism.

And every attempt to repent and to banish idols from our life-perspective, also from philosophy, anthropology, and psychology, must have our heartfelt sympathy and intercession.

Over against the many arbitrary constructions the truth always has this going for it, that it is seen in reality and is supported by the Scriptures, and that all who have “seen” it are now also /95/ convinced **by the truth** and not through this or that “authority” or philosophical fashion.

When three children do their maths together at school and they make errors, then perhaps they get three different answers. That is confusion.

But if they calculate correctly, then they all have the same answer. That is the speaking of truth.

Might also this **truth**, which speaks about reality and which says about that just what God’s Word says, find many hearers and now witness to many who “did not see it in this way earlier,” that it is true, so that they now also see it themselves.

Above all: so that they see, that the Scripture witnesses to it in this way.

Then from day to day, their eyes shall be open more and more to the danger of idols, that threatens everywhere in our Christian-living-outside-Scripture. They shall be thankful when the Lord teaches us to think Scripturally in these anxious days of apostasy, also in philosophy and anthropology.

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8. Heathen motifs in Scriptural interpretation

We can now also indicate, where people mostly have conceived the distinction between “high” and low in humans. There has been on that point quite a lot of difference among the various dualisms, for one can make the incision rather arbitrarily. One includes in the sovereign part functions, which another places under the law in the lower. And so this arbitrariness it certainly makes this dividing of the creature seem incorrect.

Why do people separate humans, in terms of their functions, in two?

In general the most popular separation is placed at the point where humans appear to possess higher functions than the animals. Humans should then certainly according to their material-spatial existence, such as in nutrition, growth and reproduction and also certainly in his emotional life (psychical) – be related to the animals, and in that they stand under the law just like the animals. But in his thought-life and in his social and ethical life, and above all in his religious life, he should he transcend those “animal-like” features in him.

Understanding	Noble human life
Psychical	
Organic	
Physical	
Spatial	
Arithmetic	

[Figure 1]

We thus get the schema at Figure 1. The person is then half-animal-like, half noble human.

The vertical line represents the person in the schema. The horizontal line is the “seam” which was “assumed” to be placed there.

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What lies above this is “the higher,” which is elevated above the “animal-like” and where people readily accept the “image of God,” while the lower has something considered animal-like.

Neither of these two find any support in Scripture. The Scripture sees the creature “according to its kind” and according to its history. A human foot is in nothing related to an animal paw. Human breath is not animal breath – and human blood is the blood of someone who is made according to the image of God. Genesis 9:6.

Another group, however, considers the understanding also to be in the lower. The lower feature of the understanding is then seen to be genuine in the “rascal,” who cunningly does with all his understanding, that which rises up out of his lower nature. If it is good, his “better ego” on the other hand must rise up... and that then is the ethical life and the religious and the idea of justice – briefly that “better” in him, that was not considered to be dependent on the lower and that dwells in him as an “angel.” Here the schema is like that in Figure 2.

“Spirit” “better self”	“angel”
Understanding	
Psychical	
Organic	
Physical	
Spatial	
Arithmetic	Good-for-nothing “lower self”

[Figure 2]

Again others place in the person a something “supernatural,” while the rest must be called then “merely natural.”

One can also speak of “nature and grace” as if grace is a higher “something,” that stands above the lower life in us. A person then lives “merely naturally,” until there is something “placed” in him, that is then called “grace.” If he believes, that grace is in him, and then he is internally “for eternity.” His ordinary life then still remains natural, certainly, but that higher in him is then the so-called spiritual life. (Note the small s.) In the Holy Scripture this is completely different. There, grace is the precious dispensation of **God** towards us, for example to “Jacob” as he fled from Esau. There it is not grace which is in us, /98/ which dwells in us, but the **grace** which God demonstrates to poor sinners. And he **demonstrates** grace to the whole person and over the whole of his life, over his bread as much as over his religious exercises in the church.

In addition, one can see “faith” as something sovereign in the person and consider the faith-knowledge as a mysterious contact of a mysterious higher Ego in us with the spirit of the Unknown God. For example, that is the case with the Gnostics.

Then people consider the higher still more “narrowly” than the preceding position does.

There is no mention of something “noble” in the person, no mention of “an angel of a better Ego,” no mention of a “supernatural grace.” The whole person, just as he stands there before you as a creature, is called “nature” and this creaturely world is “alien to God.”

But now there is in the innermost interior, in the “higher Ego,” a contact with another world. That contact point is “smaller than people can imagine.” “It does not have a place or seat.” It is the “interior,” the “repose.” And that “Higher Ego” has contact with God. There God has communion with people. There we find the free personal “essence” of the person, which is elevated above “nature.”

Here the higher in the schema is set **above** the vertical, even above Biblical faith, and above the Christian life, which was still considered to be the lower.

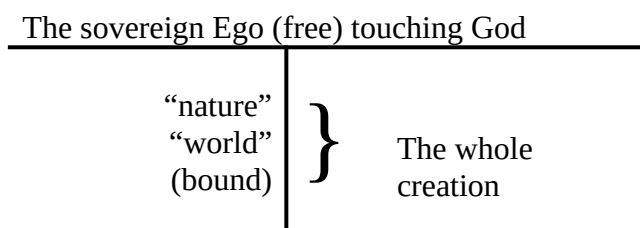
Finally, the true religion was considered to be a Gnostic communion between the “free Ego” and “God,” – as between two Sovereigns.

Here the Ego is then seen above the real creature. Here has it become a **Gnostic Ego**, a vain image, something that does not exist.

The **dualism** of the first two schemas already again clears the way for the doctrine of that Gnostic “Ego.”

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The Gnostic schema is thus as in Figure 3.



[Figure 3]

For the dualism of these schemas people have, in the course of the ages, made use of the Scriptural distinction of “soul and body” or of “flesh” and “spirit” (**sarx** and **pneuma**) or of “natural” and “spiritual,” etc.

These word pairs appear repeatedly in the Holy Scriptures. Yet whoever researches the usage of these words in the Scriptures sees right away, that there they have a completely different content.

Yet these words are often cited from Scripture in the literature, as if they had the dualistic significance which we sketched above, and even a Gnostic significance. In the history of the church these dichotomies (dualisms) have often been at issue: Clement of Alexandria and Origen have time and again propagated these misconceptions following in the path of Philo. That has made the conflict with the Gnostics and other subjectivistic directions difficult.

These dualistic motifs have also penetrated into the Scriptural conceptions of Christians concerning many Biblical texts, which they apparently therefore borrowed, while by-passing all that which the Scripture testified elsewhere against it.

In the period after the exile the Jews preceded us in following the philosophy of the heathen (Greeks) in this regard. In the “Book of Wisdom” we read in Chapter 1:15 “Righteousness is immortal.”

We hear here right away another sound than the one in the Holy Scriptures. Here there is mention of “immortal virtue.”

In the Bible “immortal” appears in only two places, namely in 1 Timothy 6:16, of God “who alone has immortality,” /100/ and in 1 Corinthians 15:53-54, “the mortal shall **put on** immortality.” In Note 56 [152?] on verse 50 the Marginal Commentators say that also our body is immortal.³⁷ They mean then, that the body of Christians shall then continue to exist, free from the judgement of death, that befell our race as wages of sin. We should distinguish this “immortality” then from “continued existence.” For those whose “body and soul” will both be destroyed in Hell, shall also continue to exist according to the body under the eternal judgement of **death**. There is no trace in the Holy Scriptures of “immortal virtue,” “immortal soul,” “immortal spirit” and so forth.

Also we read in the **Book of Wisdom**, 8:19 “I had received a good soul, or rather, because I was good, I had entered into an undefiled body,” and in 9:15: “For a perishable body weighs down the soul.”

Similar texts betray their origin. In the Holy Scriptures something totally different was said. The wisdom of God’s people, that had become great in the Scripture and the preaching of Ezra’s lawyers [scholars of the law], already was again in synthesis with the wisdom of this world.

In pious usage similar “apocryphal” sayings live on and it appears sacrilege to testify against them. So just as it was with Gideon, it is not surprising when we throw down the altars of Baal!

The Jew Philo, a contemporary of the Lord Jesus, in Alexandria, has gone further still. He has sought a synthesis between the Old Testament and the Greek worldview. The usual consequence is then, that the pagan-ness overpowers the holy. **The** “scandal” of the Old Testament for Greek speculation is this: that it takes things, to be as God placed them under the law – precisely such as they appear for us – and thus there is no “essence” “in” or “**behind**” them.

Well now, Philo took this scandal away from the whole Old Testament by seeking a hidden “essence” behind every ordinary statement. He read common words for common things - /101/ but that can not be the real, the essential. There must sit something “behind” this, the “essential” sense.

³⁷ [Reference does not tally with the text of the *Statenvertaling* and the comments. The correct one could be Comment 152 on vs. 50: “That is, the eternal life, that is incorruptible and imperishable, which, at some time the believers shall possess, according to both body and soul, and so it follows that their bodies must also be immortal. For mortality and immortality contend against each other and can not exist together.”]

Whoever sees the heathenness of that, will have no need to read **what** Philo read behind them. It becomes completely obvious, that through such a heathen position the result also must turn out to be heathen.

“Heavenly” was then defined by Philo as rational – the earthly is then the animal-like in humans.

Should the difficulties not be appreciated after so many centuries so as still to return to this muddling of Scripture, as if the same misunderstanding did not still also survive even among Christians. Many still take offence at the concrete and the reality of the Old Testament. Some think the New Testament is still able to be made “spiritual.” And imperceptibly they transpose the words of the New Testament into a Greek sense, and then they must query the connection between the Old and New Testaments. The Apostles were all Jews, who had grown up with the Old Testament. In their speaking and writing they thought in the line of the Old Testament, which was not abolished by Jesus, but which is fulfilled through Him. The Lord Jesus spoke always according to the Scriptures. “So that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,” that was his desire. And should that Word, which for Him was already in His youth as honey for the soul (Psalm 119:97-104 and Luke 2:46), be alien to us?

That is then not good for our Christianity.

And then it would come about, that we understand the New Testament even less, because we have “Greekified” the New Testament, and, just like Philo, read a “meaning” behind it. This meaning does not really belong to it, but to the world of the “idols” and which is therefore poor; meanwhile the real content of Scripture displays the richness of God’s grace for the whole of life.

By reading the New Testament in a so-called “spiritual manner,” thus for example to consider the resurrection as something that happens in our thought-life and the grace of God as **something sovereign**, that dwells in our /102/ spirit, therefore these “spiritual” things become pure abstractions and the preaching about this “spiritual” world becomes soporific.

The opinion arose very early among the “thinkers” in the Christian churches, that the Biblical terms “fleshly” and “spiritual” correspond with the contrast between spirit and body, just as Gnosticism saw every person as *pneuma-sarx*.

“The fleshly” then in each person points to the lower life: matter, flesh, bone, blood, eating, drinking, growth, reproduction, emotion, nervous system, intuitive life... that was then all called

fleshly. Yet Moses was then equally as fleshly as Korah [Numbers 16]. And Paul was then more fleshly than the false prophets of Colossae, who did not spare the body, but practiced asceticism.

Here the consequences presented themselves: that either Jesus was flesh, but then could not be eternally God – or that he gladly abandoned that flesh on the cross, so as to destroy the work of the world-creator (the demi-urge of the Old Testament) who worked with matter (Marcion) – or that He was not flesh, but had a sham body (Docetists).

John spoke of all these movements, which all resisted the doctrine that the Son of God had become flesh, as those of the anti-Christ. They all lived out of the spirit of the anti-Christ.

According to this dualism the “spiritual” was “the higher” in every person, the rational, the human spirit.

And again, Judas was then at least as spiritual as the man born blind in John 9, and the simple mother of Jesus, Mary, was then less spiritual than Caiaphas or Pilate, who still belonged to the “spiritual elite.”

According to this heathen interpretation I must then consider the text: “So there is then no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh,” (Romans 8) in this way: /103/ no judgement threatens them, who do not listen to the lower life, who do not then have much need of nutrition, reproduction, nervous system, muscle-activity, sport, and common daily life. They “live from day to day on this plane” eating and drinking and sleeping and working, just like the manual labourer, only from sheer necessity. And then it continues: “but who walk according to the spirit.” I must then read this as: no condemnation for the spiritual elite, for those, who have kept matter and the body down through fasting and discipline. Verse 5 is then to be read like this: “For those who are according to the flesh, think about the things of the flesh;” children think about eating, drinking, playing, sleeping – of plants and flowers and trees – always matter, the whole crowd is just close to the ground. But **those who are according to the spirit**, the spiritual elite, the leaders of the people, the aristocrats of the spirit, who do not think about the things of eating and drinking, the things which are connected with nutrition, growth, reproduction, who do not think about clothing and amusement – who think only about science and spiritual culture, they stand far above the fleshly people, who seek their bread in the sweat of their brow in their fields!

The conception that this lower life (vs 7) would then be enmity against God – for example reproduction! –then leads to the view that the “body” must be mortified (vs. 10) so the spirit might live (thus asceticism arose). The Christians of the Middle Ages were still often delightfully consistent – unlike our Christianity, that can be so in love with and enthusiastic about Francis of Assisi, and at the same time move not a muscle to actually follow him. The Christians of the Middle Ages have read it in this sense and they have then also done this, they have “mortified” the body, subdued, chastised, tortured... in order to see the spirit living.

And it was fortunate for them. Their **spirit** was really sharp after fasting. Their thoughts were more prolonged on the “spiritual,” their “fleshly” hunger disappeared.

The people with deep, pure eyes and sunken cheeks /104/ – the people with meditative-still countenance; with pure-white hands – they were actually totally different people to “Speknek” [Fat Neck] and his family from Timmerman’s Pieter Brueghel.³⁸ Psychically and logically it had also certainly had something for it. But the Scripture judges that **both** types live for satisfaction of the flesh (cf. Col. 2:21-23).

The Holy Scripture gives that judgement, which arbitrarily appears to us to be too hard on the first group, because there “fleshly” and “flesh” signify something different. Headstrong religion of the ascetics is there also called the satisfaction of the “**flesh.**” The distinction *sarx* (flesh) and *pneuma* (spirit) is there on the whole not a separation of the person into two pieces according to the functions, as if eating then was “fleshly” and thinking about religion then was “spiritual.”

Spiritual then signifies in the Holy Scripture: led by the Holy Spirit. It is standing under the leading of the Holy Spirit. It then stands also in Romans 8 regulated by a capital letter. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit when a sinner becomes spiritual over against his fleshly state in Adam. And this operation of the Holy Spirit is not only internal in the spirit of a person and to be perceived in his conscious life, but also in all the rest of his life. If we are led by the Spirit, then our feet go on Sundays to the church, then our purse is opened for God’s Kingdom, then is there charity in the heart for the distressed.

The Spirit works, when young men in the Youth Organisation sit bent over God’s Word in order to speak with each other about it. The Spirit gives leading in the choice of office-bearers, etc.

³⁸ [Felix Timmermans. **Pieter Brueghel**. Leipzig: Im Insel, 1928. ET **Droll Peter**. Trans. Maida C. Darnton and Wilhelmina J. Paul. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1930.]

And everything which happens under the leading of the Holy Spirit – and thus also according to the Word out of which this Spirit takes His preaching – that is called Spiritual in the Holy Scriptures.

Walking according to the Spirit is: walking through the Spirit, according to the Word, as whole people, just as much in eating and drinking and in /105/ family life and work and sleep as in thinking and feeling and speaking – just as much in ethical life and religious life.

What then does **this** “Spiritual” have to do with the distinction mentioned above between bodily life and thought life, as a free spirit and a bound body? Nothing.

Because many subjectivists do **not** consider as sins those sins of the spirit such as pride, idolatry, self-idolisation, hate against God and against neighbours, giving venom, proud self-sufficiency, defamation, etc, and on the other hand considers as sins those deeds which stand in connection more with nutrition, and reproduction (drunkenness, whereby a person loses his self-control, debauchery, whereby he likewise forgets himself, fornication, whereby he can not hold himself to be great and inaccessible). These he considers totally bad sins against himself. Therefore there arose also among some Christians the false distinction between a **better Ego**, that actually does not do much evil, and a lower life, that is indifferent and for which a person must be ashamed of himself.

But the fleshly person in the Holy Scriptures is called fleshly through and through, from top to toes. Fleshly! Even though he sits in a kingly fashion at a banquet without also eating or drinking too much. Fleshly, just as much as a drunken man, who lies under the table. Yes, the godless proud attitude of his **Ego** over against his neighbour and over against God stamps him still as the most fleshly.

For “fleshly” signifies in the Scriptures: trusting in himself, following his own evil heart, which is hatred and revolt against God, assault on His sovereignty.

“Living according to the flesh,” (Romans 8:13) that is sinfulness. That is what Jerusalem did in its religion and that Caiaphas did in his zeal for the temple-without-Christ.

“**Works of the flesh,**” these are not merely only adultery and impurity and lasciviousness, but also service of idols and sorcery and animosity and quarrelling and wrangling and envy (Gal. 5:19-21).

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“**Members who are on earth,**” that are among others also wrath, anger, slander (Col 3:8).

“**The body of the sins of the flesh**” (Col 2:11) is the whole structure of sin in the concrete whole person. And that is in those, who are of Christ, in principle “circumcised,” “buried” in baptism as sign and seal of “being dead to sin with Christ” (Col. 2:11, 12, see Marginal Comments).³⁹ Cf. Rom. 6:4 and 6:6.

“**The old person**” is then also the sin in the whole person. Col. 3:9 and Ephesians 4:22-24.⁴⁰

³⁹ [*begraven in* Of, **begraven door den doop**. Want in den doop wordt ons betekend en verzegeld dat onze oude mens door den dood van **Christus** is gedood, en vervolgens ook begraven, dat is, door **Christus**' lijden en sterven alzo zijn heersende kracht heeft verloren, dat hij is gelijk een dood en begraven lichaam, hetwelk zich niet kan bewegen om te heersen, hoewel het zijn stank nog wel van zich geeft, totdat het door denzelfden dood en Geest van **Christus** geheel wordt vernietigd. Zie Rom. 6:3, enz.

Be buried, or, buried through baptism. For in baptism it was signified and promised to us that our old person is dead through the death of Christ, and therefore also buried, that is, through Christ's suffering and dying also has lost his ruling power, that he is like a dead and buried body, which cannot move or control itself, even though it certainly gives its stench, so that through the same death and Spirit of Christ it was wholly destroyed. See Romans 6:3 etc.

in welken gij Namelijk doopt of **Christus**. Want beide is waarachtig, doch op verscheidene wijze. Want door de kracht der opstanding van **Christus** zijn wij opgewekt tot nieuwigheid des levens en door den doop wordt hetzelfde ook verzegeld. Zie Rom. 6:4, enz.

In which you, Namely the baptised or Christ. For both is true, yet in different manners. For through the power of the resurrection of Christ we are awoken to newness of life and through the baptism the same was also promised. See Romans 6:4, etc.

En de apostel wil daarmee bewijzen dat wij zelfs het zegel der besnijdenis in het Nieuwe Testament niet meer van node hebben, dewijl de doop ons nu even hetzelfde betekent en verzegelt.

And the apostle will with that indicate that we even no longer have need of the seal of circumcision in the New Testament, while baptism now signifies and promises to us the same.

der werking Gods, Hierdoor kan verstaan worden, òf de kracht Gods, waardoor het geloof in ons wordt gewrocht, òf het steunsel des geloofs, waarop het in onze vernieuwing ziet, namelijk op de kracht Gods, die **Christus** uit de doden heeft opgewekt, waardoor wij ook uit den dood der zonde opgewekt worden.

The activity of God, By this can be understood, either the power of God, by which belief was wrought in us, or the support of faith, by which it sees renewal in us, namely by the power of God, which has raised Christ out of the dead, by which we also were raised out of the dead of sin.]

⁴⁰ See above all the Marginal notes no. 45-49. [45. *In den geest*. Dat is, in het binnenste en verstandigste deel van uwe ziel, gelijk Rom. 12:2. Indien dan datzelve moet vernieuwd en wedergeboren zijn om God te kunnen dienen, zo zijn dan ook de wil en alle andere genegenheden van nature niet beter, tenzij dat ze door dezelve kracht vernieuwd worden.

In the spirit. 46. *den nieuwen*. Alzo noemt de apostel de wedergeboorte of vernieuwing der mensen, bestaande in de verlichting des verstands, en verandering van den wil tot heiligheid en rechtvaardigheid, in welke het beeld Gods bestaat, waarvan het laatste hier wordt uitgedrukt, en het eerste hierna, Col. 3:10, van den apostel zal uitgedrukt worden.

The new person. 47. *aandoen*. De apostel vergelijkt hier deze vernieuwing des mensen bij een nieuw kleeid, gelijk Ef. 4:22 de natuurlijke verdorvenheid bij een oud verdorven kleeid, hetwelk hij zegt dat de gelovigen moeten afleggen en het nieuwe aandoen; omdat zij nu door den Geest Gods wedergeboren zijnde, in beide meer en meer moeten voortgaan en toenemen, door het gebruik der middelen, die God daartoe heeft geordineerd;

And “**the body of sin**” that was annulled through Christ’s death on the cross (Rom. 6:6) that is according to the marginal notes (totally scripturally): “the whole crowd or union of this depravity.”⁴¹

One could still ask: why then call that “flesh”? Is it not such a misleading term? It would not mislead us, if we think purely by the Scripture about these things. In the marginal notes there is very little of the Greek philosophical misunderstanding to be perceived. But **we** have degenerated! And very badly!

In the Scriptural language “fleshly” has the same origin as “worldly.”

The earth is the Lord’s. But on this earth, in this concrete world, sin dominates so powerfully, that the devil is called the Prince of this world and that the worldly can not be thought of separately from sin – “worldly” can therefore mean “sinful.” That does not mean it the way Jesus did when he said: My kingdom is not of this world. Pilate’s power was of this world and yet Jesus recognised, that it was given him from above. But when John said to the young men: do not love the world, then

namelijk met kloekmoediglijk tegen de zonde door den Geest Gods te strijden, Rom. 8;13, en de gave Gods te verwekken, 2 Tim. 1:6,7. Gods woord naarstiglijk te horen en overleggen, Ps. 1:2; 2 Tim. 3:16,17, de sacramenten waardiglijk te gebruiken, 1 Cor. 11:17,18, enz., ijverige gebeden tot God te storten, Ef. 6:18, en dergelijke. Zie ook Joh. 15:2; 1 Cor. 9:25,26, enz. 48. *in ware rechtvaardigheid*. Grieks **in rechtvaardigheid en heiligheid der waarheid**. 49. *Wordt toornig*, Met deze woorden uit Ps. 4: genomen, verbiedt de apostel niet alle gramschap, want zulke bewegingen zijn van God in het hart geschapen, en wordt ook somwijlen Gode en **Christus** gramschap toegeschreven, namelijk over de zonde en ondankbaarheid der mensen; doch is deze de mening des apostels, dat, zo er rechtvaardige oorzaken van gramschap gegeven worden, dat die de maat niet te buiten moet gaan, noch te lang duren, maar haastiglijk weder nedergelegd worden.

45. *In the spirit*. That is, in the most inward and most wise part of your soul, compare Romans 12:2. If then the same must be renewed and reborn in order to be able to serve God, so are then also the will and all other affections of nature not better, unless they were renewed through the same power. 46. *The new*. The apostle names the rebirth or renewing of the person in this way, existing in the enlightenment of the understanding, and change of the will to holiness and righteousness, in which the image of God consists, from which it last was expressed here, and it first hereafter, Col. 3:10, of the apostle shall be expressed. 47. *put on*. Here the apostle compares the renewal of the person to a new robe, compare Ephesians 4:22, the natural corruption to an old worn out robe, of which he says that the believers must take off and put on the new one; because were now beings reborn through the Spirit of God, in both more and more must continue and increase, through the use of means, which God has ordained for this; namely struggling with fortitude against sin through the Spirit of God, Romans 8:13, and to rouse up the gift of God, 2 Timothy 1:6-7; to hear God’s Word diligently and meditate on it, Psalm 1:2, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, to use the sacraments worthily, 1 Corinthians 11:17-18, etc., pour out prayers diligently to God, Ephesians 6:18, and suchlike. See also John 15:2, 1 Corinthians 9:25-26, etc. 48. *In true righteousness*. Greek, in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 49. *Become angry*. With these words taken from Psalm 4, the apostle does not forbid all wrath, for such emotions are created by God in the heart, and also sometimes anger is ascribed to God and Christ, namely over the sin and thanklessness of people; yet this is the opinion of the apostle, that, were there righteous causes of wrath given, that this must not go beyond measure, neither last long, but hastily to be laid down again.]

⁴¹ [15. *het lichaam der zonde*. Dat is, de gehele massa of samenvoeging van deze verdorvenheid, welke is als een onzuiver lichaam, dat vele onzuivere leden heeft; Col. 2:11, en Col. 3:5.

The body of sin. That is, the whole crowd or union of this depravity, which is as an impure body, that has many impure members, Col. 2:11, and Col. 3:5.]

that is the sinful world, the concrete wide world, where sin runs rampant, above all in religious forms.

So also the whole person is called “flesh” in its concrete existence. And since the fall into sin that is not to be conceived of separately from /107/ sin. To see a concrete person (**the whole person**) is to see a sinner. With the eye on the power of sin, sin can be called in brief “flesh” and “body” in the connection with sin in all spheres. Conceived in the Biblical concrete meaning, our body as external person exists in all spheres. Thus it is not “matter” from a duality of matter-spirit. The definition: the person exists as matter and spirit, body and soul, is not Scriptural. The Holy Scriptures have “body” in this meaning no more than “soul.”⁴²

Just as we now with the whole of our external existence, with the whole of our body, stand in all spheres and also go bowed down with **sin** and under the curse because of sin – so can we not see any person or person see sin, no “flesh” without sin – and therefore, just as the sin can be called “worldly,” so can it also be called “fleshly.” Sin and death have gone through “all flesh,” onto all people.

Nothing of the dual division in the person: *pneuma-sarx* (spirit-flesh), remains in the Scriptural conception of “spiritual” and “fleshly.” If we read spiritual for Spiritual then we are caught in a powerful error, since we then confuse the human spirit with the Spirit of God.

Or rather: here partial theism is at play, that a part of the creation (here: *pneuma*) is deified, through crediting to that the **works** and the **place** of the Holy Spirit.⁴³

⁴² See Dr H Bavinck. **Bijbelsche en religieuze psychologie**. Kampen: J H Kok, 1920, p. 22. [“The person is formed thus, that his body was taken from the dust of the earth, but that now in that, in distinction from the animals, a breath was breathed into him from above. If we must speak for a moment of a contrast, then the Israelite does not think of this, as if it were a contrast between an immortal soul and a mortal body, but as something that was in the person from below, and a something that was in him from above.”]

⁴³ [Janse is likely referring here to the views of D H Th Vollenhoven, as they were expressed in 1935 (the concept of partial theism more or less coincided with his later concept of semi-mysticism, and he ceased using this term. See D H Th. Vollenhoven. **Wijzgerig Woordenboek**, s.v. “Grens”). “Dualism acknowledges that the boundary, for which we seek, exists. Yet unscriptural dualism – and that alone is under discussion here – considers that the boundary lies elsewhere, than where the Holy Scripture places it. It can then still be one of two: in the first place it subsumes for the cosmos a part of what the Scripture accounts to God (one or more Persons); this is **partial cosmism**. In the second place it holds with false religion that a part of the cosmos is divine; this is **partial theism**. Yet, however much these motives may differ, they all have this in common, that they either deny or infringe upon the sovereignty of the God of the Scriptures. For monism in its various forms denies every boundary and thus cannot recognise the law of God as such. And unscriptural dualism thinks, either in a partial cosmistic manner, that only a part of God is sovereign, or in a partial theistic manner, that God must share His sovereignty with a part of the creation.” **Het Calvinisme en de Reformatie van de Wijsbegeerte**. Amsterdam: H J Paris, 1935, p. 52. See also pp. 63-67, “The ground-motives of unscriptural philosophy, particularly partial theism,” where Vollenhoven discusses the details of partial theism in more depth.]

Yet it was tempting.

It certainly comes easily for our fleshly thinking to consider our sovereign thinking as the higher, above the concrete human life, that is bound to all sorts of law, and is not so “free” as the thinking conscious Ego. So people still conclude again with the Gnostic **Ego**, that even transcends its own thinking. **Self**-development courses in this spirit are then always out because of the consciousness, thinking, and above all then /108/ the **kernel**, the Ego, husked out of the lower, earthly spontaneous life “such as anyone who lives,” is developed to become the Sovereign, which stands above itself and above the surroundings and above fellow humans. To be that conscious has made many “martyrs” to “self-consciousness”! And they have felt that as a redemption!

Thus they named such a conversion of wrestler-with-life to “man with a higher Ego,” but not Christian. They should not quote 2 Tim 3:16 and 17 for this action. For Paul does not write there about the formation of self-conscious persons and still less about the Gnostic “perfection” of Colossians 2, but about the Scriptural formation of the person in the office, of the “man of God” from the Old Testament, through teaching, refutation, improvement, training in righteousness, which the Holy Scripture gives and which so, thus through Scriptural education, in this way equips perfectly “men of God” to all good works.

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9. The spirit which a person has

There remains still one question for us.

What is our spirit?

Dr H Bavinck has said very precisely following the Scriptures: the person according to the Scriptures **is** “soul,” but he **has** spirit.⁴⁴ The angel is a spirit. The person **has** spirit.

⁴⁴ [Dr H Bavinck. **Bijbelsche en Religieuze Psychologie**. Kampen, 1920, pp. 58, para. 2. “Already the presence in a number of languages of the two words ‘spirit’ and ‘soul’ demonstrates that there is a distinction between the two, and that this distinction is felt by the people, by the language-forming community. In the Scripture this distinction comes down to this, that spirit indicates the principle and the power, and soul on the other hand indicates the seat and the subject of life. The person **has** spirit, but **is** soul, while the angels are only spirits, and animals are only (living) souls. As spirit the person is related to the invisible world, as soul he is related to the visible world. To the spirit is due therefore above all the properties and activities which indicates a person’s relative independence from the world; to the soul especially the qualities and conditions in which his independence from the earthly environment expresses itself. The difference can be felt, if we compare these two texts: Jesus gave His **soul** as a ransom for many, but he commended His **spirit** into the hands of His Father.”]

The person has much: an external organisation (body) and an “internal organisation,” perhaps best indicated by “heart,” out of which are all the processes of life, also certainly with “soul,” named as the invisible **side** of the whole person (Catechism, and the expression, “body dies, the soul does not die.” Further the person has “kidneys.” He also has thoughts and will and arms and a head – also bowels as “seat” of the emotional life (Jeremiah 4:19) and still much more.

And among all these things is also a prominent, very important something: his spirit.

That is not he himself, but that is also again something that he has.

Well now, when he dies and must surrender everything which he possesses here on earth – also his “breath” – then the life spirit, which is in him – the power that “lives” in him, is relinquished – then “he gives up his spirit.”

Jesus died – He gave up His spirit into the hands of His Father as a precious jewel. So says the poet of the Proverbs, that the dust, that the person **has**, returns to the earth and that the spirit, /110/ which he **has**, returns to God who has given him this spirit. Here it does not stand: **he** returns to God, who has given the **he**, but the **spirit** of the person returns to God. And that he himself in his dying goes into torment or to the Lord, that stands totally otherwise very obviously in the Holy Scriptures. Here the **spirit** is not **him**.

We should be able to say: the person as whole living soul (pitcher) was broken into pieces (Ecclesiastes 12) and the person goes to his “eternal home,” according to his internal side “to the Lord,” or “into torment” and according to his “external person” into the grave – then he **releases** the dust out of which he exists momentarily and he gives the spirit, which propels him, over to God, who has given him this spirit. The living soul, which is taken out of dust, goes back to dust – and goes to rest in the realm of the dead, and the spirit returns to God.

There are creatures, who as spirit are called **him**. Those are the angels. They **are** spirits, personal spiritual beings and of all kinds of service and form.

Also the Holy Spirit is a He, a Someone, according to the Scriptures.

But **he** was never said concerning a human spirit, always **the spirit of human beings**.

This spirit is also in practice very well knowable. Yet, just like the wind, only in its **activity**. See him sitting, the one crushed in spirit, with hanging arms and downcast eyes. See him, the man in

spiritual rapture, how everything about him sparkles with life. It was said of the Queen of Sheba, that when she saw Solomon's glory there was no more spirit in her. We can best represent that it by saying that it struck her speechless, full of astonishment, the hands together. So someone compared it to the dismayed of spirit – the muscles hang down slack. A sigh escaped the astonished.

Spirit is connected with our word yeast – it is a driving force.

We can see it showing in all sorts of people.

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“There is spirit in the lad,” that says something, that is very demonstrably given.

But a he, who would be a spirit, he does not belong at home in the reality of humans – nor in the Scripture as it speaks about this earthly organisation –nor as the Scripture reveals something about the hereafter. **Spirit appearances** of people the heathen literature knows well, yet the Scripture does **not** name the dead in this way.⁴⁵

It would be very interesting and instructive, to see further from the Scriptures and experience **what** the spirit of humans does and works – also the relation of the Holy Spirit to the **whole** person, which he changes internally and externally in the new birth, so that the spiritually blind now sees and the pub-crawler goes to church and the stingy now gives away money – in all spheres there is change.

Also in what happens internally, that the internal person is renewed from day to day – also although the external was broken down, the spirit of a person works with it. The Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Also it needs to be researched, what it is that John speaks about: I was “in the spirit.” Revelation 1:10.

But all that lies outside the scope of this book.

Here it was my intention only to warn against the thought-constructions, which makes thought break adrift from God's real world.

⁴⁵ See for the explanation of “spirit” in Acts 23:6 [sic: 23:8?] Zahn's commentary. Exegesis Hebrews 12:23. They are come to the spiritual Zion, to the church under the operation of the Spirit, to God... and to the spirits of the Fathers who now already are perfected in heaven, that is to say to the community in spiritual fellowship with the Fathers.

And this warning holds also for knowing about “spirit.”

Not the compelling logic, proceeding from some thought-constructions and axioms, but the simple truth, which is to be known concerning the reality, to examine these as God’s creation /112/ and to enquire in God’s Word concerning these, can help us forward.

As soon as we give constructions, which rest only on our thinking arising from a non-Scriptural presupposition and which do not do full justice to reality, and to the Scriptures, then there is danger of confusion.

Surely, there are dozens of constructions possible. Yet there is but one reality.

If my reader is convinced, that there is no “essence” to be sought behind the creation, but that the actual creatures and God’s Word must be enough for us, then there may be discussion about subdivisions and then there may be more light kindled over these points than I can give here, and then through further study of the Holy Scriptures modifications on specific points may be necessary – if only the Scripture was consulted with respect to the traditional conceptions, then I have achieved my dearest goal.

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10. Modern psychology. New idols.

The **dualism** that divides a person into two so-called “substances:” animal and angel; or matter and spirit, has always had against it, that it does not work out in practice.

We see still the person always as “living soul,” as unity. There is no experience of two “**parts.**” Certainly the person has an internal and an external life, for example his “eye” with which he sees in a dream, and his eye that is closed when he sleeps. But if a person names everything which a person has as parts, then there are many parts. Each person has an external and an internal form of existence, an understanding and an arm, an office and a spirit, an emotional life (psychic life) and a heart (internal existence, out of which are the issues of life). He has further still a deep life, that the Scripture names “kidneys.” Further he has a connection to his ancestors. And... a connection with the future. Abraham had Isaac as his “son” in the loins of the fathers and Isaac was as a man a living soul with “life” out of his father and his mother.

It is not a question of whether a person has many forms of existence, and if he has many aspects for the beholder, but the point in question is whether he, so to speak with another author has “a split” in his living soul, or whether he has here or there such a “separation-seam” in his actual existence, that people can speak of a two-in-one. We saw, that there are thought to be different separation lines through actual existing functions of the person which are arbitrarily separated asunder.

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We saw also that people frequently had differences about where the “seam” must be sought.

Practical life was of no help here, so people had to appeal to fantasy for help.

And only the desire to transcend all that which stands under the law, and to place a **sovereign** part in the person, that must sit still “behind” or “in” or “above,” that only has become the introduction to above all to “believe” in such a separation, which in practice still did not emerge.

In times when people were sick of their belief in idols and had a hunger for reality, they have often abandoned that “higher.” But as a result people also sat ensnared in Positivism and Materialism, and thought also that there was now nothing more above the person and that people had **all**-controlling science, this led to divinisation of matter and things.

Out of fear for the consequences some Christians preferred to look to partial Theism, that at least still recognised “something higher,” even though that higher was then only the triad of Kant’s **Practical Reason**: the Supreme Being, virtue and immortality. People thought that it was still something higher.

And so some Christians stood in the old position against monism, that named **everything** god or **everything** world, and thus stood rather on the side of partial theism, that still saw “something higher” in the creation – even though it was then merely “something.” Whoever is obedient to the Holy Scriptures, stands, however, over against both the idealism of Kant and also over against the materialism of Feuerbach. If the foolish said: there is no god, or if they prayed to a part of the creation (wood, stone, soul, spirit, ego, Ego) as a god, all this is apostate for the Scriptures, it is stealing honour from the great Sovereign, who has placed everything, including our whole individual existence that we call “I,” under His laws.

Therefore for those, who live by the Scriptures, religious socialism is as evil as materialistic Marxism.⁴⁶ /115/ An idealistic philosophy is no better than a positivistic philosophy.

Reality testifies already against twofold separation and also against a threefold separation of the person.

Modern psychology is then also correct in so far as it again sees the “**wholeness**” [Ganzheit] and the person as a unity observed in different spheres. Whoever wishes to study psychology then must study the psychical phenomena in their connection to the concrete real person.

So modern psychology comes again to its field of research: the psychical of the living soul.

Whoever comes to the Scriptures with the textbooks of Scholastic psychology about the abilities of the “immortal soul,” feels again that it does not tally. The Scripture knows as the basic concept of the actual person the living soul, which eats and drinks and dies – and the Greek-Scholastic soul is the “essence” of the person; and that “essence” can not eat or drink or die.

And so it is also with the human abilities of Scholastic psychology. There, understanding, feeling and will are concepts of the abilities of the bloodless soul. In the Holy Scripture they are functions of the warm-blooded living soul with beating heart and living breath in the nostrils, and activities in the hearts. People studied the scholastic soul in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas – the biblical soul is to be found in many variations so called – and for every soul the psychical is to be researched by the psychologist.

Well now, as we are taught to observe through modern psychology the miracles of that psychical in the Biblical living soul, and then have seen the unity in the connection of the living soul as a miracle work of God, as we presume cohesion in the connection between the psychical and the organic and the logical and all the /116/ other spheres in the whole person, then we get an abhorrence for that unreal reasoning about the abilities of the bloodless dualistic soul of Scholasticism.

“Psychology” was still taught in textbooks in this way not so many years ago and it still appears like this in popular books as “support” for traditional Scholasticism.

⁴⁶ [A selection of articles by Janse about “Marx and Marxism” have been re-published in *Gereformeerd Schoolblad* Vol. 26, no. 3 (Sep. 1983). Articles by Janse against socialism have been republished in A Janse over het socialisme. *Gereformeerd Schoolblad* (64) 1995.]

We should not, however, seek any timidity of thought behind it, as if the subtle distinctions of Scholasticism were too difficult for the contemporary generation.

It is true, that there is a popular psychology in circulation, in which people have made evil idols (as vogue words) of “Ganzheit” [wholeness] and “Struktur” [structure] and “Typen” [types] – and the same was done of the “essence.” Through conceiving **the whole** again as something substantial, as **the** “Ganzheit” which governs all and explains all, just therefore is it again gone awry also in modern psychology. He who pronounces the word “Ganzheit” gives then the impression, that merely by saying that word that we are given the key to all science of the psychical. He has probably “seen” nothing more of the true psychical character of the actual person than any man who encounters souls on the street – he knows perhaps less than the cattle-feed dealer and innkeeper and yet he acts, as if he was a “psychologist.” Whoever says “Ganzheit” has merely pointed to the living soul as unity and that is still no psychology.

And someone who indicates the behaviours of each person-type, engages in practical knowledge of humans, but that is still not psychology.

But I do not mean this vogue-psychology, which can certainly be called “Lebens Philosophie” [life philosophy] and which writes life with a capital letter, even though they do not write in German.

I meant by “modern psychology” that serious field of scientific work of people such as Wundt, Lehman, Ziehen, Külpe, Ach, August Messer, James, Höffding and the others who /117/ have researched the psychical in the life’s connection of the living soul.

To read these psychologists is not any easier than reading a scholastic psychology. Rather, through the manifold richness, which is able to be distinguished, is it more difficult, because again and again new terms must be introduced. And to read their books critically from a Calvinistic standpoint is something that we still must learn. By way of respect for the **great** and **true** psychologists of earlier ages, who borrowed their terminology from the Scholastics but still also saw the living soul, and who were “mindful” of their terms, it must be said, that their work was also much richer,⁴⁷ than what has come under the influence of the sterile soul-concept in the schools from the popular manuals and in the traditional soul-doctrine of the people.

The concept “Ganzheit” has at present gone precisely like that.

⁴⁷ See above all the fine work: Prof. Dr. J V de Groot. **Denkers over ziel en leven**. Amsterdam, 1917.

As soon as genuine science creates an “essence” “behind” or “in” or “above” what it perceives, then the crowds seize on this idol “through the understanding of the flesh” and proceed to elevate it above God’s creation.

Hence that the most modern popular books on psychology about the “Struktur” all threaten to be just as sterile for **real** fruits of science as the old Scholastic books.

This outcome like that of the waters is for example very strikingly to be observed in H Driesch, the person who gave the Gifford Lectures in 1907-1908 at the University of Aberdeen and there on the basis of very interesting experiments with eggs and larvae of sea-urchins enabled us to see, how the living organism developed wholly according to its own nature – and not mechanically. This is a priceless witness against mechanistic explanations of the living being, an argument for the special specification of what we named above the organic sphere. Here Driesch had spoken a glorious word over against /118/ the illegitimate domination of physics over biology.

However, what does he do now?

He sees an amalgamating power in the whole animalcule, so that from the same albumen here was built lime-substance, there skin, and there flesh. And he seeks the power now “in” that animal. He does not see the Sovereign Creator “above” that animalcule. He does not see the Spirit of the Lord, which makes the living to sprout according to biotic laws, and which satisfies everything that lives there.

No, Dreisch sees “behind” and “above” and “in” that animalcule a “Plan” that was actualised – and that “Plan” has power, that “Plan” is “**the life**” in that animalcule, it is the mysterious, unknowable, the mystery. He names it “Entelechy” with a term from Aristotle.

The sovereign forming active “Plan” is here again an idol.⁴⁸

And the opponents of this Neo-Vitalism ask him with justification for the basis of this “scientific” “faith.”

What is now the consequence of this idolatrous faith in Dreisch? That he already has gone further in “believing.” After his journey to China and Japan, where he gave lectures in Peking, Nanking and Tokyo – he wrote **Grundprobleme der Psychologie**, Leipzig 1926.⁴⁹ And in that he gave, under the influence of the crisis in psychology (and under the influence of the heathen superstition in China

⁴⁸ See above all for this “Entelechy” and for the most recent in this field (holism) Dr J H Diemer. Het soortbegrip en de idee van het constant structuurtype in de biologie. *Philosophia Reformata* 1 (1936) 30-45.

and Japan?) also again a place for “the soul.” There follows a “Metaphysik des Seelischen” [metaphysics of the psychical]; soul was again a metaphysical concept. There is again something mysterious in it. A chapter about “para-psychology” speaks about data which point to the “occult world” and which were accounted unjustifiably to the psychical. /119/ Fortune-telling is for instance asking evil spirits in place of seeking God. It is an evil in the religious sphere. Also he sees prophecy as something mysterious in the soul. But the Scripture names the false prophets, as people who prophesy... yet **out of their own hearts**. And again it is a question whether suggestion and hypnosis and telepathy lie in the psychical sphere as something which is part of our psychical function. Rather it is something belonging to our whole interior life, to the whole internal person. But Driesch sees the “one World soul” itself expressed in the metaphysical soul of people. We can see here again the old idol postulated in science.⁵⁰

And in April 1935 Driesch spoke in The Hague before the Society for Parapsychology about... “Body and Soul.” Yet it first appeared in Driesch, when he demonstrated uniqueness of God’s laws for the organic, very sympathetically for a Bible reader; similarly his appreciation for the living being as a whole. The “living soul” was again **seen**. It is distressing, that the idols again make science unfruitful. The same thing holds for **Freud’s** unconscious (also an idol) and the **Personality** and **Self** of later writers about psychology. They have observed something in the great riches of the whole human life in all its spheres, yet then they lapse again into error by taking something as the most “essential,” the form-giver, the bearer, the sovereign of life. And that mistake then comes home to roost, because anyone can now join in conversation with help of the idols and that science threatens to become “pseudo-science” and will then be struck with unfruitfulness.

It is then also very remarkable, that a person such as **Lenin**, who in furious hate against God had up-ended it, so as to conduct an action against Him on all fronts and who did that with “understanding of causes,” while of his all-controlling ideal – that such a man could not see the contemporary idols in science. He expected everything from objectivity. And therefore /120/ he achieved much – therefore he was a terrible power against the Church and against God’s ordinances.⁵¹

⁴⁹ [Cf. J H Diemer. De totaliteitsidee in de biologie en de psychologie. *Philosophia Reformata* 4 (1939) 29-44, 65-85.]

⁵⁰ [See the discussion of Driesch by Herman Dooyeweerd. *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*. Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969. Vol. 3, pp. 730-749.]

⁵¹ See my article: How Lenin Hegel heeft gelezen. *Philosophia Reformata* 2 (1937) 117.

May we still be able to escape from “idols” – so that we may more soberly, practically, be able to see the whole life, and then to be as strong for our Lord and king and for His laws as Lenin and German paganism are against Him. With such great practical real love for our God, who places us in His glorious creation, and redeems us from sin and shall lead us into still greater glory on the new earth – with such great practical real love for Him as the Covenant of the godless is against Him.

Only in this way shall the church be able to be “salt” in the world of the 20th century Christianity and over against heathenism. We shall not go for pious expressions à la Kant about our “praktische-Vernunft-postulaten” [postulates of practical reason]: Supreme Being, virtue and immortality, or with Personalities who “with God’s help” are developed to self-conscious Christian “Egos” or high-ascending “immortal souls,” who in sovereign disdain may show disdain for the “low plane of everyday life.”

Preachers, who preach in this spirit, would be doing what King Ahaz did, who wished to make the service of the Lord somewhat more beautiful through sending an altar model from Damascus to Jerusalem so as to make a new altar for burnt offerings for God according to that model (2 Kings 16:10-16). In reality was it caught in a hook “to proceed in this way.”

The end result was, that the whole temple service went downhill, and that the doors were shut (2 Chronicles 28:24).

When Heathendom and Christianity run together time and again it happens that Heathendom gets the victory, unless God converts the hearts and opens the blind eyes. Then there comes a conversion to the truth (as with Calvin), then there comes bowing before the Word.

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But then they also threw away the heathen things “for the moles and the bats,” just like our German fathers flung the Wotan images in the corner where they flung the “rubbish.” The first Christians among the Germans wanted **nothing** more to do with them. Only later came the interest in the old German idols and in their feasts. It is not the case, that the first Gospel-preachers in our land had need of synthesis for transitional forms, so that the heathen could fill their Wotan-idols with Christian content and exchange their heathen superstition for Roman superstition. No, the old sources speak completely differently.⁵²

⁵² H Achterberg. *Interpretatio Christiana, Form und Geist*. Arbeiten zur Germanischen Philologie. Band 19, Leipzig, 1930.

The Germans, who were drawn out of the darkness of heathen faith in idols, now abominated this henceforth as “from the devil” and people no more even mentioned the different **names** of the “gods.”

Only later, when the church venerated its Christian idols, did people start again to ask about the “interesting” idols of earlier, which “still also were taken seriously.”

In our days the history of religions is not able to discover the difference between the heathen and Christian idols for the simple reason, that there is properly no actual principial difference. Surely the worship of Kant’s postulate of the “Supreme Being” is not distinct from the worship of Allah – and the “immortal soul” of Kant is no more Scriptural than the “soul” of the Indian Vedas.

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11. Dualism is not a good “basis” for any truth of Scripture

The warnings against dualism come from two sides for Christians.

It is difficult to maintain that “body” and “soul” are two parts, two substances, which were combined in a two-fold unity under the sovereignty of the Ego or of the spirit, which then should be sought in the best part.

The warnings come from the side of experience, because people appear as a unity in experience, and also from the side of the Holy Scriptures, which likewise always see the person as a unity and knows of no sovereign **part** in the person as form-giver or bearer or king in the centre.

Yet many Christians are wary of letting go of the dualism for the person of experience, for they think that the teaching of the Scriptures about the dead and about the judgement and about the promise of immortality for God’s people is denied along with the denial of the Greek “immortal soul.” And so as to “maintain” the Scriptural givens over against materialists and “positivists” they will hold on to the “immortal soul,” even though the Scripture says nothing about it. Now it is, however, not a good method to want to “maintain” the Word of God and the promise of God with the help of a heathen distinction or even with a Gnostic “idol.”

Yet – it certainly happens to us more – because we also after receiving forgiveness stumble time and again, just like Israel. Even the believers among them often still had “teraphim” and ephods, /123/ like Jacob and Gideon. Paul also complained about his daily stumbling. He found himself miserable

in these (Romans 7:21, 24). We find that often “haste is not possible in converted people.” That is the difference between us and Paul: difference in insight concerning the sin which lightly surrounds us (true knowledge of sin in practice). And also differences in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in Whom Paul can **boast**. Further, we still seek to maintain a course to become a “personality.” Thus it happens more and more, that we will support God’s Word with the help of heathen terms and reasoning!

The intention is then certainly good. But it turns out to be practically and scientifically not so.

True researchers of the psychic, who truly saw something of God’s works in the “living soul,” can legitimately shrug their shoulders over the reproach, that they defend “psychology without a soul.” Where was then the mystical “soul” for science?

But here the Christians saw correctly on the side of the materialists the denial of the life after this life and a placing of “matter” as the “basis” and the “law.” And therefore they did not listen to practical people out of protest against materialists. And it was certainly better to remain in a semi-Platonic concept of the soul, than to sink away in the coarse materialism of their time.

But better still than swearing by such men as Plato, was to enquire what the Holy Scripture itself says.

That they teach a life after this life is definitely beyond all doubt. But now it is remarkable, that they never teach this through speaking of an “immortal soul.” They speak nowhere of such a soul. And of immortality they speak, as we saw, only twice, and in doing so in a totally different sense than philosophy.

From both sides, from the side of experience and from the side of Biblical exegesis, was I at one time so impressed /124/ as to let go of dualism. The fruit of this Biblical obedience I have at the time written up in a series of articles about the living soul.⁵³

I would now say various things somewhat differently and more clearly, but in the main features it is a thorough-going Biblical study and thorough-going study of scientific works founded in reality, so

⁵³ “Levende wezens.” *Paedagogisch Tijdschrift voor het Christelik Onderwijs* 16 (1923) 117-121. “Tweeërlei levendhouding tegenover “de levende ziel.” Op. Cit., 140-144. “Oostersche opvattingen over het levende wezen.” Op. Cit., 145-148. “Indo-Germanen contra Semieten over de levende ziel.” Op. Cit., 149-152. “Liefde voor-of heerschappij over de levende ziel (Indo-Germanen contra Semieten.” Op. Cit., 173-180. “Ingezonden van ds. W H Vermooten over tweeërle levensbeschouwing.” Op. Cit., 222-224. “Waar gaat het om in de artikelen over ‘De Levende Ziel’.” Op. Cit., 225-233. “Antwoord aan den heer A Janse. Dr W H Vermooten.” Op. Cit., 234-238.

that later still I could write my book, **De mensche als levende ziel**.⁵⁴ What is written above about the whole person, as a unity (living soul) standing in the different spheres in which he from time to time exists under the various types of laws of God, is a recognition of reality, and straight away a recognition of what the Scripture says.

This “living soul” with his breath and blood (in the biotic organic sphere) and his conscious life (in the psychological) and his thinking (in the logical) and his community life (in the social) and his moral life (in the ethical) and his religious life (in the pistical sphere)... this living soul fits totally with the language of the Holy Scripture.

Here nobody needs to do violence to the Scriptures so as to make the terms fitting for a “system” – here the Scriptures and reality speak the same language as this science.

The simple faith in Scripture and the practical recognition of the reality are both a recognition of the Sovereignty of God. When the two go together, then God receives the glory for all His works.

And “Whoever honours Me, him shall I honour,” says God. History gives many examples of that.

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An example is in our Golden Era – when the children of the Martyrs for God’s witness have seen God in all areas with an open eye and a vigilant hand and a heart that can love.

But first the people of the Reformation period have had to confess, that they do not believe **Aristotle** and **Thomas** and the “divine **Plato**” any more, and do not recognise the Pope. First they also must struggle against the “idols” of the men of the “interior Word” and of the “immortal soul” (Coornhert) and of the nobility of man (humanists).

And alas, all too quickly the enemies again arise – humanism in both forms, as science ideal and as personality ideal,⁵⁵ have yet again overpowered the Gereformeerde churches of the Republic.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ A Janse. **De mensche als levende ziel** [Man as a living soul]. Cullenborg, 1934. 2nd Impression, Amsterdam 1937.

⁵⁵ [The reference here is to the views of Herman Dooyeweerd, who discerns two poles in the humanism of the Renaissance and after, the science ideal (which glorifies understanding of the laws governing reality) and the personality ideal (which glorifies the free human spirit and creativity). These two poles are in tension, as each presupposes the other but simultaneously seeks to absorb and dominate the other. See further, Herman Dooyeweerd. **Roots of Western Culture. Pagan, Secular and Christian Options**. Toronto: Wedge, 1979, pp. 175-178 and 182-185.]

⁵⁶ [See A Janse. “Hoe de Gereformeerde kerkender 17^e en 18^e eeuw Gods verbond hebben verlaten.” **Leven in het Verbond**. Kampen: J H Kok, 1937, pp. 78-94.]

But the Lord is faithful. Again in the 19th Century he gave liberation from the grasp of enemies and also now – in the contemporary confusion of spirits – is our eye on Him, so that He will give us remedy. And binding together, through binding us to His truth concerning the creatures and concerning Him – through opening our eyes to the truth – in the Holy Scripture and in the reality all about us.

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12. Some directions for a Scriptural anthropology

It is not my task to give a developed Scriptural anthropology. That is academic work, which will require years of continuous study and the life's work of greater people.

But certainly a few directions can be given in order to indicate in which directions perhaps further work should be undertaken.

I would wish to distinguish in a person, in so far as he – in the light of the Holy Scriptures – is given for us to research.

1. A **higher** and **lower** among the functions.
2. An **internal** and **external**.
3. An **earlier** and **later**.
4. A **law** at work within him.
5. A **temporal** and an **eternal** given.

Over each of these points I will give here only a few disconnected observations.

1. Higher and lower among the functions.

pistical	
ethical	
juridical	
economic	
social	
linguistic	
historical	
analytical	
psychical	
organic	
physical	
kinematic ⁵⁷	
arithmetic	

In the diagram adjacent the vertical is given for humans, and the horizontal gives a schema of the law-spheres, in which the functions can work. There is the closest possible connection between all these functions. When a judge delivers his sentence, /127/ then he is also active with his organs (mouth, eyes), and with his psychical life (feelings), and with his language (words) and with his religious life (if it is good, standing before God in the office, in faith – if it is not good, turning his back to Him in unbelief).

The higher functions, as correctly exercised in faith obedience, again have need of the lower functions.

There is such a close connection between our **believing** sitting down at the Table of the Lord and “eating and drinking with the mouth” that nowhere is there a boundary line to be drawn, by which these series of functions are able to be broken in two. Therefore we **really** have, through eating in faith, communion with the body of Christ.

⁵⁷ [Janse has “math.” in his original diagram, which I assume to be a mistake.]

The false dualism of a higher and a lower half must be relinquished for a multiplicity of distinguished functions, of which each following one is “higher” (= founded on the lower and working together with them) yet they all cohere.

In this scale of functions – all of which in the course of ages are absolutised in turn in the unscriptural philosophical thinking in psychologism, “materialism,” socialism, ethicism, logicism, etc. etc. – is a strong defence against these errors. And the comparative poverty of distinctions is converted into a rich multiplicity of distinctions, which does not make study easy, but certainly imparts clarity.

The higher can here not do without the lower, and suppress it. The one has need of the other, each according to its nature. And no single function is sovereign over all the others. They all have “sovereignty in their own sphere.” **Kuyper** saw much of it here in the opening of the Free University. Just read his opening speech, “Sovereignty in its own sphere,” p. 11, among others, where we see this: There is “a field of thinking in which no other law than that of logic may dominate.” He points out the particular “life law” of communal relations. That stood at the fore in the ecclesiastical and political /128/ conflict. But he saw also already the particular life-law for the analytical function, for the conscience, for faith; for ethical life and for religious life.

2. Internal-external

For each thing that takes up space, there is an internal and an external, an inside and an outside.

We speak of “inside” in a circle and in a molecule. We speak also of a circumference, an exterior.

Also in the person with respect to the body: we speak of heart, kidneys, inward parts and of outward appearance – and also of organs and limbs, which are directed from the body outwards to the outside world.

There are internal feelings and external expression of those feelings – and there is feeling of something else, that comes from outside.

There are thoughts of the heart – which remain inside. There are those which were expressed externally. There are thoughts, which come to us from outside through sound or through being written.

The Scripture speaks of the issues of life, of all sorts of words and deeds, which come out from the heart to the outside (Proverbs 4:23).

For the “living soul” the life, the breath, the blood, the consciousness, the metabolism, the inner life, the *nous* (understanding) are to be seen as **internal** and the one is at any moment more internal than the other. There are many internal points.

Yet there is nothing so “internal” that it would not be able to come to the outside.

There is also here no distinction to be made which should run as an original “weld” between a holy “inside” and an “unholy” outside. Nor is there a holy sovereign kernel, for example the free will, over against the rest. Nor is the heart such a kernel-point.

Whoever has a “heart” for his work shows this externally, /129/ in such a way, that it is to be seen in him. Heart for issues, for community, for art, for justice, for reason, for religion, also brings the person to action externally.

The conversion of hearts, the faith of hearts, sets the whole life in action. There is no single external part that should lie outside the range of action of that “internal” faith. The “soul” which hungers and thirsts for justice desires, that he as a whole living soul may be justified – for only in this way shall he be able to appear before God’s judgement seat. This soul, which “internally” hungers and longs for Christ, for the Holy Spirit to be poured out “in the innermost being,” the “soul-internal” (human interior) was renewed by the Spirit day by day. And as the deterioration of the body then begins “externally,” sinew-system, intellectual capacity, living in community with the surroundings, as the person in all functions is released from his surroundings, and as the pitched was broken into pieces (Ecclesiastes 12:6) and this tabernacle (dwelling-place here in the body) was broken, then the faithful say, that he has already had eternal life here. For dying here in this temporal world, the unleashing of the whole of his functioning in his contact with this world (described under Section 1 above), is coupled with passing as “human-inside” over to the “hereafter” into eternal life. He may then rest in the contemplation of the Prince of Life, Who has been raised and who shall also call him out of the grave and shall give him immortality.

In connection with Matthew 10:28 the “body” and “soul” can be spoken of here as “interior person” and “exterior person,” but only when we read these words in a **Scriptural** manner and not as a dichotomy of spirit and matter. For “soul” says here much more than “spirit,” and “body” is much more than “matter.”

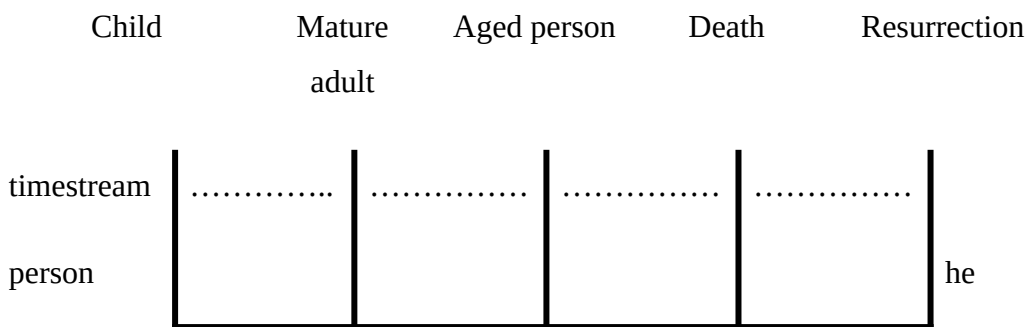
This interior and exterior aspect of the same person, which are broken through death, of the person such as God has created him (the pitcher, which was broken, Ecclesiastes 12), that is something totally different from a creation-weld being released.

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Death is more a breaking, than a separation of two incomplete substances, spirit and matter. But certainly it is a departure of the “interior person” from his “exterior person,” out of his “body” in the Biblical sense, to his heavenly tabernacle.

3. Earlier and later

Diagram 6



The horizontal line is the “he” and the vertical lines are the forms of existence.

We are blessed “in hope,” but now in this life we are still subjected to “vanity” (transitoriness). All our work in this world is still under the dominion of death. The book of Ecclesiastes originated in Israel and it applies also to the life of the believer: vanity of vanities; no more remembrance, after centuries, of a wise man than of a fool. They must all die and abandon the whole of their life – here and now – and then they must go down to death.

Our fathers saw it so clearly and truly: our life is “nothing other than a steady death” – and we must certainly “abandon comfort,” paying attention to the Lord Christ.

But later, when He comes in the clouds, then it shall be revealed, who we were here: children of God, justified, more than overcomers. Christ wins stature in people, who shall be blessed only “in hope.” In Christ he was even **perfected**.

Whoever describes the person without taking account of that newness, that eternal, in Christ – of the new person, who can be known only through faith, this stints the revelation of Holy Scripture about the believing person.

Christ shall reveal the things, which are seen **now** and the things which are still /131/ **not** seen, and they must be distinguished as earlier and later.

Also in the life of people from birth to old age an **earlier** and **later** must be seen. The later man “is” already in the lad. That is also true biologically. I still have **the same** hands as at my birth, although their form and use and material components have become completely different.

Whoever wishes to give a theoretical explanation of humans, must deal as much with this earlier-later schema as with the higher and lower and interior-exterior.

Whoever wishes to reflect on the connection of the person-here-and-now (in his “function-mantle,” in the body) with the same person in the hereafter, later, there (without his “function-mantle” and without the body, as a dead person) he must consider the miracle, that the same person earlier and later still can be **the same**: first as a whole, and after that as broken. Meanwhile the “piece” of the form of existence that goes to rest in the grave and the “piece” of the form of existence that is with the Lord, is the **same** person.

So people can indicate an expensive vase with “it.” I take “it” in my hands. If we break the vase and ask you about the fallen pieces: is that it? Then I can answer, yes, here is something of the form of existence – but it is not a whole. And in the piece, that you likewise hold in your hand: yes, that is it, but not whole.

Is that Lazarus there in Abraham’s bosom? Yes, but not the whole of his form of existence – this is broken in death.

Is that Lazarus, there in the grave? Yes, there he has turned back to dust, he rests there among the dead, and he waits there for the day of resurrection. Also what exists in this form of existence is “something” of him.

The vertical line in Section 1 “lives” with the Lord – but stripped of its function-mantle here; the functions, which work in the world, rest in the dust of death.

The “interior” of Section 2 is there still – but the “exterior” is /132/ broken off and returns to dust, and yet it was said, that “he” sleeps there in the dust – in this piece of his form of existence.

The here-and-now existing has passed away and the there-and-then existing is totally different – and yet it is the **same**. And certainly **in both aspects**. The “exterior person” is in the grave, yet his fingers as a newly-born infant and as an adult and as an elderly man and as a corpse – and of Lazarus with Father Abraham – and his fingers as resurrected on the last day – they are always throughout the **same** fingers.⁵⁸ There is also a rising up of the “eyes” **without matter**, in the place of suffering.

The interior person is with the Lord, - yet his heart and soul and senses, his life, his feelings, his “nous,” his “kidneys,” his whole interior life, is identical with the interior life he had when he was a child, and when he was a youth, an adult, an old man, and deceased. And his interior life shall in eternity be the same life. Christ made him otherwise – but it is already the same **he**, in the earlier and later, in all his forms of existence; and also in the “pieces” of his form of existence.

This “he” was not borne by two precise substances – matter and spirit – but he was in higher and lower and in interior and exterior – and in earlier and later – and also in the grave as well as in heaven – in all parts of his form of existence, borne before the Almighty power of God, who bears all things and holds them in existence, each according to its own nature. He makes the gold to be gold. And he makes the human to be human. He makes a “he” to be a he. And it is his truthfulness and faithfulness, which sustains **the same** as **the same** and which saves the whole person, even through the power of death which breaks things in pieces, he saves from death the “he” who was named, and gives him eternal life.

It is frightful to fall into the hands of God as an enemy, when he brings the person eternally under the judgement of death and **destroys** him in both “body” and “soul” in hell.

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It is then also the **he**, the same person as here, who **then** in all spheres, both in flesh and blood and feelings, will be **broken** for eternity.

⁵⁸ [Elsewhere Janse says: “In that connection Paul says: the Corinthians must not think that they will in this manner (with stockings and shoes on as people often say) step over into the heavenly kingdom, when the Lord Jesus comes on the clouds. No, they must be **changed**. The presently mortal must put on immortality. Not: our body must be evaporated (vervluchtigd) into some sort of spiritual body, but this mortal, **this** body of humility must be made like unto the immortal body of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change this our body of humility (take your skin between your fingers with Calvin and Tertullian, and say: **this** body). Philippians 3:21.” **Leven in Het Verbond**, p. 18.]

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, these to eternal life and those to contempt and eternal horror. Daniel 12:2.

Those who have done good shall go out to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. John 5:29.

These shall be precisely the **same** people, just as they are with their head and hands, with their character and heart, with their whole existence they have lived here as the same person from the cradle to the grave, and as the same person still **in** the grave and in the realm of the dead – and “with the Lord.”

The “earlier and later” concerns the whole person with his higher and lower functions (1) and with his “interior” and “exterior” (2).

4. The law at work in humans

Paul wrote in Romans 7:21 “So I find then this ‘law’ in me: when I want to do right, then evil lies close at hand. For I have a delight in the law of God according to my interior person, but I see **another law** in my members, which strives against the law of my mind, and takes me prisoner under the **law of sin**, which is in my members. So then, I myself certainly serve the law of God with the mind (*nous*), but with the flesh the law of sin.”

God has converted Paul’s heart. He has renewed him from the inside out. Through the Holy Spirit, which dwells in him, he may have a delight in the Law of God. There is no way that he would despise the law, as the slander of the Jews would have it. No, Psalm 119 is grasped by him from the heart.

If only he could now also just live without sin!

Paul had certainly written, that he was now liberated from /134/ the law. Through faith in Christ, he was “dead to the law” (Romans 7:6), but that was not to say, that the law was “sin,” that the law of God was not good. His confession of guilt (7:14-26) is a profession that he considered the Law of God to be **good** (7:16), and that it deeply distressed him, that he could not keep this law of God perfectly.

He put on the “new man,” through faith in Christ, through daily being renewed as the whole person from the inside out, to live out of the Spirit. And he laid aside the old man; the same whole person, which made him stumble.

Paul on his knees, praying for the community: that was the new man, living from the inside out through the Holy Spirit.

Paul stood in anger before the judge and cursed the judge: God shall slay you, you whitewashed wall! That was the old man. (Acts 23:5).

The law in his members poured these words out of his tongue – the law of his mind made him immediately withdraw these words, when he perceived that it was the high priest whom he had cursed.

Thus there is a two-fold “Law,” the impelling of sin, which still ruled in the concrete Paul, just as people could see him standing before the judge – and the impelling of the Spirit from the inside out – out of the changed heart, out of the “*nous*,” out of the “interior person.”

Both sorts of “law” set the whole Paul in action. When he swore out of his “members,” and when he confessed his swearing out of his “*nous*,” he is there totally with “his whole heart and with his understanding and all powers.”

An anthropology must also take account of this two-fold law in the believer. And it must above all not confuse this with a separation into higher functions, which we discussed under (1); as if the religious function was **good** in itself and biological functions only “real.” Also an anthropology must not confuse this two-fold law with the distinction which we dealt with under (2), as if the **interior** in itself was good, and the **exterior** in itself was evil.

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In the progress of **earlier** and **later** as we saw, Paul was earlier from within, in his mind, the persecutor of the community – the chief among sinners – and how he bears “in his body” the scars of the Lord Jesus, the lashings, which the flogging for the sake of Christ had left behind.

The believer does not live out of a clearer understanding, that would stand over against the depraved desires of the body – he does not live out of a holy centre, that would have to conquer an

unholy outside – but he lives from day to day out of the “law” of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which stands over against the “law of sin and of death” as that is still remaining in his members.

And that life of the Spirit works from the inside to the outside – following the usual order in human life: as the heart was previously accustomed, somehow, the practice of life in a life’s struggle was renewed from day to day; despite enduring difficulties the overcoming was achieved.

I – miserable man – who shall deliver me from the body of this death – from the connection of sin in my members, in the whole of my practice of life, in so far as this **does** not do what I wish from the heart?

I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Through him the final overcoming is certain.

God shall renew me from higher to lower, from inside to outside, and from day to day according to the image of His Son, through the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

They, who do not live according to the “Law of the Spirit,” but from the inside out are driven by the “law of sin,” the law of all “flesh,” out of Adam, lie under the judgement of Romans 1, 2 and 3. No flesh can be justified before God.

And those, who live in the faith community, and who were accounted to be “in Christ” **here, now**, in the faith community, they shall have to live out of Christ, as shoots out of a vine, for in so far as they do not do that – in this they also again live according to the flesh, then they shall die.

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Therefore it is, also in the faith community, necessary to kill through the Spirit the working of sin, the flesh, the body, and to live only through Christ. Romans 8:1-16.

The Spirit teaches us to call on God as our Father.

This “law of life” proceeds from Him. Those who were led by the Spirit were his spiritual children.

5. A temporal and an eternal given

On the basis of the Holy Scripture we confess that God shall not give a wholly different creation, but that he works in **re**-creating. He shall awake **this** our humiliated body. And this person, whom we now know here, shall come out of its own grave.

We also confess, that Christ rules over every area of life as King and that the honour and the delight of the nations shall be brought in to the new Jerusalem.

But all this may not lead us to think, that this world, as it is now in all its parts here, shall cross over into the new world.

The Corinthians could think that those who still live in “flesh and blood” at the return of the Lord, in that manner may be able to step over into the eternal Kingdom of God. But Paul writes: I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood can not inherit the Kingdom of God and the corruptible does not inherit the incorruptible... we shall certainly not all fall asleep, but we shall (at his return) certainly all be changed, in a moment in time, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be **changed**.

For – and now it comes out, what shall be changed there – this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality... and then shall the word come to pass that has been written (in Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14); death is swallowed up in victory.

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Everything which the Scripture says about the vanity of life (for example the whole of the book of Ecclesiastes) and of the transitoriness of humanity (like grass, like a flower in the field) then has no more power over those who are Christ's.

Everything which belongs to our time particularly to the earlier-later discussed previously under (3) and everything which here, now, was defective, and poor and lustreless, will then have passed away. What pertains to the child, that sometimes comes back in childish old people – is then past for eternity. Neither death, nor mourning, nor weeping, shall exist any more, nor any more trouble.

Also that which God has used in time for the unfolding of the whole human race – marriage, birth, education, history of nations and everything that is **temporal**, is then past and gone.

We may therefore take care, that we do not in a certain cultural optimism seek to claim the “temporal” things for the eternal kingdom.

That is what the [radical] Anabaptists have done, who thought they were able to establish the eternal kingdom in Strassburg and Munster.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ [For a detailed discussion of his views on this subject, see A Janse. **De verhouding van Christelijke politiek tot de wereldsche**. Aalten: N.V. de Graafschap, 1933, pp. 24-34.]

That is done by all who forget that here, now, we do not have an enduring city (since we remain subject to vanity) but that we must seek the “future city,” the eternal enduring imperishable kingdom of eternal life, that here, now we already have in principle and that we now “in hope” already “see” through faith.

Therefore we must stretch out towards everything that is “in the Lord.” Everything that happens in our life that is “in the Lord” is not vanity.

Therefore we must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness –communion with Christ **in all things in this life**. What shall we eat and drink, and with what shall we clothe ourselves – that is the question of the world, which sees its highest destination in the temporal. But the /138/ children of God have to ask: how shall I in trusting the Father glorify Him in taking care of eating and drinking and clothing, how shall I live out of Christ in all things, how shall I inherit the Kingdom of God “in Christ”?

Whoever seeks that eternal life, has the promise, that the transitory temporal day to day needs shall be provided for him, for his thinking as much as for his nourishment; for his external and for his internal being. On this promise he may depend.

And as the eternal Kingdom of Christ comes first of all from his heart, then can it also happen, that he “for the sake of Christ” would rather suffer hunger, than abandon Him for temporal preservation.

Also here again the first schema is not to be used. The eternal is not **thinking** over against temporal nourishment, for example.

The eternal is not the function of justice over against temporal historical development. The eternal is not the idea of over against the multiplicity of phenomena, so that “the horse” should be eternal and “this black horse” should be only temporal.

No, the eternal Kingdom of God has come in the carpenters of the Ark, the birth of Isaac, in the history of Israel, in the multiplicity of events around the cross of our Lord. And it comes in the usual temporal things such as church reformations, church building, political action, school education and in the nourishment and pastoral care of God’s children for the sake of Christ.

No more is the schema “inside-outside” to be used here. For it is not the case, that the interior **in everything** is eternal and the exterior is temporal in everything. We should quite likely call external things such as the ark, and the cross of Jesus, and the church service, and the money that was given

to the poor. That is also true in certain respects, but it has **in its whole** an eternally remaining reality in the Kingdom of God.

John saw Christ in heaven “standing as slain” and we receive Christ still in the Holy /139/ Communion as “broken” and “forgotten.” It is something transitory, but it was still eternal redemption.

Many mystics and fanatics have often identified the eternal with the internal, and the temporal with the external. And therefore they often had contempt for those who appreciated very highly that external (Bible, church, sacrament). They spoke therefore of the “interior Word.”

And finally, also the schema: earlier-later will not do here. For there is much eternal which happened **earlier** in us and there shall be much temporal in what happens to us later.

“Eternal things” came from our youth (for example, we must respect our elders “in the Lord,” that is to say as children who were “of the Lord.”)

And temporal things come from our later years (such as when we become sick and deformed).

Those who place the **eternal** in a wholly other hereafter and who call everything of the now the “temporal” (cf. the temporal with the eternal change = death!) can with difficulty understand what Christ said to Nicodemus: those who believe in me, they **have** eternal life. John 3:36.

Only when we see through faith, how Christ brings about His eternal Kingdom **in the whole of this concrete life** of His people – only then do we understand the reality of the confession that Jesus Christ has come “in the flesh.”

The confession has become an offence through the ages for those who live “out of religion,” “out of the Law” (Jews, false churches, fanatics). For the wise men of this world it was foolishness. In the days of the antichrist it shall concern this confession.

John saw the beginning of this antichrist: All spirits, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come **in the flesh**, are not from God, but this is the spirit of the antichrist, which spirit you have heard about, that shall come, and is now already in the world. 1 John 4:3.

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Everything which was **of** and **in** and **from** Christ, that is eternal.

He has triumphed over death, and also his external life, also his body, is raised up.

And all who are in Him, they shall be similarly raised up and be made like to Him. We will be preserved with everything which was “in the Lord.” Since God created us as “living souls,” we shall all come before His judgement seat in that way.

And since we were created as “living souls,” we shall continue to exist in that way.

Everything which is outside of Christ shall lie eternally broken under the power of death.

Everything which was found in Him, everything which He saves out of this world, shall be “changed” through swallowing up the mortal and putting on the immortal.

The absolute distinction of eternal and temporal lies here, in Christ. And it does not lie between higher and lower functions, between internal and external, between earlier and later.

The dominion of death in the temporal is characterised by that which suffers transitoriness, brokenness, destruction, through the means by which the creation destroys, decomposes.

The “eternal” death – which also was defined through Christ – is the **eternal** continuation of this dominion of death. And this death remains neither limited to the lower functions, nor to the outside, nor to the preceding period, but in the judgement of the Son of Man it lays hold of the whole person – thus also his higher functions, also his internal, also his whole past and present and future. Also there is decidedly not any creaturely distinction, but the judicial sentence of Christ, which in the present has appealed to grace, clearly and earnestly and truly; come, buy, without money, wine and milk; why do you weigh out your money for that which cannot satisfy? He has called to humankind: my **son**, give me your **heart**. He has promised: he who believes in Me, /141/ streams of living waters shall flow out of his innermost being. God has given to those, who believe in him, authority to be called children of God, and he has summoned them to honour Him and to serve Him **in all functions** in fact from **the whole heart indeed**, from today onwards with perfection **in the future**, participation in the eternal life, in the midst of brokenness of this transitory life. Yes, He shall not forsake them even in the breaking of death. For they are His possession with “body” and “soul” (read Scripturally) in life and in death, for time and eternity.

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